

History: Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church

Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church was officially organized in December of 1962. The state charter was signed on January 10, 1963. It was established as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Ohio. The official name on the charter was Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church of Christ, Inc. However, later a trade name and legal designation of Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church was adopted. When there was a dispute within the Shiloh Baptist Church (Cleveland, Ohio) in 1962, approximately 160 individuals left to organize a new congregation. That new congregation became known as Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church. The former pastor of Shiloh, Rev. A. Henson Jarmon, became the first pastor of Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church. Within four months, several other members left Shiloh and joined Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church. Therefore, after being in existence only four or five months, the membership had grown to over 300 members. The members used The House of Wills Funeral Home and later Phyllis Wheatley Association as places for Sunday worship.

In approximately 18 months the congregation purchased a sanctuary building with a three level attached educational building. That building was purchased from the First Assemblies of God congregation. Fellowship Baptist Church purchased another building which was used for recreation. Under Rev. Jarmon's leadership the church established the Fellowship Church Credit Union. The congregation grew to have slightly more than 500 members. After seven years of serving as pastor, Rev. A. Henson Jarmon died.

After approximately 18 months, the church called Rev. Gabriel S. Lee Jr., M.Div., to be the next pastor. He led the church in paying off the mortgage on the buildings. He also led the congregation to renovate the sanctuary. He remained pastor for 19 years. However, under his administration many of the original members died or relocated after retirement. So, the membership declined numerically. He retired in June of 1990.

In August of 1990, Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church called Rev. Andrew Edwards, Ph.D. to be the third pastor in the history of the congregation. At the time that Dr. Edwards became pastor, there were approximately 200 members in the congregation.

The current membership of the congregation lists approximately 415 members. That includes approximately 75 youth under the age of eighteen and approximately 340 adults. Every two years there is an official purging of the roster to delete the names of inactive members, others who have relocated, those who have died, and those who have joined other churches. The members reside in all neighborhoods of Cleveland as well as 15 different suburbs in Northeast Ohio and represents a socioeconomic mixture.

In April of 1996, The Fellowship Human Development Center was incorporated under the laws of the state of Ohio as a not-for-profit corporation. It is intended to be the church's structure for sponsoring social programs to benefit the community when public funds are used. It was granted federal tax exempt status, 501-C (3) by the Internal Revenue Service in 1997. The Fellowship Human Development Center is affiliated with the Fellowship Baptist Church but is a separate corporation. The members of the FHDC must be members of Fellowship Baptist Church. However, the financial affairs and corporate boards are separate. The FHDC rents property from the church. The church purchased a one level brick building, at 1775 East 55th Street in 1995 which was renovated in 1996 for the purpose of housing the Fellowship Daycare Program.

The daycare program was the first social program administered by the Fellowship Human Development Center. The daycare currently has approximately seven employees (some are part-time) and about 25 youth enrolled. The FHDC had contracts with Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs for youth services for over four years. The FHDC had an annual budget of \$240,000 - \$275,000 during the last three years. Some of the social programs have used space on the third level of the Church's educational building.