

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church

*Celebrating 180 years
(1823-2003)*

Rev. Dr. Michael R. Bean, Pastor

Historical Marker Dedication

Sunday, July 13, 2003



639 E. Long Street Columbus, Ohio 43215

614-228-4113

Pastors servicing St. Paul since 1905

Robert R. Downs

James M. Henderson

W.H.H. Butler

J. W. Gazaway (2 terms)

E. A. Clark (2 terms)

J. S. Jackson

J.C. Anderson

J. F. Williams

Harrison Payne

Hubert N. Robinson

A. Sidney King

J.D. Howell

Alvia Shaw

Andrew A. Hughey

Thomas E. Liggins

Michael R. Bean, Sr.

Thanks to our Community Leaders

The St. Paul Marker Dedication would not have come about had it not been for Mrs. Catherine Willis and Dr. Canise Bean, Delta and Links sisters. Last winter, we received a letter from Mrs. Willis which reads in part as follows:

“Dear Pastor Bean,

I need a contact person from St. Paul to get in touch with me to talk about the procedure and date to erect the marker at the church in celebration of the Ohio Bicentennial. The erection of the marker at St. Paul will be one of twelve markers that will be erected celebrating the contributions of African American to the growth of Ohio.....”

We are grateful to Mrs. Willis for considering St. Paul A.M.E. Church for this historical event.

We thank our community leaders who responded to our invitation to join us today –

St. Paul’s Marker Dedication Committee

Nancy Winfrey Thomas, Coordinator

Liz Cook, Publicity

Kevin Boyce, Program Participants

Merzell McGhee and Rebecca Roberts-Holliman, Hospitality

Junior Usher Board Members

Brenda Thomas and Deborah Henderson, Refreshments

Wayne White and Irvin Harris, Installed Marker

Don Holliman and Richard Thomas , Photographers

Male Chorus, Servamus Club,

Helen M. Paxton Women’s Missionary Society, Senior Usher Board

Ceremony

Presiding.....Kevin Boyce
City Council Member

WelcomeRev. Dr. Michael R. Bean, Sr.
Pastor, St. Paul A.M.E Church

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift every voice and sing, Till earth and heaven ring

Ring with the harmonies of liberty;

Let our rejoicing rise High as the listening skies,

Let it resound loud as the rolling sea,

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;

Facing the rising sun Of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.

Remarks

The Honorable Jennette Bradley
Lt. Governor of the State of Ohio

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman
Mayor of the City of Columbus

Mrs. Catherine Willis

**Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Liggins, Presiding Elder, Columbus District
Third Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church**

**Mr. Brad Long, Government Liaison Director
The Ohio Historical Society**

**Rev. Michael R. Bean, Pastor
St. Paul A.M.E. Church**

The Unveiling of the Marker.....Senior members of St. Paul A.M.E.

Closing remarks

Closing Prayer.....Rev. Dr. Michael R. Bean, Sr.



**The Marker Unveiled
Mrs. Bean, Rev. Bean, Lt. Governor Jeannette Bradley, Mayor Coleman**

“An abbreviated history of St. Paul A.M.E. Church”

In 1814 the first Methodist Church in Columbus was erected. Built of hewn logs, it cost the members – black and white worshipping together the modest sum of \$157.53.1/2. Located on a lot donated by the city, it was named the Town Street Methodist Episcopal Church.

Moses Freeman

In 1823, Moses Freeman (the fifth charter member) separated from the Town Street Church. With 12 followers he organized an independent society. At the beginning, they held their meetings from house to house, then in rented rooms until 1839 or 1840 when they erected their present church on East Long Street.

The small group, founded by Mr. Freeman, their roots deep in Methodism, gradually began to increase. Finally, in 1824 for the first time, they were able to worship in a building of their own.

It was just a little log cabin (whether rented or purchased is not known) located on the east side of Straight Alley (Lazelle St.) just north of Spring Street. This, their first church, was named Bethel.

Eventually, the congregation outgrew the little log cabin. In 1830, seven years after organization, a site was selected on the south side of Long Street (No. 71) between Third and High Streets.

In 1841, a brick church was built replacing the old frame building at the same location. The work on it was completed in 1844.

In 1870, construction began under the administration of Rev. J.P. Underwood. At a cost of \$14,000, the church was completed in 1871 and became St. Paul A.M.E. Church.

In 1890, the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was entertained here.

A new church with a new name

Steps were taken for the immediate erection of St. Paul A.M.E., a new church with a new name. Metaphorically, the members rolled up their sleeves and went to work. A notable spirit of consecration and devotion on the part of the congregation is revealed as someone wrote: "Everybody had a mind to work." These good people considered labor honorable, idleness a sin.

In 1905, under the pastorate of Rev. Robert R. Downs, lots were purchased for \$6,000 at the location where the church now stands, 639 E. Long Street.

Erection of the edifice began immediately was completed at a cost of \$40,000 under the Pastorate of Rev. J.W. Henderson. The original color of the building was grey, pressed brick with sandstone time, and considered at it's completion as one of the imposing churches of the city. It is artistically arranged throughout, with classrooms, assembly room, and with food preparation facilities. A pipe organ was installed in March 1920, at a cost of \$7,408. It was air propelled and had to be pumped by hand. St. Paul A.M.E. was one of the first churches to install a pipe organ.

Progress has always been the aim of St. Paul. From the beginning the church has taken its place in the religious, civic and education life of Columbus. It established the first school for the education of the black youths of the city. The pastor then, Rev. Brown, was its first teacher. Mother Ellen Belt, age 92, a member of St. Paul for 76 years, was one of its pupils. The first graduates of the high school of the city were members of the church.

Under the leadership of the former pastor, Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Liggins, and our present pastor, Rev. Dr. Michael R. Bean, Sr., properties have been purchased which will make it possible for the St. Paul Church family to build a multi-complex just west of the present sanctuary. The addition will be know as the St. Paul Gateway Wellness Center.

See St. Paul's website for a complete history (www.stpaulcols.org).

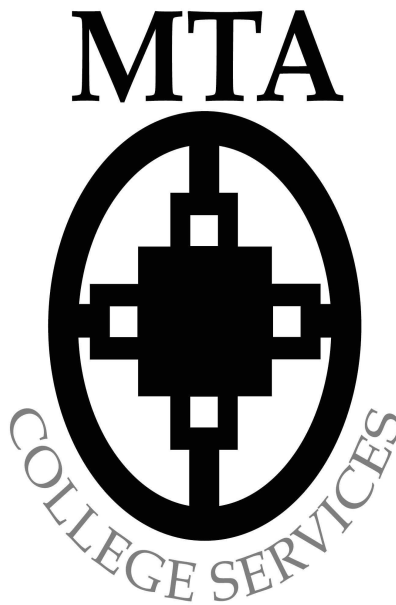


Site Marker Inscription

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church

Organized in 1823 as Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, St. Paul A.M.E. Church is the oldest congregation of African descent in Columbus. The church, founded by Moses Freeman and 13 other members from the Town Street Church, was originally located on the east side of Lazelle Street. Several buildings were erected to meet the needs of the growing congregation. The present edifice, located at 639 E. Long Street, was completed in 1906. St. Paul has several outreach ministries, including the Prison Ministry, Alzheimer Ministry, Karen's House, Community Development Corporation, Health Concerns Committee, St. Paul's Tutorial and Enrichment Program (STEP), St. Paul Scholarship Program, St. Paul Drama Ministry, Jam'N Jefferson Park Festival and Church Without Walls.

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