PREFACE

At a Church Conference and Get-together held at Bethel A. M. E. Church, July 14, 1938, there arose a discussion on the early history of the Church. In consequence Reverend Thomas H. Stoner, the pastor, appointed a Committee on Church History for the purpose of making research and securing facts concerning the early history of the Church. The personnel of the committee were set forth and the work distributed to the members. The Committee consulted files of the old newspaper and histories of Champaign County as found in the Library of the University of Illinois & State Historical Library; examined such old records as could be found; conversed with old citizens who had resided in this community sixty years or more. Early church records before 1880 were not found, if kept, nor was the Committee able to secure Conference Minutes of the early years. As Bethel Church is older than the Illinois Conference their unavailability is explainable. The members of the Committee, with one exception, were natives of this community, and all of its members have resided here for a number of years. They were able to draw upon their own memories, and relate the traditions that have come down to them from their parents. The Committee met, checked the facts, interpreted and evaluated all data obtained, and reached conclusions and agreements, which they have embodied into their outlined History of Bethel A. M. E. Church. In presenting it no attempt has been made to give an exhaustive detailed literary history, but only a summarized outline of the salient and outstanding facts, events and conditions which constitute a history of Bethel A. M. E. Church.

Champaign, Illinois

September 14, 1938