One Hundred Forty Sixth Year
Church Anniversary Celebration

April 6, 2014  2PM

Organized: 1868
Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
491 Mount Zion Church Road
Brandon, Mississippi 39042

Theme: A Church Built Upon An Everlasting Foundation
Luke 6:48-49

Reverend Sylvester C. Huntley
Pastor
A Dedication to Future Generations

To shed light on some of the terms that were listed in our church history, it is felt that younger generations need to be given this information. The information not only serves as an informative data tool for some, but as a reminder to others as to just how far God has brought us. This information was obtained from eHow and you may check your computer to gather more information on your own.

eHow Culture & Society Religion Christianity The History of Brush Arbors

The History of Brush Arbors
By H. J. Hill, eHow Contributor
A brush arbor is a rough, open-sided shelter constructed of vertical poles driven into the ground with additional long poles laid across the top as support for a roof of brush, cut branches or hay. Appearing in the 1700’s and early 1800’s, brush arbors were used by some churches to protect worshipers from the weather during lengthy revival meetings.

Protracted Meetings
Brush arbor revivals began in the late 1700’s and were held regularly through the mid-1900’s. These “protracted meetings” could last for days or even weeks, with many people traveling for miles to attend and staying to camp on the grounds.

Circuit-riding Preachers
An itinerant minister or a preacher who rode circuit through rural communities would send word in advance of his expected arrival and the congregation would erect a brush arbor to house the revival meeting, usually at a crossroads in a well-traveled area.

When the Crowds Grew
Leafy branches overlaid the pole structure, blocking the hot summer sun and most rainfall. A pulpit was set up in the center front. When the crowds overwhelmed the space under the arbor, extensions could be built to accommodate them.

Black Congregations and Brush Arbors
Brush arbors were also used for revivals and worship services by African-American congregations before and after the end of slavery in the United States.

Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
April 1868 – April 2014

Reverend Marion Dunbar, Founder
Reverend Sylvester C. Huntley, Pastor
Reverend Clifton Boggan, Guest Speaker

Theme: A Church Built Upon An Everlasting Foundation

Scripture: Luke 6:48-49
“He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”

The Cornerstone
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Organized A. D. 1868
Rebuilt A. D. 1926

Deacons
Wm. Weekly                                           G. W. Walters
W. C. Sumner                                                   W. Jones
J. C. West Pastor
J. S. Kelly Clerk
Laid by M.W. Cuney Grand Lodge

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Pastoral Reflections

A truly divinely inspired composer named Thomas A. Dorsey once wrote, “I don’t know why, I have to cry sometimes, I don’t know why, Lord, I have to sigh sometimes. There’s going to be a brighter day, when troubles get out of my way, I don’t know why, oh, but I’ll find out by and by.” These words are especially touching to me for I truly realize that all tears shed are not of sadness, rather they are tears of joy. These wonderful words of inspiration were recorded by the great Mrs. Katie Sanky.

As we look back over the past one hundred and forty-six (146) years, seeing the way God delivered this congregation from a “brush arbor” to a framed building, it is easy to see they truly have walked in the light of Jesus Christ. Appropriately chosen as a church motto, “Let go, and let God” along with the church song of “Let Jesus Lead You” truly depicts the path of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church. The future can only hold greatness.

Mount Zion has enjoyed the luxury of having a host of angels watching over it, and nothing has come short of the glory of God. We have not yet overcome all earthly afflictions cast in our pathway; however, we strive daily to do so. No matter what obstacles are encamped around us, there is a sweet relief in knowing that the Lord Will Make a Way Somehow, oh, how sweet it is to be loved and guided by God with the Lord Jesus Christ at the Stern.

Our theme, “A Church Built Upon An Everlasting Foundation” appropriately reflects the solid foundation upon which Mount Zion was constructed. Through our forefather’s strong trust in The True and Living God, this church has survived the perils of the ages. Worship services in this community predate the founding year of 1868, and have continued to thrive to the present day, an excess of 146 years.

May the Lord God Continuously Bless Each of You!!
Pastor Sylvester C. Huntley

Invited Churches

Farris Hill Missionary Baptist Church – Pelahatchie, MS
Greater Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church – Jackson, MS
Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church – Jackson, MS
House-To-House Baptist Church – Pearl, MS
Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Kone Hill Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Mount Center Missionary Baptist Church – Flora, MS
Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Mountain Ridge United Methodist Church – Brandon, MS
New Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Pearlie Grove Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Rock Star Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church – Mendenhall, MS
Sylvarena Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Taylor Hill Missionary Baptist Church – Braxton, MS
Trinity Missionary Baptist Church – Terry, MS
Warren Hill Church – Brandon, MS
Waters Grove Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS
Program

Prelude .......................................................................................... Musician

Call to Worship ............................................................................. Pastor Huntley

Opening Selection ........................................................................ Mount Zion Choir

Devotion ........................................................................................ Deacons

Selection ...................................................................................... Choir

"Let Jesus Lead You" (Public Domain) Soloist: Mother Lucille Wilson

Introduction of Master & Mistress of Ceremonies ................. Brother Wayne Dobson

Master and Mistress of Ceremonies
Brother Dexter Webster & Sister Dora Webster

Welcome ..................................................................................... Deacon Tommy Stapleton

Acceptance of Welcome .............................................................. Minister Joseph Buckner

Trinity Missionary Baptist Church – Terry, MS

Occasion ...................................................................................... Deaconess Ora J. Stapleton

Selection ...................................................................................... Choir

Church History .............................................................................. Sister Aretha Gates Lawson

Invited Churches ........................................................................ Master/Mistress of Ceremonies

Public Offering ............................................................................. Finance Committee

Offertory Music ........................................................................... Mount Zion Choir

Introduction of Guest Speaker ................................................ Pastor Sylvester Huntley

Special Music ............................................................................. Rock Star Male Chorus

Speaker of The Hour .................................................................... Pastor Clifton Boggan

Rock Star Missionary Baptist Church – Brandon, MS

Remarks/Benediction .................................................................. Pastor Huntley
Church History

As evidenced by historical data, the genesis of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, like the majority of black congregations throughout the southern territories, was one of very humble means. In the early 1830’s a wealthy white land owner (name unknown), gave the slaves acreage on which they were permitted to hold worship services. In keeping with the times of the slave era, worship services were held under a ‘brush arbor’ in the form of prayer meetings with white overseers and patrols present. (The term ‘brush arbor’ is often eulogized by most southerners as ‘bush harbor’). Individuals were required to have a pass from their owner in order to attend these worship services, therefore, necessitating the requirements for patrols and overseers. Even through the darkest of times when our slave ancestors were required to have a pass in order to attend prayer meetings, they persevered and never gave up. They truly trusted the Lord for deliverance. And, in January 1863, when the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted they were free to worship without permission of the “master/massa” or the use of a pass.

Sometime during the mid 1800’s, after passage of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and ratification of the 13th Amendment, there came to Jackson, MS, from the State of Georgia a Reverend George Holoman. Though information is limited regarding Reverend Holoman, he apparently served as a mentor to the founder of Mount Zion. Then, in the Year of Our Lord 1868, God sent His Guardian Angel in the form of the Right Reverend Marion Dunbar, who founded and organized Mount Zion Baptist Church. In the early 1920’s the congregation moved across the road out of the brush arbor and constructed a building on its present site. The Reverend Marion Dunbar is credited for having assisted in the establishment and organization of many churches throughout Mississippi before his passing in the mid 1920’s. Reverend J. C. West was installed as the second pastor of Mount Zion in 1926, approximately 58 years after its organization in 1868, following the death of the founder, Reverend Marion Dunbar.

Over the past one hundred forty six (146) years, Mount Zion has boasted a strong and thriving congregation. The church reflects a history of having had a grand total of twenty-two (22) pastors, which includes the present pastor. The past shepherds were: Reverend Marion Dunbar, founder and organizer (1868 – 1926); Pastor J. C. West (1926); Pastor Jack Crook; Pastor Lindsey Jones; Pastor Andrew Lyles; Pastor H. L. Thompson; Pastor Lewis Patterson; Pastor Charlie Robertson; Pastor J. E. Marsh; Pastor T. C. Williams; Pastor John Sims; Pastor Jimmie Keys; Pastor B. R. Stephenson; Pastor R. S. Pickens; Pastor C. B. Bingham; Pastor H. T. Frazier (1962 – 1968); Pastor O. L. Baugh; Pastor N. C. Pittman; Pastor R. D. Wells; Pastor James Floyd; Pastor Dwight Robinson; and Mount Zion’s current leader, Pastor Sylvester C. Huntley, who was sent to Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church by God on June 17, 2012.

Of special significance were four local preachers who lived in the community and were great inspirations to this church during its infancy years. These inspirational figures were Minister Lewis Selby, Minister Sial Myers, Minister Lawrence Massey and Minister Willis Holloway.

Walking beside and supporting our pastors were strong trusting Men of God who included Deacon Shepherd Brown; Deacon B. J. Sumner; Deacon Bogan; Deacon Ed Terry; Deacon W. M. Weekly; Deacon Thomas Wright; Deacon A. C. McCall; Deacon J. E. Myers; Deacon G. W. Walters; Deacon W. C. Sumner; Deacon Will Jones; Deacon John Lott; Deacon Leroy Kelly; Deacon Oscar Dobson, Sr.; Deacon E. J. Lott; Deacon T. H. Stapleton; Deacon Oscar Dobson, Jr.; and currently, Deacon Tommy Stapleton and Deacon Eddie G. Lott.

Not only has Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church served as a beacon of light for the surrounding community, it has also inspired men to “Walk in the Light.” Proudly accredited to this church is the ordination of nine ministers. These Men of Zion include Minister Santee Anderson, Minister Lee Hardy, Minister E. D. Terry, Minister Noble Lacy, Minister Artee McLaurin, Minister W. C. Sumner, Minister Silas Stapleton, Minister George Lott, and Minister Clifton Boggan, currently serving as pastor of Rock Star Missionary Baptist Church.

Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church emerged from a group of controlled slaves worshipping God in a brush arbor in the 1830’s to an organized congregation and a wooden building constructed in 1868. That one room structure grew to accommodate a growing congregation, and continued to thrive, overcoming many hurdles and obstacles in their path. The church evolved from torches in the ‘bush harbors’ and lanterns, as well as, coal-oil lamps for lighting to electricity with ceiling fans and modern chandeliers. In 1926, the current building was erected with the Reverend J. C. West serving as pastor.

During the administration of Pastor R. D. Wells the church was expanded; additional rooms and an office were added on to the back of the sanctuary, and indoor plumbing installed. As time progressed, and to further enhance the comfort of the congregation, the old hand fans and pieces of cardboard were replaced with air conditioning during the sweltering hot summers, as well as, heating units for winter warmth versus the old wood burning stoves. To accommodate our mothers of yester-year, who served ‘dinner on the ground,’ a portable unit equipped with a stove, refrigerator, and a dining area was placed in back of the church to move attendees indoors out of the elements during fellowship periods. The congregation also enjoys the ease and comfort of updated padded pews versus the wooden benches of the past.

Under the administration of the current pastor, God’s bounties continue their prevalence. Deacon Eddie G. Lott was crowned in 2012; Little Miss Addison Brenner’ Fowler was baptized in 2012 (the first new member under Pastor Huntley’s administration); and Brother Bobby Washington was selected as a member of the Trustee Board in 2013. The church was blessed with a new roof in 2013 following a severe hail storm that ravished most of the state of Mississippi. The corner stone was replaced in 2013. The church progressed from acapella singing to hand claps and foot stomping to a choir with piano accompaniment in the 1950’s. The old upright piano was replaced with a spinet, the spinet was replaced with an electric keyboard and drums, and the keyboard was replaced with an electric piano in 2013. There are great plans in store for Mount Zion, and as God gives the vision, this church family will make these divine inspirations become realities. Pastor Huntley has foreseen many more 21st century improvements at Mount Zion, and the church body is working diligently to add a fellowship hall to the church as one more stepping stone mastered. This, too, shall come to fruition.