

## **St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church**

In 1935, St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church was organized, at the home of Deacon Ben Shepherd, on 19<sup>th</sup> and Euclid in Kansas City, Missouri. Along with 4 other faithful believers, the Church called Rev. J.E. China as the first pastor. He served the congregation for two years.

In the ten years that followed there were seven others to serve, before Rev. F.W. Haynes accepted his call to pastor St. Mark in June of 1947.

Under Rev. Haynes' pastorate at St. Mark, her membership grew in numbers and had one of the greatest music departments in the area, as well as a large representation of Deacons, Church Mothers, and Ushers. Rev. James Glover and Rev. Earl Abel were among the associate ministers who served with Rev. Haynes during this time.

By 1965, St. Mark had relocated 6 times before finding a home at 4300 E. 31<sup>st</sup> Street.

In March 1979, Rev. Haynes went home to be with the Lord. For the first time in almost 32 years, St. Mark was again in need of a pastor. There were several ministers, over the next several months, who came and conducted services for the church.

In October 1979, Rev. Stewart Johnson accepted the call to pastor St. Mark, where he remained God's good and faithful servant for 44 years.

During the first few years under the leadership of Rev. Johnson with a few members willing to work, the little store-front church building was remodeled; the church also purchased a new piano and a new 15-passenger van. During this same time, the church filed an Application of Incorporation with the State of Missouri.

In 1986, the 720 Club was formed, where members of the Club pledged \$720.00 to a special building fund to be used for construction of a new church building.

In 1989, the church began purchasing land around the existing building for the new construction. By 1995, work plans and construction estimates were approved, and the design had been approved to meet city requirements.

Then began the work to obtain financing for the building project. With just over \$72,000 in the bank, the church had to apply to several different banks before the loan request for \$225,000 was approved in 1998.

Groundbreaking service for the new St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church was planned and took place in May 1999. One year later, on October 19, 2000 the members moved into the new building and held a Service of Dedication to God. On May 20, 2001, in another Service of Dedication, the cornerstone was laid.

In June 2002, the church purchased the house at 3028 Spruce, which provides housing for members who were formerly residents at City Union Mission homeless shelter.

One year later, the church purchased 3 lots on the east side of 30<sup>th</sup> Spruce. The church later voted to build a parsonage on those lots, with the address of 3015 Spruce. Construction began in May 2004 and was completed in August the following year.

During construction of the church and parsonage, Rev. Johnson served as the General Contractor, and along with faithful members of the church, could be found working daily on the projects until they were completed.

In September 2003, the church also purchased 2 corner lots on E. 31<sup>st</sup> St., east of the church, which today is the overflow parking lot. Rev. Johnson felt it was important for the neighborhood, that the church claim vacant properties for Christ, and help minimize the illegal activity taking place in the area.

In January 2015, the church submitted an Application for Recognition of Exemption under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The application was approved, retroactively to our date of incorporation, September 16, 1982.

In January 2020, the mortgage note on the Church Parsonage was paid in full. Three months later, in March, the mortgage note on the Church building was paid in full.

By April 2, 2023 all properties of St. Mark had clear titles, was in good repair, and the Church had no outstanding debt.

Rev. Johnson had previously shared with the members, he felt he had accomplished what the LORD sent him to St. Mark to do, and if the Lord allowed, he would retire in October 2023.

On October 31, 2023, Rev. Johnson retired from pastoral ministry, with the distinction of being the longest serving pastor in St. Mark's history.

On November 1, 2023 longtime Associate Minister Reverend Robert Tinch took his place as the new pastor-elect. Rev. Tinch was officially installed as Pastor on March 10, 2024 to continue building on the great history of St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church.

Sis. Brenda Rucker, Church Clerk