

## HISTORY OF SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH

In the latter part of 1866 and early 1867, a group of forward thinking, spiritually inclined people began thinking of the possibility of organizing themselves into a church body. In 1867, Susan Franklin Johnson, Kitty Lee, T. J. Shore, J. W. Randolph, and Martin Dandrage met with the Council of Recognition at the Old Coffee Place at 406 East Park Street, Champaign, Illinois. The Council was composed of selected members of First Baptist Church of Champaign, Illinois, First Baptist Church of Urbana, Illinois, and Bethel Church of Mahomet, Illinois. The purpose of the Council was to consider the newly organized church, its Articles of Faith, its Covenant, the circumstances of its organization and to recognize it as a Baptist church. The church was to be called Second Baptist.

The official witnesses of the church organization were Sarah Bromwell, Anna Randolph and David Johnson. The original membership, in addition to the organizers, were Sister Hopkins, Phebie Rivers, Ana Randolph and David Johnson; all candidates for baptism.

Other members to join later were Fannie Strong and her granddaughter, R. A. Johnson, Mary Mitchell, Anthony Johnson, Lester Johnson, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Washington, Rose Bromwell Morgan, Henrietta Bromwell, Edward Lee, Morgan Alexander, Atrice Lee, Hardy Bromwell, Louis Bromwell, Ella Randolph, Henry Randolph, Callie Randolph, and Mildred Randolph Graves.

The first pastor to serve Second Baptist Church was Rev. William Washington who was followed by Rev. Riesnor and Rev. J. H. Bell. During their pastorates, the membership purchased a lot on East Park Street, Champaign, and erected their first church in 1869. The building burned and the members were then forced to rent a place to worship.

Between the years 1869 and 1886, Reverends Teal, Gray and Turner served as pastors. It was during this period that the church purchased a lot on East Clark Street in Champaign and erected a church. Rev. S. L. Harris pastored the church from 1889 to 1891. He was succeeded by Rev. B. H. West.

In 1893, the Wood River District met with the church and Second Baptist joined the Wood River District Association. Since Second Baptist was too small to accommodate the delegation, the services were held in a rented hall above Swanell Drug Store located at Main and Hickory Streets. A large number of converts were received during this period. The church organized a choir under the direction of Ms. Amy Coffeen, a hired musician.

After the resignation of Rev. West in 1894, Rev. Stewart was called. He served a short period of time then returned to his home in Missouri.

In 1895, Rev. Helm was called to pastor. The church grew spiritually and numerically during this period. The Sunday School was active in studying weekly lessons and Bible training. After the completion of a remodeling program and the installation of a baptismal pool, the church observed its first major dedication service. Rev. Stedman, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Champaign preached the dedication sermon in a very solemn and beautiful ceremony. Rev. Helm resigned and was succeeded by Rev. Brown in 1897.

In 1901, Rev. Crushon accepted the pastorate. In 1902, Rev. Nichols accepted the charge to serve as a pastor. It was under this administration that the ground work and plans were laid for the purchase and clearing of the lot at 500 East Park Street, Champaign, for the erection of our present church.

The next several year's development is of great significance to this publication for it was during this period that the original church was erected. Many present day members can recall the features of the original structure before the mid-1950's remodeling program.

After Rev. Nichols, the new pastor became Rev. Edwards, a minister recently out of the Methodist Conference, who was unfamiliar with the Baptist doctrine and laws. He was often referred to as a very find and competent man. It was under his leadership that the church's name was changed to Salem Baptist Church.

In 1908, the cornerstone was laid and the first communion set was purchased. The Board of Officers were: Deacons - Dave Johnson, George Roy, Anthony Johnson and B. E. Payne; Trustees - Peter Hawkins, Lois Brown and Job Harris.

Those who served as pastors between 1911 and 1916 were Rev. J. M. Owens, Rev. Batchlor and Rev Clanton. Under Rev. Owens pastorate new pews were installed some of which are presently used in the balcony, choir rooms and two of the classrooms.

Between 1917 and 1925, the church was pastored by Rev. Hall and Rev. R. A. Hayden, both serving comparatively extended terms. From 1911 through 1925, some of the officers were: Deacons - B. E. Payne, George Roy, W. H. Chandler, Bob Smith, W. H. Patterson, Dabney Jones, Uriah Moreland, James Caldwell, Richard Hall and Howard Foree.

Rev. Hayden left Salem and organized the Pilgrim Baptist Church on North Fourth Street in Champaign. Then in 1925, Rev. Dabney Jones succeeded Rev. Hayden as pastor of Salem and during his pastorate, the front entrance was changed from the southwest side to the south side. During his nine years of service, a \$16,000 indebtedness was paid.

In the latter part of 1933, Rev J. J. Olive, president of the State Convention of Illinois, was called. A heart attack and death interrupted a very enthusiastic pastorate in August of 1937.

In April of 1938, Rev A. S. Webb was called to succeed Rev. Olive. During his administration, a heating plant was installed and many members were added. Rev. Webb ordained Brothers Campbell and Johnson. He also started a parsonage fund which netted approximately \$700. Deacons under his administration were: Joe Garland (Chairman), Uriah Moreland, W. H. Chandler, Albert McKinley, William Ricks, David Sayles, Ed Benton and Harrison Pierce. Rev. Webb was named Pastor Emeritus in 1956.

In 1948, Rev R. A. Lillard, a fine, intellectual and spiritual minister was called to Salem. The church was without a parsonage. After renting an apartment for a short time, Rev. and Mrs. Lillard set out to purchase a parsonage.

Members of the committee for selecting the parsonage were Trustees Charlie Brown, Alvin Foxwell and Theotto Bowles; Deacons were David Sayles and Harrison Pierce. Brother Pierce made inquiries about the house at 304 North Third Street, Champaign, and presented the matter to the Official Board. Brother Charlie Brown contacted the owner and after the legal matters were settled, Trustees Brown, Bowles and Foxwell signed the contract. The purchase price was \$8500. When Rev. Lillard resigned sixteen months later, a balance of \$2300 was owed on the parsonage. Deacons at that time were B. E. Payne (Chairman), Joe Garland, Albert McKinley, Harrison Pierce, David Sayles, Ed Benton, George Bigham, Percy Gordon, L. T. Tinsley, William Ricks, Eugene Caldwell, John Brown and George Peacock. Trustees were: David Sayles (Chairman), Alvin Foxwell, Theotto Bowles, Charlie Brown and Harrison Pierce.

In 1949, Rev. Lillard, directed by the Spirit of God, recommended the Rev. William Howe Donaldson to Salem Baptist Church. On June 20, 1949, Rev. Donaldson was called from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to pastor Salem Baptist Church. He accepted the call and on the first Sunday in August, 1949, moved here and started his strenuous task.

Under his leadership, \$2955 was raised to pay off the balance on the parsonage, a duplex offering envelope system was set up, a typewriter and a desk for the church office were purchased, new hymnals and rugs were purchased for the church along with a rug for the aisle, a motion picture projector and screen, filing cabinets, adding machine, mimeograph machine and other office equipment were purchased. A new Youngstown kitchen, hot water tank, gas furnace and rugs were purchased for the parsonage. The balance in the checking account exceeded \$200 and outstanding debts were less than \$300.

Rev. Donaldson baptized into the church approximately 100 persons, and an equal number was taken into the church by Christian experience. A mortgage burning service was held in September 1950 and Rev. Donaldson invited the Rev. Lillard to preach for the special service, inasmuch as Rev. Lillard has started buying the parsonage. Deacon B. E. Payne and Mildred Gray, the two oldest members of the church, were honored with the burning. Sister Gray held the paper and Deacon Payne struck the match.

In July 1951, Rev. Donaldson established Boy Scout Troop #11. Blaine Ramsey was the first Scout Master, James O. Wilson was the second and Otis M. Scott was the third.

Rev. Donaldson strongly believed that fellowship was a tool to have the membership bind closer together. The first Laymen's dinner was held on February 23, 1951. For several years the Laymen purchased, cooked and served food for breakfast on Easter Sunday mornings after the Sunrise Service.

In addition, Rev. Donaldson organized the Young Matrons Missionary Society on April 16, 1952. He was also responsible for the success attained through the operation of our missionary departments on the Circle Plan that worked under the General Missionary Department.

On January 13, 1952, Rev. Donaldson ordained as Deacons Otis M. Scott, Roscoe Tinsley and James O. Wilson. Rev. J. A. G. Jordon, Pastor of the Galilee Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, was the guest speaker. Later on in the 1950's, Rev. Donaldson ordained Eugene Caldwell, George Peacock and Harrison Pierce as Deacons.

On July 1, 1953, Rev. Donaldson resigned and accepted the pastorate at Zion Baptist Church, Peoria, Illinois.

Rev. John A. Anderson was called to pastor at Salem in 1953. During his administration, the Willing Workers Club was organized with Elizabeth Foxwell as President. The Willing Workers sponsored a drive and purchased a \$4100 organ. Rev. Anderson also organized the Junior and Red Circle Girls and on December 10, 1953, the Brotherhood was organized with Clarence Taylor as President.

A nursery was put in the church basement and dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Hattie J. Wells who served as Sunday School Superintendent from 1925 until her death on September 10, 1953. Deacon James O. Wilson succeeded Mrs. Wells as Superintendent.

Rev. Anderson resigned in December of 1955 to return to his home in Lafayette, Indiana.

In April 1956, Rev. Eugene H. Williams was called to Salem Baptist Church. On May 27, 1957, the church officially voted to build an education annex and a \$25,000 loan from the First Federal Loan and Savings Association was granted.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held July 28, 1957. The addition was started in August 1957 and completed in February 1958. The annex consisted of ten new classrooms, two new restrooms, a baptismal pool, a pastor's office, a modern kitchen, a banquet room, three storage closets, new light fixtures, 100 steel folding chairs, a new heating system, and two new entrances. The exterior of the church was

painted and sandblasted. It had a new front entrance, cottage style windows, new outside door and completely trimmed windows. The inside was also redecorated; new pews, new pulpit furniture, new communion table, deacon's chairs and new rubber tile on the floor were installed. The total cost was approximately \$52,000.

In January 1958, the Building Fund Clubs were organized to pay off the indebtedness.

Rev. Williams ordained Rev. Edward Scaggs and Rev. Cecil Webb. Deacons were: David Sayles (Chairman), Albert McKinley, Harrison Pierce, L. T. Tinsley, Roscoe Tinsley, Otis Scott, James Wilson, Clarence Taylor, Eugene Caldwell, Louis Taylor and F. D. Brown. Trustees were: Alvin Foxwell (Chairman), Theotto Bowles, David Sayles and Harrison Pierce. Later that year, Jasper Lewis and Ozell Thompson were added as Trustees. Ms. Helen Hite was the Church Clerk.

Rev. Williams resigned in June 1961 to accept the pastorate of the Antioch Baptist Church, Waterloo, Iowa.

Rev. Albert Rowan, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, and a graduate of Michigan State University and Western Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, was called to pastor Salem Baptist Church on August 29, 1961, after resigning from the historical Zion Baptist Church, Springfield, Illinois.

Salem made considerable progress under the leadership of Rev. Rowan. Some of the accomplishments: liquidation of the \$12,404 indebtedness on the educational annex, 450 new chairs for the Sunday School and new floors were installed in the educational annex. The sanctuary and dining areas were redecorated and the outside of the church was painted. New robes were acquired for the Gospel Chorus and the Junior Choir. New tables for the Sunday School, new hymnals and a piano were also purchased.

The following auxiliaries were organized under Rev. Rowan's leadership: Junior Choir, Board of Christian Education, Men and Boy's Chorus, Cub Scout #100, Mildred Webb Missionary Circle, Red Circle and the Women's Missionary Fellowship. The annual "Senior Citizens Day" (December 9, 1962) was also instituted. Youth Day services began early in 1962.

Rev. Rowan ordained Rev. Clarence Thomas and Rev. Williams. Over 175 new members were added to the church under his pastorate.

Two former pastors were invited to participate in the mortgage burning ceremony on June 30, 1963. Rev. Eugene Williams spoke at the morning service and Rev. W. H. Donaldson spoke at the afternoon service.

Rev. Rowan resigned from Salem in 1964 to accept the pastorate at Bethany Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

The congregation of Salem Baptist Church voted November 27, 1964, to issue a call to Rev. Asa B. Moore of Muskogee, Oklahoma, as its new pastor. Rev. Moore accepted the call November 29, 1964. During his pastorate at Salem, Rev. Moore rearranged the pulpit. He resigned in 1968.

Rev. Morris Clark accepted the call to the gospel ministry and was given a license to preach on March 8, 1964. He was ordained on October 23, 1965, under the pastorate of Rev. Moore. For a short period, when Salem was without a pastor, Rev. Clark served as Interim Pastor of Salem.

After an absence of 15 1/2 years, on December 20, 1968, Rev. Donaldson returned to Salem. He resigned from Mt. Zion Baptist Church in East Moline, Illinois, to complete the work at Salem that the Lord had ordained him to finish.

Others Deacons ordained by Rev. Donaldson were William McCoy and James Albert McKinley (November 23, 1969), Theotto Bowles (January 2, 1972), Verlon Buchanan (June 24, 1973); Roscoe Tinsley was restored to the Deaconship on June 24, 1973; Sherman Oldham (November 25, 1973); Willie Herrington (June 2, 1974); R. E. Goines, Sr. (May 2, 1976); Willie Holt (October 24, 1976); Albert Alexander, Charles Caston, Willie Dozier, Kenneth Lewis, Joe Willie McNeal and Lynn Taylor (November 25, 1979).

Ministers licensed to preach by Rev. Donaldson were: George Earl Bigham (January 21, 1973), Henry L. Goines (May 4, 1973), Raymond Payne Hicks (June 17, 1973), Val Starks (January 19, 1975), Victor Keith (March 5, 1975), Michael Wilson (April 16, 1975), Lorenzo Bolden (April 27, 1975) and Ernest Hite (May 11, 1975).

On April 4, 1969, Helen Johnson asked permission to use the facilities of Salem for a six-week Montessori School. Salem agreed to donate the use of the facilities. The children at the school ranged in age from 2 1/2 to 5.

In October 1971, Salem granted the pre-school permission to renovate and decorate the restrooms in the lower level for the children's use. The stairway leading to the school from the Fifth Street entrance was carpeted. The school was also granted permission to continue using the facilities. No formal rental fee was established and Salem agreed to accept any donations the school offered. It was not until May 2, 1975, that the school decided to operate full day, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

After Mrs. Johnson's death, the name of the school was changed to the Helen E. Johnson-Salem Pre-School. The school was in operation until February 1980.

The dedication ceremony for the new parsonage at 1712 South Prospect, Champaign, was held on December 7, 1969. Ottawa Scott was Chairman of the service.

On June 5, 1970, Salem and Mt. Olive Baptist Church began a joint Crusade for Christ. The purpose of the crusade was to reach families who did not know Christ, as well as families who did have a church home. A religious survey was conducted, commencing at First Street and encompassing an area bounded by Wright, Bradley and Lincoln Avenues. The starting point was Salem Baptist Church. A special prayer service was held each Monday evening at Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

On July 31, 1970, Veola Tinsley, Donna Tanner and Rosalind Tinsley went to Arrowhead Springs in San Bernadino, California, to attend a Crusade for Christ training session. George Bigham spearheaded a fund-raising drive to sponsor the trip.

On December 4, 1970, James O. Wilson instituted a bible ministry. Money was collected to purchase bibles for University of Illinois students.

On January 10, 1971, Boy Scout Troop #100 was reactivated. Otis M. Scott was named Institutional Representative.

On September 3, 1971, Salem purchased a new organ at a cost of \$3100.

On October 1, 1971, Salem agreed to help support Rev. Moses Roulah, an African students attending the National Baptist Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee. In July 1975, Moses became the first recipient of the Elizabeth Jane Prout Jones Scholarship which was established in August 1974.

Salem purchased the old Willard School building, 501 East Church Street, Champaign, for \$3000. The ABC Demolition Engineering Company was the successful bidder for the job of razing the building at a cost of \$2500. Mr. Matthew donated \$500 to the church toward this project.

At the Homecoming Service held on November 26, 1972, a ceremony was held to burn the note for the \$5000 borrowed to purchase and demolish the school.

June 10, 1973, was designated as "Alvin Harris Day." A "This Is Your Life" program was sponsored by Salem members to honor Brother Harris who worked very diligently with the Music Department of Salem. Brother Harris' family, local churches, choirs and community people helped to make the event a very special occasion. Brother Harris organized a trip for Salem youth to participate in a program at his home church, St. James Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. A chartered bus left Champaign on Friday, June 29, 1973 and the program was held on Sunday, July 1, 1973. Sister Robbie Donaldson, Rev. Henry Goines and other adults chaperoned the youth. Brothers Alex Mitchell and Garland Hawkins were the musicians.

On January 4, 1974, a 12-passenger bus was selected by Rev. James Offutt to be purchased from Rantoul Motors for the price of \$2675. In addition, Brother Willie Jackson was asked to select a commercial stove for the church which was purchased at a price of \$1000.

Brother Michael Wilson was appointed Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop #100 on March 1, 1974.

Brother Willie Herrington replaced Brother Roscoe Tinsley as Bus Chairman on June 5, 1974.

On August 2, 1974, the members of Salem Baptist Church made the following proposal:

Because of the inspirational life that Elizabeth Jane Prout Jones lived and served without complaining during her short life filled with suffering and serious illness which took her life, we the members of Salem proposed a special scholarship fund be set up as a memorial to her.

The scholarship was to be awarded yearly to high school graduates with "B" or higher grade point averages who have and are showing some type of dedicated service to Salem Baptist Church. The amount of the scholarship was to be divided equally to all deserving graduates.

The method of establishing the scholarship and the decisions on recipients was to be worked out by a special committee appointed by the church. Clarence Taylor was appointed Chairman and other members of the committee were James O. Wilson, Albert Alexander, Alvin Harris and Veola Tinsley.

During the November 24, 1974, Homecoming Services, recognition awards were presented. Members who had served for 50 years or more were presented with gold certificates. Members with 20 years or more were given blue certificates.

On January 1, 1976, Deacon and Mrs. Theotto Bowles were granted permission to purchase and present to Salem a five-piece brass alter set as a memento of years to come from the Bowles family.

Also in 1976, Salem Baptist Church was designated as a historical site by the Champaign County Bicentennial Commission for being one of the oldest continuing institutions in Champaign County. A marker was placed on the front lawn,

In order for the deacons to become more familiar with the membership, the Ward System was reactivated on April 1, 1977. Under this system deacons were assigned areas surrounding their home and asked to be responsible for visiting members in their area.

Salem purchased a new organ on February 1, 1978, at a cost of \$1200. In March, Salem purchased 152 hymnals at a cost of \$704; 20 additional hymnals were purchased later. Members contributed the price of a hymnal in memory of their loved ones. Deacon Clarence Taylor was Chairman of the Hymnal Committee.

Sister Dorothy Hite donated a "No Parking" sign for the parking lot on May 5, 1978.

The Brotherhood Banquet was held on February 2, 1979. Rev. D. E. King of Chicago, Illinois, was the speaker.

Salem decided to purchase a new bus in October 1979 at a cost of \$13,119. This price allowed for a trade-in of \$745 on the old bus which was too costly to repair.

On December 1, 1979, Brother Willie Herrington contacted a firm in Chicago to arrange a price for cushioning the church pews. The total cost of the cushions was \$1868. A rally held on May 4, 1979, raised \$1514 toward the cost of the cushions.

Salem helped to sponsor Rossie Cary's ministry for Child Evangelism Fellowship, a Christian ministry to help deprived youth, in Arrendal and Prince George's counties in Maryland.

On December 5, 1980, Rev. Donaldson's letter of resignation was read to the church. It was to become effective sixty days after acceptance. Rev. Donaldson was asked to delay his resignation for a few months and he consented to do so.

His pastorate at Salem Baptist Church ended April 26, 1981, after completing fifty years as a pastor. Salem was blessed to have many of Rev. Donaldson's former parishioners and friends take part in the day-long celebration. Rev. Donaldson's morning sermon "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" was very inspirational.

Chartered buses and several cars came from First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Zion Baptist Church, Peoria, Illinois; Mt. Zion, East Moline, Illinois; Union Baptist, Alton, Illinois; New Salem, Illinois; Decatur, Illinois; Minnesota; Gary, Indiana; Nashville, Tennessee; and local churches including First Methodist, Mt. Olive Baptist, Pilgrim Baptist, Bethel A.M.E., University Baptist, Freewill and Canaan Baptist. Sister Lillie Terry, Chairman of the Food Committee, said that the food seemed to multiply to feed the feed all of the people.

Salem voted unanimously to name Rev. Donaldson "Pastor Emeritus" on February 27, 1981. Pastor Emeritus Donaldson and Sister Donaldson continued to served at Salem until they moved to Harbor City, California, in May 1990. California is a long way from Pastor Donaldson's hometown, DeValls Bluff, Arkansas, and Sister Donaldson's native home, Paducah, Kentucky. A Farewell Recognition Program was held at Salem on Friday, May 18, 1990, and Sunday, May 20, 1990. Local and out of town churches, as well as many friends attended the two-day celebration. Pastor Emeritus Donaldson preached his last sermon at Salem on Sunday, May 20, 1990, at the morning worship service. His sermon was entitled, "A Days Work - God Provides."

Pastor Emeritus Donaldson passed away on June 30, 1992, in California. Pastor Shelby attended the funeral services in California. A memorial service was held at Salem on Wednesday, July 8, 1992. Many pastors, ministers and friends attended the service and gave remarks. Special remarks were made by his long-time friend and classmate, Reverend Samuel Hale, Sr., Pastor of New Salem Baptist Church, Decatur, Illinois. Brother Kedrick Jason sang a medley of Pastor Donaldson's favorite hymns and Brother Alvin Harris from Zion Baptist Church, Springfield, Illinois, rendered a musical selection in memory of Pastor Donaldson.

On August 28, 1981, Salem voted unanimously to call Rev. Claude E. Shelby, Sr., to serve as pastor. He accepted the call September 11, 1981. Rev. Shelby came to Salem from Bridgeton Missionary Baptist Church of St. Louis County, Robertson, Missouri, where he served for 15 years. Since coming to Salem, Rev. Shelby's spiritual leadership has manifested itself in many ways. He took in over 100 new members and baptized a new candidate nearly every first Sunday his first year as pastor.

Rev. Shelby started a New Member Class and a Sunday School Staff Training Class on March 14, 1982, both of which he is the teacher. He has participated in the Evangelistic Crusades to Trinidad since 1969 and has been Director since 1972. Hundreds of souls have been won to Christ during these crusades, as well as the establishment of new Baptist works. A building is being erected in Trinidad and a plaque bearing his name will be enshrined.

On November 6, 1981, the Mass Choir purchased new choir robes. The cost was \$3439. Rev. Shelby sold many of the choir's old robes in the East St. Louis area. The Youth Choir was also granted permission to purchase new robes.

On February 11, 1982, the church voted to upgrade the restrooms, the listing system in the sanctuary, move the pulpit lectern and install an outside message board.

The family of the late Sister Leona White had asked for suggestions for a memorial to be set up in her memory. On April 2, 1982, the church voted to purchase the outside message board as a memorial to Sister White. The sum of \$350 was donated by the family of Sister White and other members of the church were asked to make donations as a memorial for their loved ones.

Rev. Melton Richardson of Trinidad conducted a revival for Salem July 26-30, 1982. He was accompanied by his lovely wife, Rev. Nickerson and a group of singers.

Rev. Shelby has worked closely with Empty Tomb and the Bread for Jesus Projects. Money was raised to send to Brazil as a result of Rev. Shelby and Brother Robert Lewis making cabinets for Empty Tomb to give support to the Bread for Jesus Project.

The new lights were ordered August 13, 1982, at a cost of \$2280. Labor costs were \$2035 which included installation of the lights, rewiring, extra plugs, reinstalling five of the old lights that were in the sanctuary and putting a rope on the bell so that it could be used.

A dedicatory service was held on December 5, 1982, for the new lights in the sanctuary, kitchen equipment, ushers uniforms and the pastor's cape, a gift from the Pastor's Aid. Rev. Ira Banks, Jr., of East St. Louis, Illinois, was the guest speaker. Sister Mary Alexander was the Chairman for the service.

On September 3, 1982, Salem voted to send \$50 each month to Minister Lorenzo Bolden who was attending the American Baptist Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee. Brother Kenneth Lewis, a former deacon at Salem, also sent \$30 each month to Salem to help Brother Bolden.

Sister Glenda Ealey was commissioned by Rev. Shelby on January 30, 1983, to go out into the mission field.

In January 1983, the first issue of Salem's newsletter, *Salem Speaks*, was mailed to members, former members and friends. The newsletter is published quarterly.

On March 4, 1983, Sister Jeanette Goines was elected Publicity Chairman for Salem.

Salem continued to grow spiritually and numerically under the strong leadership of Rev. Shelby who placed strong emphasis on church attendance: "Forsake not the assembling of ourselves together..."

On December 2, 1983, the church adopted a 3-5 year building plan (beginning in 1984) for building a new sanctuary. The plan was unanimously adopted by the Board and the membership.



The Pastor knew the church would have to acquire more land in order to build a new structure and he asked the Board to start seeking property for the church to buy. Negotiations were begun with the owner of the property at 504 East Park Street, Champaign and on October 17, 1985, the final settlement on the property was made whereby Salem assumed the balance of the mortgage plus other liabilities and the amount of the cash transaction was \$23,678.

On October 21, 1985, Salem started negotiations for the property at 505 East Church Street, Champaign. The property was purchased for \$6000 on November 1, 1985. This property needed some major repairs. Mr. Richard Johnson, a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, offered to rewire the property if Salem would purchase the materials. The church accepted his offer. Other work was done by members of the church.

On February 10, 1988, the church purchased the lot at 501 East Park Street, Champaign for \$7495.

On October 6, 1988, Salem voted to purchase the property at 506 East Park Street, Champaign and to take possession of the property on October 31, 1988. The cost of the property was \$21,500. Other accomplishments under the leadership of Pastor Shelby include:

A new furnace and air conditioner was purchased for the parsonage at a cost of \$5000.

The parsonage roof repaired at a cost of \$4300.

A retaining wall at the parsonage was replaced at a cost of \$785.

New carpet was purchased for the church at a cost of \$2540.

The church voted on December 8, 1986 to purchase a model C-2 organ purchased for \$2000. The organ was dedicated on January 11, 1987.

On December 7, 1986, the church voted to purchase a telephone answering system at a cost of \$117.

Deacon Willie Herrington purchased the old parsonage at 304 North Third Street, Champaign, for \$16,000.

On December 8, 1986, Brother Eldridge Walker was put on trial for deaconship. He was elevated to the position on January 11, 1987.

The Noon Day Prayer Service began in January 1987. Many members take time off from work to attend the hour long services.

On October 11, 1987, Salem celebrated "Lydia Wilson Day" for her many years of service with the Pulpit Committee which was later changed to the Flower Guild.

Brother William Hoff was appointed to serve as Director of Operation Excellence, a tutoring program designed to help children in need of help in their school work as well as motivate those who are doing well to do better.

Sunday evening services were reinstated on February 19, 1988, to be held at least one Sunday a month.

The bell in the belfry was repaired at a cost of \$420.

The church voted to purchase 40 new hymnals at a cost of \$6.95 each in April 1988.

Michael Carter preached his trial sermon on April 24, 1988. His sermon was entitled "If Ye Would Have Only Listened." Text was based on the scripture found in Luke 16:19-31. He was issued a license to preach the gospel as opportunity affords.

On May 12, 1988, Rev. Jewel Kelly, Sr. was appointed to serve as Salem's representative to the Council of Congregations. Others who have served on the Council are:

- Rev. Morris Clark (July 1, 1970)  
Clarence Taylor - Alternate
- Charles Hassell, Sr. (April 30, 1971)  
Helen Hite - Alternate
- Willie Dozier (November 30, 1973)  
Charles Hassell, Sr. - Alternate
- Henderson Herron (September 5, 1975)  
Sherman Oldham - Alternate
- Sherman Oldham (May 5, 1978)  
James Terry - Alternate
- Dorothy Hite (1979)  
Sherman Oldham - Alternate
- Betty Taylor and Linda Taylor (May 30, 1980)
- Albert Alexander (appointed to serve for 1980, 1981)  
Jeanette Goines Osler - Alternate
- Viola Bradley (October 8, 1982)  
Alice Steward - Alternate
- Viola Bradley (December 5, 1985)  
Willie Mae Williams - Alternate
- Linda Taylor (March 12, 1987)

The mortgage on the parsonage was paid off and a mortgage burning ceremony was held on Men's Day, November 27, 1988.

On March 3, 1989, Deacon Theotto Bowles was appointed to serve the remaining portion of Brother Willie Herrington's term as Chairman of the Trustees.

Christian Education training started May 7, 1989. The training sessions are held each Sunday from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. except the third Sunday evening. Rev. Jewel Kelly, Ministers Michael Carter and Michael Wilson, Deacon Sherman Oldham, Sister Bernice McNeal, and Sister Marian Dozier are in charge of the training.

Salem Church celebrated the 123<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary and Homecoming services July 9, 1989. Rev. A. T. Rowan, a former pastor of Salem Baptist Church was the guest speaker for the afternoon services. Pastor Emeritus W. H. Donaldson spoke for the morning service. Two bus loads and several cars accompanied Rev. Rowan to share in the celebration.

A group of engineering students from the University of Illinois did a model and the coloring of our new facility as a class project. Mr. Ron Canada, said the students saved the church approximately \$1,000.

A pulpit parament, purchased by Sisters Fannie Freeman and Joann Ellis and Mrs. Edna Earl Benton in memory of Sister Ida Mae Bostic Warren, and presented it to Salem Church on February 8, 1990.

The men of Salem raised \$5,570 to buy a new copier (\$270.00 over the actual cost of the copier). The machine was delivered to the Church June 14, 1990.

D. W. Rhodes Demolition Contractors was paid \$10,140 for demolition work and tree removal at 504 and 506 East Park Street in June, 1990.

A Youth Summer Science Enrichment Program, sponsored by the Youth Department and Coordinators Derrick R. Dean, Rev. Jewel Kelly, Sr. and Robert Lewis. The science program was instituted to give youth simple hands-on experiments; visits to laboratories, museums and other places where science is being taught and lectures from guest who work with science everyday. The first session held June 23, 1990, consisted of some exciting demonstrations of the wonders of science by Derrick Dean.

Pastor Shelby, Mr. Ron Canada of the Church Company and members of Salem met periodically to update the progress on the building plans. Members have been asked to contribute \$500 or more toward the building fund and receive a "Together We Build" pin; 139 pins have been presented. The Church Company's services were terminated before the facility was completed.

The construction of our new building is progressing rapidly. The foundation was completed in October, 1991. Walker & Sons of Indianapolis, Indiana, poured the concrete in March, 1992 and did an excellent job. The insulated wall system was delivered on March 16, 1992. Pastor Shelby, Deacon Willie Dozier, Deacon Sherman Oldham, Edgar McIntyre and other friends of Salem spent many hours unloading the truck which brought the wall section and workers began putting up the walls on March 23, 1992.

The men of Salem along with some of the women, friends, Empty Tomb, Curtis Road Church, Brother Edward Owens of Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, and many others have faithfully volunteered their services doing whatever they can to help defray expenses. We are blessed to have a Pastor who has many skills. Pastor Shelby not only can be found working each day, he has also served as our Construction Site Supervisor.

Salem organized a basketball team in January 1992 for boys and men ages 15 and up. The team plays at Douglas Center. Brother Robert Lewis is the Coordinator of the team.

Salem sponsored a trip to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, on February 21, 1992, in observance of Black History Month.

Salem was asked to make a donation to Mr. John Hackshaw of Trinidad to help defray the expenses of publishing a book about the History of Black Churches in that country. Salem contributed \$200.00.

Brother William Hoff was asked to serve as a Trial Deacon for a 6 month period on February 13, 1992. He was ordained as a Deacon on January 10, 1993.

On April 12, 1992, Brother Wendell Bonner preached his first sermon at Salem Baptist Church. His topic was "Why It's Important to Praise the Lord". Scriptures were taken from Psalms 34:1-3 and Philippians 4:4-7. His sermon was inspirational, scriptural and spiritual. Pastor Shelby thought Brother Bonner should be given the opportunity to use his gifts without delay. It was moved by Deacon Oldham and seconded by Sister Dorothy Hite that Salem extend to Brother Bonner the license to preach. The motion carried unanimously.

Brother Kedrick Jason and the Salem Choir presented the Dillard University Concert Choir from New Orleans, Louisiana on April 17, 1992, at the Faith United Methodist Church in Champaign, IL. The concert was held at Faith United Methodist in lieu of Salem Baptist due to space constraints. The concert was well received by everyone. Champaign was one of many cities the Concert Choir appeared in while on tour. The students enjoyed the fellowship with Salem members and friends and returned in April 1993 to perform another excellent concert.

Brother Derrick Dean presented a proposal to Salem Church requesting some of the young men of the church serve as Mentors for boys of Single Parents. After much planning, the program began in February, 1992. Some of the Mentors working with Brother Dean are: Brothers' Wendell Bonner, Rodney Green, Freddie Gordon, Kedrick Jason, Robert Lewis, Edwin Martinez and Todd Taylor.

Other workshops and programs instituted and held at Salem were:

A three-part workshop conducted by Minister Wendell Bonner and Sister Lizette Smith-Bonner: 1. "How to Have an Effective Prayer Life." 2. "Managing the Challenge of Single Parenting, Part I & II". 3. "How are Black Men Supposed to Live in a World Like This?"

"How to Read and Study the Bible," taught by Pastor Shelby.

A Membership Committee, chaired by Deacon William Hoff and comprised of group leaders and volunteer members, was established to telephone and/or visit church members to assure them that the Church is able to meet their spiritual needs and their continued fellowship is desired.

Sister Lizette Smith-Bonner thought the young ladies of Salem Church needed to become involved in more activities other than singing and ushering. Sister Smith-Bonner and others organized the Baptist Youth Fellowship. Those assisting Sister Smith-Bonner are: Sisters' Caprice Banks, Elana Hassell and Toya Walker. The young ladies not only receive spiritual training, but are also able to do fun things together.

Salem Baptist Church recently purchased a 15 passenger van from Shelby Dodge in Champaign, no relationship to Pastor Shelby. The old bus was sold to New Hope Fellowship Church in Alton, IL. Reverend James K. Shelby is Pastor, Reverend Shelby's brother. The following members contributed toward the van purchase: Sister Mary Alexander, Deacon Willie Dozier and Sister Marian Dozier, Sister Dorothy Hite, Sister Willie Mae Williams, and an anonymous donor.

Reverend T.D. Robinson, Pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Springfield, IL, blessed Salem during the five evening Revival Services held May 4-8, 1992. The services were very inspirational and well received.

Salem celebrated its 127th Church Anniversary on Sunday, July 11, 1993. Pastor Shelby preached for the morning worship service from Matthew 9:36-38, and I Corinthians 3:9. His sermon was entitled "The Poverty of the Church." Rev. Samuel Hale, Jr., Pastor of Zion Baptist Church, Springfield, Illinois, his choir and congregation were our guests for the afternoon service. Rev. Hale's sermon was entitled, "How Big Is Your Church?" with scriptures taken from Colossians 1:17 and Revelations 11:1.

Salem hosted the Wood River District Association, Inc., July 12-16, 1993. The theme was "The Church Pursuing the Challenge of Excellence During the Decade of the 90's." Although Salem has hosted the Association meetings on several occasions, an interesting side-light to our hosting the conference in 1993 is that Salem hosted the Association 100 years ago in 1893.

Salem made several personnel changes due to the sudden death of Deacon Sherman Oldham, Chairman of the Deacon Board. On April 30, 1993, Deacon Eldridge Walker was named Chairman of the Deacon Board and Deacon William Hoff was named Vice Chairman. Brother Christopher Copeland was named Chairman of the Trustee Board, and Brother Arnold Yarber was named Vice Chairman.

Memorial gifts have been made by many members and friends to memorialize their loved ones. Members, church groups and friends have also donated time and labor to help defray the construction cost of our new facility. Due to some setbacks with contractors, our new facility was delayed but with God's help and our continued faithfulness and patience we are finally reaching our goal. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

We thank God for our 127 years of existence.