

The History of Piney Grove African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

1864 thru 2008

Researched and written by Eilatan

On January 20, 1864, [Rev. James Walker Hood](#) arrived in New Bern, North Carolina.

He was responsible for the setup and organization of several area church congregations in and around New Bern, to join the [African Methodist Episcopal Zion \(AMEZ\) Church](#), under the North Carolina Conference.

At that time, Superintendent Joseph Jackson presided over the North Carolina Conference (established in 1864) under the 4th District of the AMEZ Church.

Rev. J. W. Hood's presentation of the AMEZ church's doctrines so impressed the few community leaders in North Harlowe that they decided to formally express their religious emotions by organizing Piney Grove AMEZ Church In 1865.

Initially, the Church was named the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, South of the County, and constructed on land purchased from Mr. John George.

In 1868, the general conference of the AMEZ Church convened in Washington, D.C., and appointed Bishop John Jamison Moore to preside over the 3rd District, of which North Carolina was a part.



BISHOP J. W. HOOD

In 1872, Rev. J. W. Hood was elected as Bishop of the North Carolina Conference and noted as the first Bishop of Piney Grove.

Piney Grove AMEZ Church's detailed narrative is unavailable because of the scarcity of chronological historical data on its members, church leaders, ministers, elders, and bishops from its origin until the

1930s. It can be surmised that the ancestors of some of the present members of Piney Grove were instrumental in its foundation and continuous membership rolls.

On April 21, 1894, an indenture or sealed agreement was executed between Silas and Debby J. Fenner, John and Lucinda Fenner, Gambo and Francis Brimnage Fenner, Haywood and Francis Freeman, and other heirs at law, of Silas Richards and the Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church South of the County.

Those trustees were: Silas Fenner, Ben Richards, Jesse P. Godette, George I. Fenner, Allen Whittington, Rufus L. Carter, Stephen Martin, Isaac Miller, and James Black.

This transaction was for the purchase of three acres of land, at the cost of six dollars (\$6.00), with the stipulation that the lands go to the successors in the above named Church's office.

Sunday's were glorious days for the people. Sundays were days of relaxation, communication, reverence, and release from the stresses of labor.

Farming, from sunup 'till sundown all week, was the main source of income for many members, with wages ranging from 5 cents to 25 cents a day; but that was the "signs of the time."

On Sundays, the people came to Piney Grove — on foot, by oxen or mule car, etc. Some would start before daybreak to participate in Sunday School, morning, afternoon, and evening worship services.

When the time came for quarterly conferences, they occurred in a place of the afternoon services. After the conference's business ended, all the class leaders and all their members had testimonies and more worship.

Sundays at Piney Grove were all-day affairs, and the members adored them.

Remember the song the children's choir was singing on a third Sunday (May 17, 1992).

"We do not get in the spirit like we use to."

The original Church was destroyed by fire on a Sunday night in 1911, 1912, or 1913. Arson was rumored but not proved.

There had been an ongoing debate among the membership concerning the location of the Church. The second Sanctuary was started under the pastoral leadership of Rev. John Singleton Shaw, who was born January 15, 1879, and married Beulah Mae Godette, June 3, 1913.

While construction was underway, the Society Hall meetings were held, located a quarter mile from the church site. The white-framed church building, much of the form it is today, was completed with furnishings under the administration of Rev. Anderson R. Roberts.

February 17, 1914, the trustees of Piney Grove Church, Namely; Jesse P. Godette, H.D. White, L.H. Martin, and John S. Shaw, purchased and secured from the Tolson Lumber and Manufacturing Company-specific properties totaling \$444.21.

To secure payment of the debt, the trustees mortgaged: 1-40'x70' church building erected on three acres of land known as Piney Grove, the site, and the surrounding campgrounds adjoining the lands of the John H. George Estate.



The Tolson Company further stipulated within the document that the Church be insured for \$1,000 for the company's benefit. If the trustees failed to obtain the insurance, the Tolson Company would procure a policy and charge the Church's cost.

This transaction was a logical decision since a fire destroyed the first Sanctuary. The mortgage's maturity date is unknown, but forfeiture of the debt would have resulted in a public auction sale of the Church and property to the highest bidder at the Craven County Courthouse door.

During the twenties and thirties, when the members wanted to begin a construction project, they always raised the money beforehand. One of our members made Ice cream, baked pies and cakes, prepared ham, and chicken sandwiches to sell wherever she went.

You see, the wood steps on the Church were falling apart, and this member raised enough money to have concrete steps installed. Her name was engraved on the steps, which have since been covered during other renovated projects. Her name is Nettie Richard's, Godette Fenner.

Harrison Becton. Sr. informed me that Rev. T. S. Multsby was the first pastor at Piney Grove to set a budget of ten cents a week per member. This Reverend would show up in a Model-T Ford each Sunday.

During the mid-1940s, construction of the second parsonage was started under the pastoral leadership of Rev. D. J, McDowell (1941-43) and completed under the administration of Rev. F. I. Lowe (1943-47).

The original parsonage just had rotten away. [Rev. Ossie Roosevelt Ellis, Sr.](#), the pastoral leader from 1948 through 1957, initiated the Church's first renovation project.

The choir stand was moved from the side of the pulpit to the rear. A portion of the Church was partitioned off on one side of the pulpit for a pastors study and on the other side for a choir room, and the roof of the Church was tinned.



Trustees and Stewards pictured above from left to right are:

1st Row: George Stephen Godette, Sr.; Rev. Ossie Roosevelt Ellis, Sr.; Walter Alexander Godette; Rev. McCloud. 2nd Row: Welton "Pat" Fenner; Shedrick "Shade" Harvey. 3rd Row: Robert Fenner; Harrison Becton, Sr.; Levi Martin, Sr. 4th Row: Benjamin Richard; George Crawford; Will Carter; Clarence Fenner.

The week of October 23-29, 1950, was designated to celebrate the 85th Anniversary of Piney Grove AMEZ Church and to honor the 25th year of Rev. O.R. Ellis, Sr.'s ministry. Members, Family, and friends gathered to observe this joyous occasion.

In 1952, the Entertainment House was built.

On November 8, 1954, 2.5 acres of land were bought from Guy A. Civils and his wife, Sadie M. Civils. A portion of this bought acreage was the site of the "African Methodist Episcopal Zion Cemetery."

The trustees' names listed on this deed were: Benjamin H. Richard, Harrison Becton Sr., John Carter, Clarence Fenner, Burtney Carter, James George, Jesse P. Godette, William Richard, George S. Godette, James Dotson Fenner, and Rev. Ossie R. Ellis, Sr.

The second church renovation program began under the pastoral leadership of the Rev. S. P. League within the years 1957-1968.

The front of the Sanctuary was extended to be even with the vestibule. This space provided a room for the ushers on one side of the vestibule and a nursery on the other.

A porch was added to the front of the building, and the Church was brick veneered. The building was rewired, and the interior was redone - altar, walls, ceiling, and floor.

All new furnishings - pews, organ, piano, and pulpit chairs - were purchased. The pulpit and all the windows, except the one in the rear, were left in their original form.

A communion table was donated by Ms. Adelaide (Doll) Dove in memory of her mother - Mrs. Martha Fisher Dove.

The second cornerstone was laid in 1964.

Rev. League initiated the Men's Day and Women's Day programs in 1960. In the beginning, Mrs. League was the chairperson of Women's Day, with Mary Carter Sparrow, as co-chair. Mary planned the program. Mrs. Thelma Becton Staton, lovingly called "Sister" by her relatives, was "Women's Day Chair," after Mrs. League.

"Back then, when there was Women's Day, they had night services; just as many people at night as was the day."

Currently, Mrs. Beatrice "Bea" Miller is the chair' of Women's Day Programs. She coordinates the Women's Day activities with assistance from various other members and friends.

On October 15, 1967, Piney Grove had the Annual Women's Day Observance Services dedicated to Mrs. Matilda G. Fenner to recognize her faithful, devoted, loyal, and efficient work for the Church, community, and the children of Godette Elementary School.

Mrs. Fenner had begun her teaching' career in 1937 and, during that period, was a leader and financial secretary at the Church.

Mrs. Sylvia Edwards and Ms. Carol Andrews performed the presentations, and Rev. L. J. Waddell preached the sermon.

"Four things in any land must dwell,
If it endures and prospers well:
One is manhood true and good,
One is noble womanhood,
One is child life, clean and bright,
And one an altar keen a light."

On Sunday, July 20, 1969, the Dedication Service of Piney Grove A.M.E. Zion Church was held under the pastoral leadership of Rev. C. L. Winslow (1968-76).

Presiding Bishop, William Andrew Stewart, preached the sermon and performed the ceremony while Harrison Becton, Sr. made the presentation.

Under Rev. Winslow's superintendence, 15.3 acres of land adjacent to the church property was purchased for \$500.

This transaction, dated January 27, 1972, carried Samuel Fisher, Harrison Becton Sr., Casezell Martin, George Crawford, Jesse Godette, James Becton, Harry Sparrow, James D. Fenner, James Norris, William Richard, and Rev. C.L. Winslow, as trustees.

From December 1977 through November 1981, Rev. Abraham Walter Washington was the pastoral charge of Piney Grove. He was born on April 24, 1899, in Montgomery, Alabama, and later chose Elouise Florence as his wife. He departed this life on November 18, 1981, while in the administration of the Church.

Under his leadership, the Entertainment House was expanded, redecorated, and refurbished with new kitchen and dining areas. Space was provided for a pastor's study and a storage closet. Also, extra restrooms were installed in the Church.

Following the "homegoing" of Rev. Washington, Bishop Alfred G. Dunston Jr., in his Godly judgment, appointed Rev. Timothy Howard, Sr. to lead the congregation.

On January 1, 1982, Rev. Howard, Sr. was met at the Kinston Airport by the Preacher's Steward, Welton Fenner. It was there where he made his first view of Eastern North Carolina.

Rev. Timothy Howard, Sr. was from Providence, Rhode Island, of the New England Conference. However, his home place was New Zion, South Carolina.

Rev. Howard's Family consisted of his wife: Augustina; sons, Timothy, Jr.; Todd; and daughter, Tamara.

The following Sunday, Rev. Howard preached his first sermon at Piney Grove A.M.E. Zion Church.

After ministering for approximately five weeks, he initiated the following programs and activities: a Church Budget, a Birthday Club, a Youth Night, a Church Membership Drive, and he appointed a Parsonage "Faith Committee."

"The Parsonage "Faith Committee" members were chosen after long hours of praying", stated Rev. Howard.

The members were: Wilbur Becton, Chairman; Valery Frazier, Secretary; Helen Godette and Harrison Becton, Sr., Treasurers; Welton Fenner, Adelaide Dove, Gillette Martin, Anna Frazier, John Becton, Dollye Medlock, Gladys White, Eliza Carter, Nettie Fenner, James Becton, Eula Frazier, Theron Harkley, with Rev. Howard, as Advisor.

Two weeks later, the "Faith Committee met with the congregation and presented a proposal for a new parsonage. Their proposal was based on a building plan designed by their members and accepted by the congregation.

Immediately after that, the "Faith Committee" became the backbone for the renovation project's finance. A rally was held, and the treasury balance stood at \$5,000.

On March 13, 1982, several members gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony regarding the parsonage.

The parsonage was rebuilt from a six-room structure, with one bathroom, to a modern style structure, with central air and heat, eight rooms, two bathrooms, and a two-vehicle carport.

The parsonage was also decorated with wall-to-wall carpeting, a dishwasher, washer and dryer, a new kitchen set, and a living room suit.

The parsonage was completed in August 1982 at an estimated cost of \$36,000. The "Faith" Committee raised \$8,500.00 toward the completion cost.

Later that month, Rev. Howard moved his Family and furniture from Providence, Rhode Island. The members and officials of Piney Grove welcomed the Family with an outstanding reception.

The Trustees during that time were: Samuel Fisher, Chairman; Harrison Becton, Sr., Casezell Martin, Learn Carter, Harry Sparrow, James D. Fenner, James Becton, George Becton, George Crawford, Lucille Carter, Wilbur Becton, and Rev. Howard.

In 1982, an Honorary Program was held to pay tribute to Reba Whittington Carter, Harrison L. Becton, Sr., and Welton G. Fenner.

Reba Carter served as the Church Secretary for 33 years and passed the torch on to Patricia Evans, later that decade. Nevertheless, she continued to render her faithful services. Aunt Reba died on February 4, 1988.

Harrison L. Becton, Sr., had 30 years of service as a Trustee and further served as Trustee Emeritus.

Welton "Pat" Fenner served as the Sunday School Superintendent, Church Treasurer, Leader of Leaders, and Preacher's Steward for 28 Years. In the 1990's he Passed the torch, of Preacher's Steward, to Leander Carter. "Pat" Fenner still currently serves as Leader of Leaders and Steward Emeritus.

Leander "Tobe" Carter is presently the Church Treasurer and a Trustee, while Wallace Teel is the Preacher's Steward.

Rev. Howard appointed and elected Lucille Carter, as the first female in Piney Grove history, to be a trustee board member.

Rev. Howard also oversaw the organization of the Young Adult Choir.

The year 1982 also marked the beginning of the Annual Family and Friends Day, held on July 4, 1982. The Family who raised the most generous amount of money was honored with the Family of the Year Award.

This Day was begun with a Morning Service and ended with an Evening Service of spiritual uplifting.

Piney Grove's Mass Choir rendered the music, directed by Toby White, with solos led by Nettie Stowers and Ida Alston.

The welcome was given by Jennettia Carter (now Drake). The response was given by Nannie Hill and an additional welcome by Dollye Medlock.

Welton Fenner conducted the Introduction of the speaker. Rev. Howard delivered the message, and an inspirational poem was given by Clementine George.

Trustees - Lucille Carter, Samuel Fisher, Harrison L. Becton, Sr., Charlie Carpenter, James Becton, Wilbur Becton, Learn Carter, Jim Dotson Fenner, Odessa George gave the Family Reports. He announced the "Adelaide Dove" Family as the 1982 "Family of the Year."

The second place was the "Carter" Family, and third place was the "Fenner" Family.

The Family and Friends Day Committee members were: Adelaide Dove, Chairperson; Velma Morris, Co-Chair; Odessa George, Secretary, Anna Frazier, Jennettia Carter-Drake, Leon Staton, Barbara Carter, Welton Fenner, Wilbur Becton, Lucille Carter, Earlene Harkley, Laverne Teel, and Addie Richards.

Other outstanding accomplishments include the building of a church office within the O.R. Ellis Fellowship Hall (formerly the Entertainment House); the purchase of a \$1,300 typewriter; installation of a \$3,500 furnace; donation of a file cabinet by Beatrice Miller; donation of a piano for the Fellowship Hall, by Joy Somerset, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Somerset.

In April 1983, Rev Howard informed the congregation of the need to obtain a new organ. Within three weeks, the congregation donated enough money to Purchase a Lowery Organ, at the cost of \$2,800.

In May, the Church had its first Revival. Rev. Charles C. Davis, Pastor of Trinity AMEZ Church, Byington, New York, preached.

Rev. Howard presented the parsonage and organ for the dedication service performed by the Rt. Rev. Alfred G. Dunston, Jr.

Piney Grove's Mass Choir rendered the music, directed by Toby White and William Humphrey, Ministers of Music.

The receipts for the Day totaled \$2,800.

Following the ceremony, Wilbur Becton, Parsonage "Faith Committee" Chairperson, presented a key to Casezell Martin, the Trustee Board Treasurer, in the absence of Samuel Fisher, Trustee Board Chairman. Casezell Martin, in turn, presented the key to Welton Fenner, Preacher's Steward, for final submission to Rev. Howard.

Other noteworthy achievements for 1983 include the organization of the first central Budget and Finance Board, and the Family and Friends' Day "Family of the Year" award, presentation to the "Edna Norris" Family.

The most significant event of 1984 was the mortgage's liquidation on the Fellowship Hall, as the church budget increased from \$50,000 to \$90,000.

Trustee Board members were Wilbur Becton, Chairman, James Becton. Harrison Becton, Charles Carpenter, Learn Garter, Lucille Carter, James O. Fenner, Samuel Fisher, Casezell Martin, and Gillette Martin.

The Rev. Timothy Howard Family received the annual Family and Friends Day's "Family of the Year" award.

Organized in 1984, the Howard Chorale made their official debut on April 7, 1985, an Easter Sunday.

From July 1 through July 7, 1985, the Piney Grove A.M.E. Zion Church Family celebrated 120 years of Christian Fellowship. The central theme of the anniversary was "Holding on to the Mysteries of faith."

The Reverends: William Pritchard, of Mt. Tabor Missionary Baptist Church, North River, NC; Johnny Smith of Green's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church; Roy McCabe of the Christian Star Church; and Johnny Henderson of Hyman Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, rendered the daily devotional services.

On Friday, a banquet was held at Havelock High School, with Benjamin S. Ruffin, the guest speaker. Mr. Ruffin was the current Vice President and Special Assistant to the President of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company in Durham, North Carolina.

The 120th year celebration culminated on Sunday with a morning worship service delivered by Rev. Howard and an evening service address by Rev. W. L. Rush, of Jacksonville, North Carolina.

The Anniversary Committee members were: Helen Godette, General Chair; Clarissa Bizzell, Banquet Chair; Dollye Medlock, Banquet Representative; Rev. Hilda McDougal, Awards; Lindbergh Norris, Special Activities; Valery Frazier, Journal; Wilbur Becton, Ticket and Finance; and Rev. Howard, Advisor.

Piney Grove's first historical souvenir Journal was presented during this celebration, and the Fellowship Hall was christened the [O. R. Ellis](#) Fellowship Hall.

"Let us march on 'til victory is won."

He was born and reared in Memphis, Tennessee, [Rev. W. L. Wainwright](#) became Piney Grove's pastoral leader in August 1986.

Rev. Wainwright received his B.S. degree, in Business Administration, from Memphis State University, in 1970, and did graduate work at Wayne State University, in Detroit, Michigan, from 1970 to 1974, in Business Management.

Rev. Wainwright has done seminary study at Shaw Divinity School and Southeastern Theological Seminary.

Ordained an A.M.E. Zion Minister in 1976, Rev. Wainwright has pastored several A.M.E. Zion Churches in Benson, NC; Henderson, NC; and Edenton, NC.

During his initial church meeting, and through various times in 1987, Rev. Wainwright organized the following auxiliaries: The Sons of Piney Grove, The Gospel Choir: The Daughters of Piney Grove: The Sick, Birthday and Condolence Committee; The Floral Committee; The Building Fund Committee; and The Cemetery Committee. He split The Budget and Finance Board into two distinct groups and began the first Joint Board meetings, between the Trustees and Stewards, to keep them equally abreast of church business.

On April 14, 1988, the membership of Piney Grove met and approved a \$100,000 loan from BB&T for a church renovation and building project initiated by Rev. Wainwright, and thus begun another phase in the growth and facility improvement of Piney Grove.

Members of the Trustee Board, at that time, were: Wilbur Becton, Chairman; Shelia Teel, Vice Chairwoman; Natalie Taylor, Secretary; Jay Fisher, Assistant Secretary; Casezell Martin, Treasurer; Learn Carter, Chaplain; James Becton, Lucille Carter, Samuel Fisher, Gillette Martin, Rev. Wainwright; John Becton, Joe Carter, Leon Staton, Auxiliary Members; with Harrison Becton and James O. Fenner, as Emeritus Members.

On May 31, the loan closing statement papers were signed at Atty. John Harmon's office, in New Bern, North Carolina. On June 16, 1988, Roland Woodward, of Carolina Home Improvement Association, the project's general contracting company, received the first installment of \$5,948.

In 1988, the Sanctuary renovation began first, with the painting of the interior walls, the restructuring of the O.R. Ellis Fellowship Hall, and the installation of insulation and vinyl siding.

Air conditioning ducts were installed in the O.R. Ellis Fellowship Hall, as were soft drink machines. Water drain lines were rerouted, and electrical rewiring was accomplished.

James Harvey painted the parsonage, and Rev. David Armstrong built directional signs.

In August 1988, a foundation was poured into constructing a ten-room Administration Annex, with wall-to-wall carpeting and office furnishings, for the Pastor's Study, the Secretary's Office, and the Board Room.

Jeff Godette tinned the roof, while Harrison Becton, Jr., landscaped the grounds. By the end of October 1988, the Annex was completed.

Other highlights of 1988 included the dedication of the following items: A Baptismal Fountain by the New Young Adult Choir; An Offering Table by the Gospel Chorus; Hymn Books by the Senior Choir; and Bibles by the Fette Godette Family.

The Calendar Committee, who organized and sold 1989 calendars, highlighting memorable dates of the membership, and chaired by Thelma Becton Staton, was responsible for the pews' cushioning.

For the first time in the Church's history, Piney Grove hosted The One Hundred Twenty-fifth Session of the North Carolina Conference on November 22-27, 1888. Bishop Alfred G. Dunston, Jr., and Bishop Charles H. Foggie, assisted by Presiding Elders: Rev. O.R. Ellis, Rev. W.H. Thomas, and Rev. Jeremiah Asbury, D.D., conducted this very successful annual conference.

Based on a report by Rev, W.L. Wainwright, Financial Secretary of this Session and Host Pastor, the conference generated funds of \$382,608.

"The Lord has said that he would live in the thick darkness: But, O Lord, I have built you a lovely home on earth, A place for you to live."

During the past years, Rev. Wainwright has been active in the political arena. He became a member of the Craven County Board on Aging, the North Carolina Council of Churches, the Craven County NAACP, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of New Bern & Craven County, the Havelock - Cherry Point Ministerial Association, United Tri-County Senior Citizens (Vice Chairman, 1987-88), Craven County Voters League, and the Policy Council of the Carteret Community Action Head start Program (Chairman for three years).

Rev. Wainwright has also served as the Financial Secretary and Analyst of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Due to unforeseen expenses and pending bills, the initial building fund loan increased to \$120,000 in 1989, and the renovation project was able to be finished.

Master Builders of New Bern, NC, installed the breezeway connecting the Sanctuary to the Annex and removed the old secretary's office in the fellowship hall.

Robert George poured the handicapped ramp and extended the sidewalks, providing his labor free of charge. In May of this same year, Bishop Alfred G. Dunston, Jr. presided over the Administration Annex's cornerstone laying and dedication ceremony.

1990 will remain in our historical memoirs as the year the Annex was officially christened "The Thelma Becton Staton" Administration Building. This action took place on the Family Reunion weekend of July 1.

Also, Rev. W.L. Wainwright was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in November.

The Trustee Board Members were: John W. Ellis, Chairman; Shelia Teel, Vice Chairwoman; Natalie Taylor, Secretary; Anthony Andrews, Assistant Secretary; Casezell Martin, Treasurer; James Becton, Rev. Wainwright. Emeritus Members were Harrison Becton. Sr., Learn, Carter, and James D. Fenner.

In 1992, the Christian Education Board, chaired by Sister Beulah George, sponsored an observation of Black History, with the theme "Speaking the Truth and Singing the Praise," on Sunday, February 16, at the North Harlowe Community Center. The speaker was Bro. Atiba Ellis, with musical selections rendered by the New Hope Singers.

March 1992 roared in like a lion and eased out like a lamb. A windstorm caused minor damage to our church buildings that month. The first time the Church filed an insurance claim, with Kelso Wheeler of New Bern, amounting to \$1,500.

"God will keep you on a solid foundation." was the subject of Rev. Wainwright's sermon one Sunday morn.'

The Right Reverend Alfred G. Dunston. Jr., Presiding Prelate of the North Carolina, 2nd Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church, celebrated his retirement in June 1992, via ("A job well done"):

The Family and Friends Day Committee also celebrated its Annual Day. Chaired by Sister Patricia Evans, the committee proclaimed with their theme, "Uniting and Rejoicing in Christ." The guest speaker, with the message for this joyous occasion, was Bro. Edward Earl Carter of Greenville, North Carolina.

On July 31, 1992, the Right Reverend Herman L. Anderson became our Presiding Prelate, replacing Bishop Dunston's position. Bishop Anderson resided in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was the 77th in Episcopal succession.

Bishop Anderson was elected to Bishop hood in 1980 and was a past President of the Board of Bishops. His father, the late Bishop Felix Sylvester Anderson, was elected a Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church in 1960.

In 1992, the Sanctuary's windows and frames required repair. Once again, the membership united, and during August, donated the funds necessary to accomplish that renovative goal.

Master Builders of New Bern, North Carolina, performed the work.

Names of the window and frame benefactors were placed on plaques and affixed to the windowsills and frames near the pews where they sit to honor them for their contributions.

The window benefactors donated \$400 each, the frame benefactors donated \$200 each, and miscellaneous donations amounted to \$332. The total was \$5,732.

Reverend Joseph L. Walton was appointed pastor of Piney Grove in 1997 and was instrumental in the Church's continual spiritual and economic life. Under his leadership, the Church established an afterschool tutorial program and installed a circular drive around the Church.

Reverend Robert Little, Jr. was appointed pastor of Piney Grove in 2008 and is the current pastor. During his tenure, the Church has initiated and completed several capital projects totaling over \$125,000.00.

Past Pastors of Piney Grove AME Zion Church:

Only three pastors are known for the first 76 years of existence for Piney Grove AME Zion Church. They were Reverends John Singleton Shaw, Anderson R. Roberts, and T. S. Multsby

Subsequent pastors are listed as follows:

1941-43 – Rev. D. J, McDowell; 1943-48 – Rev. F. I. Lowe.

1948 - 1957 – Rev. Dr. Ossie Roosevelt Ellis, Sr.; 1957-1968 – Rev. S. P. League.

1968 - 1976 – Rev. C. L. Winslow; 1976 – 1981 – Rev. Abraham Walter Washington.

1981 – 1986 – Rev. Timothy Howard, Sr.; 1986 – 1994 – Rev. Dr. William L. Wainwright.

1994 – 1997 – Rev. Dr. Avery Brown; 1997 - 2008 – Rev. Dr. Joseph L. Walton.

2008 – Present – Rev. Dr. Robert Little, Jr.

"Lord, thank you!"