

HISTORY OF WASHINGTON SHORES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Orlando, Florida

The Washington Shores Presbyterian Church is an outgrowth of a collaborated effort of Orange County Presbyterian Churches of the Saint John Presbytery, and the Washington Shores community. It was a dream of the Presbytery to one day establish an all-black Presbyterian church in the Washington Shores neighborhood.

In April, 1955 the St. John Presbytery set aside \$3000.00 dollars for the establishment of a black Presbyterian church. In October, 1956 the Presbytery Home Mission committee, employed a black minister named Ernest A. Jupiter to serves as an organizer. Reverend Jupiter came to Orlando from Napoleonville, Louisiana. He was a graduate of Leland College, Baton Rouge, LA and Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA. Reverend Jupiter was married to Del Alexa, a graduate of Spellman College and Atlanta University. They were the parents of 3 children, Ernest, Carolyn and Lolita. The Jupiters resided at 3406 Spaulding Road. Rev. Jupiter was short in stature but long in intellect. He had a stern facial expression but an affable personality. He began his work reaching out to people in the neighborhood. As he met people he would teach about the Presbyterian faith and invite them to come and experience Sunday services. Often times Sunday services were held under the Minister's carport or at Jones High School.

On January 8, 1957, Reverend Jupiter was examined by the St. John Presbytery and transferred from the Congregational Christian Church and enrolled in the Presbytery with the power of an Evangelist.

June 4, 1957, the St. John Presbytery instructed the Home Mission committee to sign the donation contract so that the Washington Shores Mission could receive \$24,000.00 from the Negro Work Fund through the Board of Extension.

On October 8, 1957, Reverend Ernest A. Jupiter presented a petition from the Washington Shores Mission with 45 signatures requesting that they be constituted as a church in the area. A commission was organized, Sunday November 10, 1957, and church service was conducted by Reverend Oswald Delgado. Forty-five members were received by letter and by profession of faith and baptism. Reverend Jupiter administered the sacrament of baptism to fourteen infants.

Charter Members

Anna J. Hall
Adella Badie
Priscilla Brown
William Farrington
Leona Brown
Henry C. Turner
Mary E. Stoves
Willie Jordan, Sr.

Blanche Brown Sims
Alfred Turner
Dorothy Butts
Vivian Boston
Thomas Brown
Horace T. Baker
Felton A. Johnson
Thaddius Hargrove

Clarence Jordan
Cecil W. Boston
Mrs. C. B. Hammonds
Clara Baisden
Fred Butts, Jr.
Willie Jordan, Jr.
Eunice Baker
G. C. Gullet

Carrolyn Johnson
John Williams
Ruby Farrington
Ira Roberts
Frankye J. Robinson
Harry C. Johnson
Ruby D. Potter

Otha Kelly
Celestine Boyd
Edgar V. Potter
Alice Kelly
Charles H. Boyd
Thomas A. Brown
Elowees Turner

Frank Badie
Del E. Jupiter
Kate Tillman
Carrie Mack
Robert L. Curtis
Lorene Jordan
George Wooden

The church has had ten ministers, seven installed pastors, and three interim pastors:

Rev. Ernest A. Jupiter
Installed Pastor
(1957-1963)

Rev. Austin Bayne
Installed Pastor
(1964-1967)

Rev. Joe Rigsby
Installed Pastor
(1972-1974)

Rev. Alphonso McLean
Installed Pastor
(1976-1977)

Rev. William Belk
Interim Pastor
(1979-1980)

Rev. Dr. Ralph J. Aker
Installed Pastor
(1980-2004)

Rev. Dr. James C. Kelly
Interim Pastor
(2004-2005)

Rev. Dr. Frederick Terry
Interim Pastor
(2005-2006)

Rev. William Gaffney
Installed Pastor
(2007-2008)

Rev. Dr. James C. Kelly
Interim Pastor
(2009-2010)

Rev. Erika Rembert Smith
Installed Pastor
(2010-Present)

Several visiting ministers served our congregation during periods when we did not have an installed or interim pastor.

As a member church in the Presbyterian Church USA, we are governed by the Session and we have an active Deacon and Trustee Board. The current ministry areas include Christian Growth and Nurture, Worship Planning and Service, and Witness and Commitment.

Over the years, this church has served as a vital part of the community; it has operated a day care nursery, sponsored Boy Scout troops and supervised an after school tutorial program. We celebrate our rich heritage and look forward to a glorious future as we serve Christ's Church together.