

HISTORY OF TRINITY EMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church's roots emerged from the soil of two separate congregations. The founding of Emmanuel Church was in response to the call of the Presbyterian Alliance of Rochester, on June 8, 1873, to establish a Sunday School. Following this meeting, Bethany Sunday School was established in a hall, of a building located on the corner of Plymouth and Frost Avenues. Soon thereafter, the Sunday School moved to Friends Meeting House on Hubbell Park. In the meantime, Sunday School's sponsors secured funds in 1874 to erect a new structure at Plymouth and Frost Avenues, in order to provide better facilities for the Sunday School. This edifice was later renamed Emmanuel Mission Sunday School. Worship services began in the new building in 1886. The following year, 1887, Emmanuel Church evolved as an outgrowth of the worship services and Sunday School classes.

In 1914, Emmanuel's congregation occupied the church it had erected on the corner of Jefferson Avenue & Shelter Street. Although small in number, the congregation soon increased its membership under pastorates of the following spiritually gifted clergymen: the Reverends William Hallock, E. Ebenezer McGhee, Albert F. Ebenezer McGhee, Albert F. Mc Clements and Orville G. Bosley. In 1952, during Rev. Bosley's pastorate, Emmanuel Church erected a \$95,000 education building, attached to its original structure..

The second congregation that provided soil for Trinity Emmanuel's historic roots was Trinity Presbyterian Church. This church was the outgrowth of Trinity Presbyterian Mission, which was organized in 1898. Worship services and Sunday School had been held for a time in private homes. Eventually, a small space situated on West Main Street was secured. During this time, the Rev. G.L. Hamilton supplied the pulpit. Trinity changed location several times until purchasing a House of Worship on the southeast corner of Bronson Avenue and Reynolds Street. Among the clergymen who brought their love and commitment to Trinity were the Reverends Lawrence, Ward, Campbell, Bird, Charles Kearns, John L. Salmon and Bobby Jo Saucer.

Following many discussions, deliberations, soul searching in ministry, mission and worship, a process of consolidation was initiated in 1969. On Sunday, December 13, 1970 Trinity congregation voted to approve a merger with Emmanuel Church. On Sunday, January 10, 1971, the Presbytery of Genesee Valley approved the consolidation of the two congregations.

The Honorable Justice Jacob Ark signed the order consolidating Emmanuel Presbyterian Society of Rochester, New York and Trinity Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York on February 25, 1971. The churches were, thereafter, unified under the name of Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. Mr. Gordon Davison, Chair of the Trustees signed the documents for Emmanuel and Fannie Terrell, Clerk of Session signed for Trinity. The Trustees of the Corporation were: Elizabeth Avery, Margaret Bell, Al Blake, Napolius Bostic, Wallace Carpenter, **Nelli Chappelle**, John N. Cole, **Addie Lou Coleman**, Gordon Davison, Edna Fletcher, Marilyn Griffin, James Guyon, Lillie Humphrey, **Connie Ingram**, Arthur Jones, Dorothy Mergerle, Beatrice Nagel, James Roberson, Bertha Schoenheit, William Strickland, Fannie Terrell, **William Watson**, Cassie White, and Gerald Wilson. The names in bold are still actively involved at TEPC.

On the first Sunday in February 1971, the initial worship service as the newly combined Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church was held in the sanctuary of the former Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. At that time, the Reverends Philip Johnson, stated supply Edward Wheeler, stated supply and Charles Thurman, assistant student minister, served as pastors. The Rev. James Goins was the first full-time pastor of the unified church. The church adopted new initiatives in the areas of early childhood development and in community ministries. The kitchen in the education wing was renovated. The Property adjacent to the church was purchased and transformed into the existing parking lot. In 1974, the Rev. Frederick Douglass Jefferson, Jr., Ph.D., served as Interim Pastor and became pastor in 1975. During his pastorate, TEPC experienced significant changes. Its governance was altered from bi-cameral (elder, trustee and deacon boards) to uni-cameral (elder and deacon boards); Jefferson Avenue Childhood Development Center began operation in the Education Building; and the tradition of an annual revival was instituted. TEPC's membership grew, in spite of the departure of several families.

Another milestone in the history of Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church occurred in 1983, during the tenure of its first female pastor, the Rev. Deborah F. Mullen. Rev. Mullen came to TEPC in June 1983 as the Interim Pastor and later became the Stated Supply for the Church. Under her leadership, a new outreach ministry, Project Connect was implemented. Rev. Mullen left TEPC to answer a higher calling with the PCUSA and to also further her education at McCormick Seminary in Chicago.

During the time TEPC was without a called pastor, the Rev. Lyn Turner assisted the church with its spiritual mission and outreach ministry. Recognizing the need to help those in the community with co-dependency problems, and to provide young males, in grades 1-6 with an opportunity to interact with each other, the church organized YIO (Youth Inside/Outside and Second Chance, a Black Male Connection).

On September 1, 1988, Rev. Miles O Smith became pastor. Unfortunately, that same year, his health waned and he was forced to take a leave of absence. The pulpit was supplied each Sunday, with several students from Colgate Rochester Divinity School, namely: Rev. William Meanes, Randolph Fields, Rev. Edna Darlene Williams, as well as Rev. Frederick Jefferson, Rev. Lynn Turner and Rev. Donald Roth. The relationship between TEPC and Rev. Smith ended on March 31, 1993.

Rev. Peter Fisher became a candidate, under the care of TEPC, while studying at the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Without a called pastor, the congregation remained faithful to its outreach ministry. We saw the need to help those around us with co-dependency problems; our young black males in grades 1 thru 6; the youth outside of the church to interact with those inside. From these visions came the Second Chance Co-dependency Program; The Black Male Connection; and the Youth Inside/Outside Program (YIO).

Rev. Edna Darlene Williams was hired as part-time Christian Education Director, and as a result, our Sunday School grew with participation, not only from our own young people, but also from many neighborhood children.

To further the stability of the congregation during this transitional period, Rev. Lynn Turner was brought in to serve the congregation as temporary pulpit supply. He served from July, 1992 until June, 1994. Rev. Turner served us well, and was instrumental in helping the congregation in spiritual growth and nurturing, in our preparation for a full-time pastor.

On May 24, 1994, the TEPC congregation called as pastor, the Reverend Darryll H. Young, from the Presbytery of New York City. Pastor Young began his ministry with us July 1, 1994. He brings a new focus to the congregation with the biblical witness from the book of Isaiah 43:19, (“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert”). TEPC is now a church where the Lord is doing a “New” thing!

Rev. Arthur P. Dilbert II led the congregation for 10 years. Under his leadership, worship services took on a new spiritual direction adding to it a praise team. For the first time in the history of TEPC, after a request by several, baptism by submersion was done at the pool of Calvary Spiritualist Church. A concerted effort was made to connect to the community, with the theme “Connecting to our Community”. An annual Church and Community Day was established with back to school supplies and hair products from Soft-Sheen given to the needy in the community. A van was purchased to provide transportation for those in need of transportation for the Youth Ministry Programs as well as others in the congregation. Ministerial

assistance was provided from students Rev. Benjamin Dodzweit, North Eastern Seminary, Rev Anthony Sampson, Colgate Rochester, Rev. Johnnye L. Murrell and Elder Rutha Williams completed the Presbytery Lay Pastor training.

January 2010, the Congregation welcomed Dr. William H. Wilkinson. Under his leadership, we are getting back to our Presbyterian roots. We are again active and participating in the programs of Genesee Valley Presbytery and working with the urban churches of the Presbytery. Service continues to be uplifting and there's a renewed interest in the Youth of the church and the community. Lent, Advent and Christmas services were well attended and reaffirmed our commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. TEPC is not only the only African American church in the Presbytery of Genesee Valley but also this region.

We thank God for our friends from the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, for forty years, they have encouraged and provided whatever assistance we have needed to fulfill our ministry in this community. We praise God for the Moderators who presided and helped with session meetings over the years; the late Rev. Dr. Frederick Jefferson, the late Rev. Jim Rice, Rev. William Young, William Holmquist, the late Donald Roth, Frank Ichista, Stu Pattison, Jim Evinger, the ever faithful Bob Kaiser and trustee George H. Gray and all the others who may have been inadvertently omitted.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching”. Hebrews 10:23-25

“40 Years and Continuing to Build” for God, Emmanuel is with us!