

## History of Zion Baptist Church

Zion Baptist Church was organized in a local home by Reverend R. L. Slade who served as its first minister. Under his leadership, an old wooden building on Southwest Market Street was purchased. Because of its location, Zion became known as “The Little Friendly Church by the Railroad Tracks.”

From the beginning, the membership of Zion Church grew as more and more souls were added. After Reverend Slade’s tenure, during the next forty-five years, Zion had eleven wise and capable leaders. They were the following:

- ◆ Reverend J.A. Carter
- ◆ Reverend J. T. Hairston
- ◆ Reverend D. S. Salter
- ◆ Reverend J.P. Alexander
- ◆ Reverend W. Watson
- ◆ Reverend B.K. Mason
- ◆ Reverend J.W. Croom (9 years)
- ◆ Reverend E. M. Johnson
- ◆ Reverend G.H.E. Washington
- ◆ Reverend W.L. Mason (6 years)
- ◆ Reverend H.G. Thompson

It was during these early years that the following special projects took place: building a parsonage on Piedmont Street, renovations to the old church, installation of a pipe organ, installation of a furnace and building a balcony and additional Sunday School rooms.

On May 2, 1945, Reverend E.L. Kirby became the thirteenth pastor of Zion Baptist Church and began his tenure that would last for forty years. Zion flourished and experienced many changes under his prudent leadership. He stressed harmony and cooperation among the members of his congregation.

Physical improvements were made to the old building. However, as the ministry grew, the need for more space and ample facilities became increasingly necessary. In 1959, Reverend

Kirby recognized the need to push for the new building. To raise building funds, Reverend Kirby stressed the need for tithing and other fundraising methods were undertaken. When these methods failed to raise sufficient funds to continue the building program, Reverend T.L. Sasser, pastor of First Baptist Church on Main Street in the city, came to the membership with a Bond Plan that would enable the congregation to pay for the church at a cost of \$145,491 in thirteen and one half years.

On December 11, 1960, Zion marched from Southwest Market Street into a new edifice located on Piedmont Street to hold its first day of worship. The burning of the mortgage service was held on December 10, 1967, clearing the bond indebtedness in seven years. The laying of the Cornerstone by the Masonic Lodge No. 33 was held on March 15, 1775.

After forty years of fiscally responsible and spiritually uplifting leadership, Reverend Kirby retired from Zion in 1985. Zion was without pastoral leadership for two years.

Reverend G.K. Moss became Zion's pastor in February of 1987. Under his progressive, creative leadership, Zion's membership increased and involvement in community issues expanded. The official motto was ***"Everyone Is Somebody."*** However, the unofficial motto was ***"Join Zion And See The World."*** Innovations started by Reverend Moss included: the evangelism team, commission on ministries, early morning service, innovative Vacation Bible School lessons that were designed and written by Reverend Moss and the associate ministers of Zion with biblical themes relevant to existing conditions in the world. One such theme dealt with HIV-AIDS awareness, and was shared with churches and congregations throughout the state. Furthermore, Zion became the first Missionary Baptist church in Reidsville to ordain female ministers and deacons. Also, during Reverend Moss' administration, Zion installed its first female treasurer and female trustees. Plans for building a new multi-purpose building and renovating the sanctuary and other areas of the church were started under Reverend Moss.

On February 6, 2000, Reverend Patrick L. Cheston became the fifteenth pastor of Zion. History repeated itself with the naming of Reverend—prior to accepting the pastorate at Zion, he served as the pastor of First Baptist Church in Thomasville, North Carolina, where the Reverend E.L. Kirby pastured prior to coming to Zion. Reverend Cheston was officially installed on May 7, 2000.

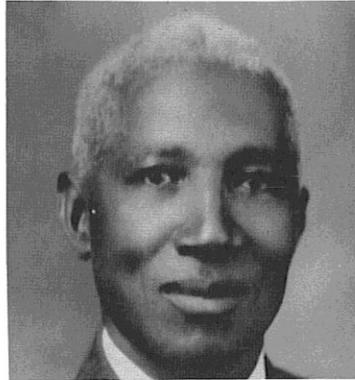
Under Reverend Cheston's inspirational leadership, the Zion family participated in the Injoy Stewardship Program, celebrated the Church's Centennial Anniversary, and advanced electronic communication through the internet and email networks. On March 12, 2000, Zion held the groundbreaking for the construction of a Multi-Purpose Center. Now completed, the facility houses a gym, offices, and a commercial kitchen. Reverend Cheston's tenure ended in January of 2005.

Reverend Michael Anthony Long accepted the call to become Zion's sixteenth Pastor on September 24, 2006. Rev. Long officially assumed his duties on December 1, 2006, and he was installed as our pastor on March 11, 2007. Because of his leadership skills, Pastor Long was installed as Second Vice-Moderator of the Rowan Baptist Association on October 20, 2007. We

are excited about starting a new era of ministry and community service under his dynamic leadership and vision. We join together under a single banner and shared theme of setting new standards of excellence in Christian Ministry for the present and future generations. To God be the glory!



# Former Pastors



Rev. J. T. Hairston - Third



Rev. D. L. Sauter - Fourth



Rev. B. K. Mason - Seventh



Rev. J. W. Croom - Eighth



Rev. W. L. Mason - Eleventh



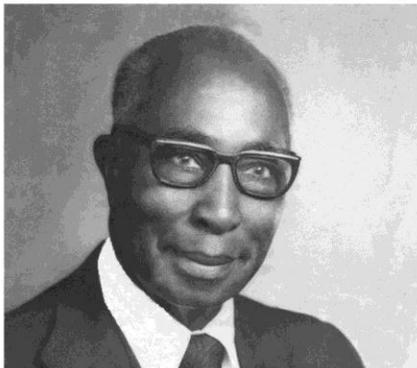
Rev. F. T. Byrd - Asst. to Pastor



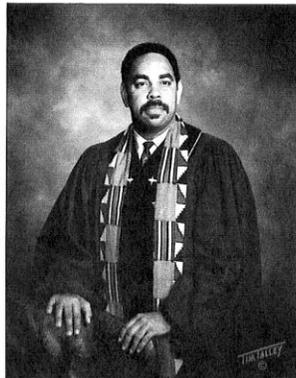
Rev. H. G. Thompson - Twelfth

## FORMER PASTORS (Not Pictured)

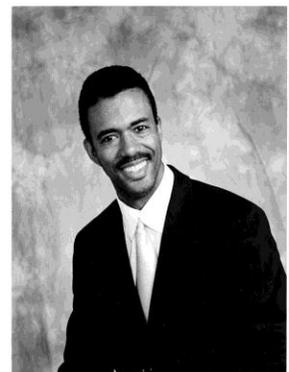
- Rev. R. L. Slade - First
- Rev. J. A. Carter - Second
- Rev. J. P. Alexander - Fifth
- Rev. W. Watson - Sixth
- Rev. E. M. Johnson - Ninth
- Rev. G. H. E. Washington - Tenth



Rev. Dr. E. L. Kirby - Thirteenth



Rev. Dr. G. K. Moss - Fourteenth



Rev. Patrick Cheston - Fifteenth