

Marietta Chapel AME Church History

In the year 1891, yearning to grow spiritually, a few devoted Christian souls began holding prayer meetings on Wednesday nights at different homes under the leadership of Brother George McClardy and Preacher J.F. Jones. The meetings were nondenominational. The group gradually attracted others who felt the same spiritual need. Later, a request was made by Rev. Adolphus Elemens for membership in the C.M.E. Conference, where they remained only a short time before withdrawing.

In 1908, a suggestion was made by Rev. J.C. Jones that the brethren should organize into an official church body. The church body purchased a plot of land from Mr. Sam Mosely. This plot was located on Jones Avenue in the section of town called "Louisville." At that time the church was called McClardy Chapel.

In 1910, Brother George McClardy moved his family to a house in front of the present Marietta Golf Club and Conference Center located on Powder Springs Street; known at that time as Glovers Woods. Here, the brethren continued praying and growing spiritually stronger with the preaching of Rev. Jones and Rev. Elemens, who were also serving as preachers for the community while alternating as leaders of the little flock.

Later in 1910, Rev. J.S. Jones suggested that the church request membership in the A.M.E. Conference. The group was accepted as a member of the AME in 1911 under Bishop J.S. Flipper. Bishop Flipper suggested that the name of the church be changed from McClardy Chapel to Marietta Chapel. The church was completed and under the ministry of Rev. G.W. Cook the first cornerstone was laid July 23, 1923.

The next several years brought many challenges, changes, improvements but also many new members including a large number of youth members.

During the 1950's the urban renewal program required the clearance of all buildings in the Louisville section of Marietta for the construction of Johnny Walker Housing Projects. The church was required to find a new location. The new location, which was purchased from the late Mike Mayes, caused much dissension among the members and many left at that time.

On Sunday Afternoon July 17, 1961 under the ministry of Rev. S.T. Huey ground was broken for the construction of the present building. A new organ and chimes were acquired for the new church. The building was completed September 1961 and officially dedicated on December 17, 1961 by the late Bishop W.R. Wilkes. Rev. D.A. Smith was serving as minister during the time and under his pastorate many members were added that year.

During the 1970's, two Pastors who served the church; Rev. Curtis Richardson and Rev. George Perkins. During Rev. Perkins ministry the church mortgage was burned on May 14, 1978, new carpet was laid and the P.A. system was installed.

During the ministries of Rev. Lawrence Williams, Rev. Walter M. Reynolds and Rev. Joseph McKibbins several repairs and upgrades were made to the church including a new air conditioner system.

June 1986, Rev. Charles Bennett was appointed to Marietta Chapel. The church enjoyed it's most prosperous Christian influence spiritually with establishment of many activities among the youth, formation of a travel committee, increased donations that improved the financial position of the church and upgrades to the building such as installing stained glass windows. In addition, the Marietta Chapel Gospel Choir was also formed.

During the pastorate of Rev. Michael Jones several members of the church were granted "Outstanding Georgia Citizens Awards" by the Secretary of State Max Cleland. Rev. W.R. Wilkes, Jr. followed as pastor and the parking lot was paved.

May 1998, Rev. Gloria C. Bennett was the first female pastor appointed to Marietta Chapel. Under her leadership, the church was painted, a roof was added, a 15 passenger van was purchased and new front steps to the church were erected. The Cobb County Chapter of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C) was formed in 2004 and their meetings were held at the church. Rev. Bennett served as the pastor for eleven years.

Pastor Joseph W. Comeaux was appointed to Marietta Chapel May 2009. Pastor Comeaux was a dynamic spiritual leader. He was a visionary who spoke great things into existence for the Marietta Chapel AME Church Family. Pastor Comeaux thought big and it was with this faith that the church moved in a new direction with massive strides in the Missionary Ministry, Youth Ministry and Ushers. The Willing Workers were formed and several renovations were made, which were in harmony with Nehemiah 4:6 "and the people have a mind to work". It was after his transition to be with the Lord that Presiding Elder David Rhone and two associate pastors, Reverend Dr. Kenneth J. Aveirls, Sr. and Rev. Orna Husbands, guided us spiritually with much love and devotion as is expressed by the Church membership.

We are currently under the leadership of the Rev. Mark R. Harkness, Sr. who was appointed to Marietta Chapel Church in June 2016. He also has a vision for Marietta Chapel and together we will embark on a continued spiritual journey inspired by the work for the Lord.

This great church, as we experience it today, could not exist without the love and commitment of the pastors who have each enriched our ministry and the faithful souls who first received the vision to start a church.