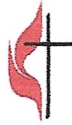




# OUR CHURCH HISTORY 1846 TO 2021

**Union Memorial United Methodist Church**  
**1141 Belt Avenue**  
**St. Louis, Missouri 63112**

**Reverend Dr. Antonio Settles, Pastor**  
**Reverend Dr. John W. Heyward, Retired Pastor**  
**Reverend Ronald Graham, Retired Pastor**  
**Reverend Dr. Ardella G. Johnson, Retired Pastor**  
**Reverend Robin Bell, District Superintendent**  
**Bishop Robert Farr, Resident Bishop**



**OUR CHURCH HISTORY  
UNION MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
1846 - 2021**

In July, 2016, Dr. Doris V. Harrington was elected Church Historian. Her commitment, and responsibility, was to write the history of key events that occurred after 2004. The history had already been written through 2004. She joined the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church and continued to seek ways to give the congregation fresh views of the history that they are creating. Occasional one-page History Updates were provided to the members.

The current History and Archives Committee was formed in July, 2016 and includes committee members Goldie Abram, Pauline Wolfe, and Carletta Thomas. In 2017, Carletta Thomas was officially elected Church Archivist for Union Memorial UMC. Goldie and Pauline became Associate Archivists. We are honored to have Dr. Arnold G. Parks as our resource person. He is a former member of Union Memorial UMC. He is an educator, author, sociology professor emeritus, and well-known historian in the Missouri Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

In May, 2017, some information in the church history was updated. Copies were then forwarded to John Finley, Archivist for the Missouri Methodist Archives at Central Methodist University in Fayette; Carol Travis, Executive Assistant for the African-American Methodist Heritage Center located at Drew University; and Dr. John Wright, Chairman of the Missouri Conference Archives and History Commission.

In 2017-2018, a grant of \$669.00 was approved by the Missouri Conference Gateway District for use by Dr. Harrington for supplies for archival materials and the printing of copies of the 1846-2017 church history.

In July, 2018, Dr. Mark Shenise, Archivist with the General Commission on Archives and History for the United Methodist Church located at Drew University, invited Union Memorial to provide a summary of our history for their archives. A short summary and a full copy of the 2017 history were forwarded to Dr. Shenise shortly thereafter. A select set of twenty-two (22) picture collages was printed on photo paper by our Church Photographer and forwarded to the General Commission to further highlight events and activities of our historical Mother Church. In 2019, Dr. Harrington was blessed by being asked to visit the General Commission on Archives and History at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.

For the 2020-2021 edition, information is being included about the pastorate of Reverend Dr. Antonio Settles, Union Memorial's 26<sup>th</sup> pastor. An appendix will be included - mostly pictures. Upon completion in 2021, the history will be emailed to members of the congregation. Upon retirement of Dr. Harrington, it is hoped that Dr. Miller W. Boyd, III will be elected as the new Church Historian for 2022.



**OUR CHURCH HISTORY**  
**1846-2021**  
**175 Years of Ministry**

**U**nion Memorial United Methodist Church is one of the four oldest black churches in Saint Louis, and the oldest African-American United Methodist Church in the Missouri Annual Conference. At the time of its formation in 1846, Rev. James Farrar, a local white preacher, was the first pastor. The congregation worshipped on Broadway between Morgan Street (now Delmar) and Franklin Avenue, known as "Essex Alley", in the home of a slave. Rev. Adolphus Foshee succeeded Rev. Farrar. Other pastors who served the congregation during its early years were Rev. Nathan Church and Rev. Warner.

A piece of property on Seventh Street, between Cass Avenue and O'Fallon Street, was purchased and lost. After losing that property, the congregation worshipped on Green Street (now Lucas Avenue) for a number of years. The church was called "Little Rock Church."



In 1865, Dr. F.W.S. Peck of Baltimore, Maryland became the first Black pastor of the church. He played a very important role in the development of Missouri Methodism. Rev. S. Thomas and Rev. Edgar Pins followed him.

In 1873, under the pastorate of Rev. F.H. Small, the congregation bought the church at 1008 Wash Street (now Cole Street). This church was often called "Lower Wash." The members moved into the new church on August 2, 1873. On October 26, 1884, the church was dedicated and named Wesley Chapel. Bishop Bowan and Rev. E.W. Peck officiated at the dedication.

In December 1884, several members of Wesley Chapel, interested in the expansion of Methodism, organized a church at the corner of Wash Street and Elliot Avenue known as Elliot Avenue M. E. Church. The first pastor was John Hughes.

Rev. W.H.H. Brown was sent to Wesley Chapel in 1890. Methodism in Missouri and the name of W.H.H. Brown are synonymous. He served the church in almost every capacity with the greatest of credit, reflecting honor upon the church and himself.

In 1899, Wesley Chapel and Elliott Avenue Churches consolidated, and Wesley Chapel was sold. Thereafter, both congregations worshipped at the Elliot Avenue Church, naming the merged churches "Centennial." The first pastor of Centennial was Rev. J. Will Jackson, D.D.



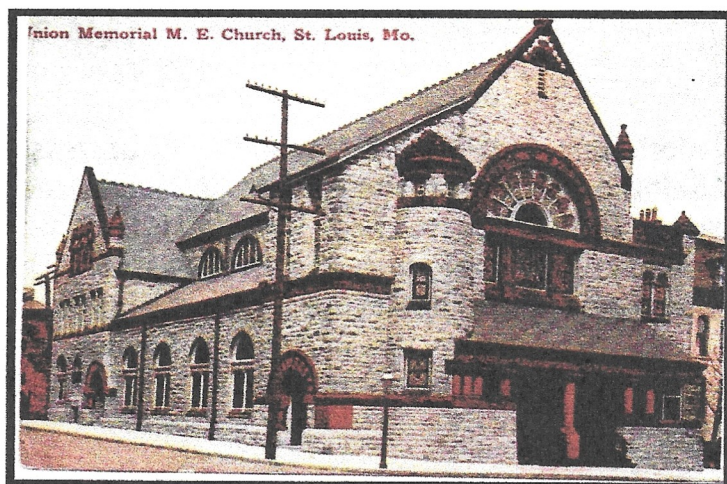
In 1900, Bishop Fitzgerald, presiding over the annual session of the Central Missouri Conference at Marshall, Missouri, appointed Dr. R. E. Gillum pastor of the Centennial Church. Soon thereafter, the name of the church was changed



to Union Memorial. The church really began to grow. During the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904, the capacity of the building was not adequate to accommodate the membership. So, larger, more convenient and more comfortable quarters were sought.

*(In 1915, this picture was used in Stockton, California to create a post card.)*

Union Memorial purchased Temple Israel, a Jewish Temple located on the corner of Leffingwell Avenue and Pine Street.



Its members, led by Dr. Gillum, entered the Temple Israel edifice on July 28, 1907. This structure, regarded as the most expensive, finest, and imposing edifice of any "Colored Congregation" in the world, remained standing until 1963.

On March 29, 1908, when the appointments of the twenty-second Annual Conference held in Union Memorial Church were read, Bishop William F. McDowell appointed Rev. Dr. B.F. Abbott pastor of Union Memorial. After Dr. Abbott came to Union, the final payment of the church debt was made, and Bishop William A. Quayle dedicated the church in April, 1920.



During his last two years as Presiding Elder of the St. Louis District and in the first fifteen years of Dr. Abbott's pastorate, he led the establishment of six new churches. All of the churches owned property. This extension work of Union Memorial was as follows:

Gratiot Street was established in autumn of 1907.

1907 - First Methodist Episcopal Church in Kinloch Park. (Now North Park UMC due to merger)

1908 - Webster Groves Church. (Now Unity UMC due to merger)

1914 - Cosby Chapel M.E. Church. The church closed in the 1940's.

1915 - Asbury Methodist Church

1920 - LaSalle Street M. E. Church. (Now Beloved Community UMC)

North Park UMC, Unity UMC (Webster Groves), Asbury UMC, and Beloved Community UMC (LaSalle) are still active and serve as anchors in their communities.

Through the years, white Bishops presided over the Black Conference. In 1920, the first Black Bishop was elected, Matthew W. Clair, Sr. He served until his retirement in 1936. Bishop Clair's first visit to Union was heralded with great pomp. He was given a large reception with hundreds of people in attendance. Since 1936, Missouri Methodism has been served by five other Black Bishops: R.E. Jones, E.W. Kelly,



**Matthew W. Clair, Jr., by Bishop Noah W. Moore, Jr., who finished Bishop Clair's term after he retired, and W.T. Handy, Jr. In 1939, after celebrating thirty-one years as pastor of Union Memorial, Dr. Abbott left and was replaced by Rev. Dr. E.W. Kelly, who came from Detroit, Michigan.**

**In June 1940, while Dr. Kelly was pastor, St. Louis was host to the Central Jurisdictional Conference of the Methodist Church, with Union Memorial as the host church. It was the first General Conference of this jurisdiction since the merger of the M.E. Church South and the Protestant M. E. Church. After serving the congregation magnificently for five years, Dr. Kelly was elected to the Episcopacy. Several bishops were consecrated during the session.**



**In the same year, Bishop Jones retired. Succeeding Bishop Kelly in 1944 was Rev. Dr. E.O. Woolfolk, a learned, dignified man of culture. He held two degrees, an M.A. and D.D. Dr. Woolfolk led Union Memorial to great heights of service. The membership also increased under his leadership. The "Crusading for Christ" movement was most successful. In 1947, Dr. Woolfolk was appointed as a District Superintendent and was succeeded by Rev. L.L. Haynes.**



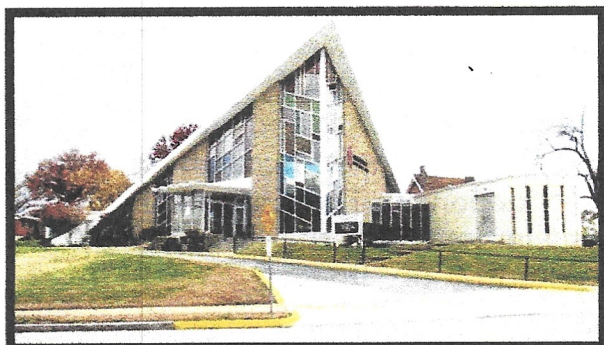
**Rev. Haynes graced the pulpit with such eloquence and power that the pews were filled to capacity. Moreover, as had his predecessors, he garnered such financial harvests as to make possible the improvements of all the interiors of the church properties.**



**Succeeding Rev. Haynes in 1953 was Rev. E. L. McAllister. Rev. McAllister left the church in 1955 and was succeeded by Rev. Dr. John J. Hicks. Dr. Hicks came by transfer from Los Angeles to Union Memorial and served in St. Louis on many civic and community committees as in California. In 1959, he became the first member of the African-American race to be elected to the St. Louis Board of Education, and later served that organization as both vice-president and president.**



**During Dr. Hicks' pastorate, the city dedicated a mammoth redevelopment program. Union Memorial was located in what was called "The Mill Creek Area". This area was to be cleared and rebuilt. The church did not have to move, but since many members had moved westward, the church decided to move west, also, and build a new church.**



**A committee of one hundred was appointed which was empowered to negotiate with the Land Clearance Authority and to take all necessary steps to secure available land. The committee reported that the land and property at Belt and Bartmer was the best that they had found. Two architects were employed to draw up plans, which were later accepted. After**



moving to the present site at 1141 Belt Avenue, known as "the New Union", Union Memorial became a member of the West St. Louis Ecumenical Parish.

Bishop Clair, the resident bishop, officiated at the Ground Breaking Ceremonies held on March 26, 1961. The Cornerstone Laying was March 7, 1963 followed by the formal opening in November, 1963. The Union Memorial Methodist Church edifice is said to be the second largest "thin shell parabolic structure" of its kind in the United States. In 1964, Dr. Hicks left Union Memorial to take a pastorate in New York City. The Rev. Dr. John N. Doggett, Jr. succeeded him.



The Rev. Dr. Doggett also came to Union Memorial by transfer from Los Angeles. Dr. Doggett was the first pastor of Union Memorial to hold the office of president of the St. Louis Branch of the NAACP. When Dr. Doggett became pastor in 1964, the loan balance on the church was \$218,250.74. When he left in 1976, the loan balance was \$71,635.25. At the 1976 Missouri East Annual Conference, Dr. Doggett, who had earned a Ph.D. degree, was appointed as St. Louis North District Superintendent.

In the mid-1960's, after more than 120 years of the church's existence, Dr. Doggett and church members successfully elected Dr. Doris Harrington as the Administrative Board's first woman vice-chairperson. In later years, Dr. Carolyn Atkinson became the first woman chairperson of the Administrative Board.

The church had one of the finest music programs in the city, started while the church was on Leffingwell Avenue and Pine Street. Continuing her development in the present facility, one of the sought-after soprano performers by churches and groups far and wide was the late Mrs. Willetta Atkinson. Likewise, the church's well-known Chancel Choir was frequently invited by churches in St. Louis City and County and in Illinois to sing its interpretations of church anthems, hymns, and cantatas.

*Of great significance was the merger of The Methodist Church with the Evangelical United Brethren Church in April, 1968 to become The United Methodist Church. It was at that time that Union Memorial UMC became the oldest African-American United Methodist Church in Missouri.*

Dr. Doggett, a civic leader until the end of his life in 2010, was appointed in 1976 as St. Louis North District Superintendent.

The Rev. Dr. John W. Heyward, Jr. followed Dr. Doggett as Union Memorial's pastor. Dr. Heyward had traveled extensively throughout Europe, Asia, and Central and North America. He found a loan balance of \$70,302.02 and was intensely eager to retire that debt. Dr. Heyward's eagerness became contagious and reached, so to speak, epidemic proportions. The church became a "beehive" of activities. The \$50,000 extra that he asked the members to give in addition to the \$100,000 they had given when asked by Dr. Doggett, was met with approval.





On November 20, 1977, the three John's - *Rev. Dr. John Hicks, Rev. Dr. John Doggett, and Rev. Dr. John Heyward* - officiated at the mortgage burning services. This occurred approximately five years before the mortgage was to be paid. During Dr. Heyward's pastorate, additional property across the street from the church was purchased and used to house the pastor and his family. At the 1985 Missouri East Annual Conference, Dr. Heyward was appointed to serve as District Superintendent of the Columbia-Mexico District. It is notable that he later served as Vice-President of the African-American Methodist Heritage Center, located at Drew University, from 2012 to 2015.

It was in 1984 that Bishop de Carvello of Angola and Bishop Kulah of Liberia exhorted the United Methodist Church to consider the urgent need for the establishment of Africa University. To that end, the proposal was given strong encouragement by Rev. Dr. John W. Heyward and Dr. Roslyn Kelley-Sykes of the General Board of Higher Education and Ms. Diane Holland Johnson of the General Board of Global Ministries.



They are members of Union Memorial UMC. Further, Dr. Heyward, former pastor of Union Memorial, traveled to Africa to help with a feasibility study and to work on legislation that would make the creation of Africa University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe a reality.

In 1988, during the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in St. Louis, that legislation was overwhelmingly approved. When Africa University was finally built "to train leaders for churches and societies in Africa", the delegation from the U.S.A. that attended the 1994 opening ceremony and dedication included Dr. Heyward and Dr. Kelley-Sykes, as well as Dr. Arnold Parks, a former long-time member of Union Memorial. Such a connection with Union Memorial UMC is praise-worthy and highly significant.



Dr. J. LaVon Kincaid, Sr. succeeded Dr. Heyward as pastor. Dr. Kincaid came to Union Memorial after serving for seven years as the first African American Director of Stewardship, General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tennessee. Strengthening the church through Stewardship and Discipleship was the focus of his ministry. Dr. Kincaid served Union Memorial for four years before Bishop W. T. Handy, Jr. appointed him to serve on the Missouri East Conference Council on Ministries in 1989. In his fiftieth year in the ministry, Dr. Kincaid returned to Union Memorial to preach a last sermon before retirement.

After retiring in Pennsylvania, Dr. Kincaid and his wife, Bobi, to this day, continue to call and email to check on the health of Union Memorial members. He traveled to St. Louis to attend the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of our member, Herschel Parks. Having turned 102 years old in 2021, Mr. Parks is the oldest member in the church.

The Rev. Dr. Rhymes H. Moncure, Jr. succeeded Dr. Kincaid. During Dr. Moncure's ministry at Union Memorial, many programs were developed to train and encourage youth participation in the work of the church. Dr. Moncure's other appointments included churches in St. Louis, Kansas City, Kansas, and Columbia, Missouri. He served as Executive Director of the





**United Methodist Urban Ministries in Kansas City, Missouri. At the 1991 Missouri East Annual Conference, Dr. Moncure was appointed to serve as the District Superintendent of the St. Louis South District. In July 2000, he was elected to the episcopacy, serving in the Nebraska Conference. For the next few years, he provided exemplary service to laity and clergy until his death in August, 2006.**

**Bishop Moncure's family was honored by Rev. Kevin Kosh, Sr. and church members at Union Memorial UMC in a special ceremony on April 15, 2007. Included was the dedication of The Bishop Rhymes Moncure Prayer Garden as a special tribute to honor his life. In later years, the Rhymes H. Moncure Bishops' Chapel was established in Plano, Texas.**



**The Rev. Dr. Theo V. Triplett, Sr. succeeded Dr. Moncure at Union Memorial. Rev. Triplett served on the Kingdom House Board in the Missouri East Conference, and was vice-president of the St. Louis North District. He was also a member of the Clergy Coalition, and treasurer for the Black United Methodist Ministers. On May 22, 1993, Rev. Triplett earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from United Methodist Seminary, Dayton Ohio. His doctoral project, entitled "The Development of a Project Community Renewal Restoration", was designed to lead Union Memorial United Methodist Church into the twenty-first century.**

**The church became involved in the Come Share Program, established a permanent endowment fund through the generous gift of Miss Grace Anthony, and started the Disciple Bible Study programs. Of long-lasting import, the Mitchell School across the street from the church was purchased with the help of Barnes-Jewish Health Systems from the St. Louis Board of Education due to the hard work of Dr. Triplett, church officers Mr. Porter Lewis and Mr. Eddie Davis (former president of the Board of Education), and members Mrs. Jean Neal and Dr. Rosalyn Kelley-Sykes.**

**The Union Memorial Outreach Center (UMOC) was established with 501(c)(3) status. Grants from Barnes-Jewish Health Systems for outreach programs were obtained for UMOC's programs. Over the years, Mrs. Neal, in collaboration with the committed members of the church, established a mentoring for students, started a special annual Holy Boldness Bible Study group taught by retired pastor, Dr. Triplett, and opened a Resale Shop at the school. In later years, Dr. Kelley- Sykes, a chairperson of UMOC, developed along with the church, several blood drives for the church and community in collaboration with the St. Louis American Red Cross.**



**A separate mini history will be written by Mrs. Jean Neal, a former chairperson, to highlight the components of UMOC that benefitted the community, as well as the church. UMOC was established to provide health care, education, and outreach social services to members and non-members.**

**In May 1995, Rev. Dr. Lynn R. Mims succeeded Dr. Triplett. A native of Texas, Dr. Mims came to Union Memorial from Oklahoma City where he had served as senior pastor of Christ United Methodist Church and Adjunct**





Professor of Religion at Oklahoma City University. Under Dr. Mims' leadership, Union Memorial witnessed new, revitalized, and expanded ministries. As the largest African-American church in the Missouri East Conference, Union Memorial's membership then stood at 1100. Union Memorial ranked fourth in size in the St. Louis urban district of the United Methodist Church and first in size among United Methodist churches in the City of St. Louis. Program development at the church included:

- ♦ Expansion of the Christian Education program beyond the traditional Sunday school, training for all age levels, seminars and workshops, Bible Study and expanded Disciple Bible Study training.
- ♦ The implementation of "A New Cornerstone", a partnership with the Small Business Administration that promoted economic and business development in the African-American community.
- ♦ "Feed the Children", a ministry that was designed to provide nutrition for children in the community.
- ♦ The Come Share Co-op program continued to grow as it served the neighborhood and the community at large.

A first for the Missouri East Conference, clergy and laity from the same congregation, UNION MEMORIAL, were recipients of the 1998 Denman Award for Evangelism. Dr. Mims and Mrs. Saint F. Jones received the award for bringing souls to Christ.

Consistent with our rich history, started a mission station to St. Louis (Union-Shaw Ministry) Rev. Antonio Settles and Mrs.



in early 1998, Union Memorial serve persons on the south side of at Shaw United Methodist Church. Linda Settles were assigned to serve the congregation at Union-Shaw Outpost. Mrs. Settles later left that post to pursue seminary studies. She still worked with Rev. Settles to continue developing Shaw UMC. When Union-Shaw Outpost was no longer a part of Union Memorial, it became New Spirit Church and was pastored by Rev. Settles.

Candidate Stacey Powers served as Director of Union Memorial's Welfare to Work Program, an impactful outreach effort. She was assisted by Rev. Antonio Settles. She was later appointed to serve as student pastor of Mt. Auburn-Wesley UMC. She then became Rev. Stacey Mims, a pastor at Barak Ministries.

In 1999 and later, our ministries were expanded to include additional events such as: the appointment of Union Memorial's first African-American clergy woman as associate pastor, Rev. Dr. Lisa Scott-Joiner and the appointment of Rev. Antonio Settles as associate pastor. We also acknowledge the commitment of two other associate pastors in caring for our congregation - Rev. Paul L. Higgs and Rev. Dr. Ardella Johnson.



Among Rev. Dr. Scott-Joiner's many tasks as Associate Pastor was her work with Union Memorial's Welfare to Work mentoring program. She engaged the services of several church members to work with the young people in the program off-site. Dr. Scott-



Joiner also served as Executive Director of the Union Memorial Child Development Center.

Union Memorial's first Annual Women's Conference was held on August 6-7, 1999. The Conference preacher and workshop leader was Rev. Barbara King, Founder/Pastor of Hillsdale Chapel and Truth Center, Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia. The first youth-parent Disciple Bible Study class started in September 1999.

The dawn of the new millennium has seen new partnerships formed, new programs started, and existing programs flourish at Union Memorial United Methodist Church. In 2000, other milestones were reached:

- ◆ Union Memorial was nominated by Bishop Ann B. Sherer to be a "Congregational Resource Center." Our nomination was based on the qualities that exemplify a vital congregation.
- ◆ We completed the initial stages of our capital funds campaign, "Touched By God's Vision...Fulfilling His Charge."
- ◆ We completed plans for the demolition of the Redmond Building.

At the 2004 session of the Missouri East Annual Conference, Rev. Kevin M. Kosh, Sr. was appointed as the Senior Pastor at Union Memorial. Rev. Kosh came to Union Memorial after having served as the District Superintendent of the Gateway Regional District. Rev. Kosh was chairman of the Global Connections Team for the Missouri Annual Conference, 2004-2008. He has brought to Union Memorial a compassion for seeing that the congregation is empowered to carry out the work of ministry in this community.



Union Memorial continued to carry out the "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:19-20), building on a heritage rich in service and dedication to this community. The clergy team, between 2005 and 2011, of Rev. Kevin Kosh, senior pastor; Rev. Kimberly Payne, associate pastor and Minister of Outreach; Rev. Dr. Ardella Johnson, retired clergy; and, Rev. Dr. John Doggett, retired clergy and pastor emeritus was expanded to include Rev. Dr. Theo Triplett, retired clergy. Rev. Ronald Graham and Rev. Dr. John W. Heyward, Jr. joined the clergy team as retired pastors in 2015.

During the Missouri Annual Conference, June 2-6, 2016, Union Memorial United Methodist Church was recognized as, and given a proclamation for being the oldest African-American United Methodist Church in Missouri. Rev. Kevin Kosh and Livingstone Sykes, Lay Leader, accepted the award on behalf of the church.

Numerous pioneer efforts were carried out 2004 through 2016. They included a capital improvement program and several program ministries. Physical improvements in the church began with the renovation of Fellowship Hall on the lower level in 2005 by Pastor Kosh and his Beautification Team. The pastor and a work crew built the steps that lead from outside the side door down to street level and across the street from the



church's parking lot. Mrs. Jean Neal, chairperson, and the Trustees had a new roof installed on the church. Dr. Roslyn Kelley-Sykes, the next Trustees's chairperson, led the elegant renovation of the church's chapel. The pastor and a work crew embarked on the massive renovation of the church's parsonage. A work crew also built a handicap ramp that leads to Fellowship Hall from the outside of the church. Rev. Kosh is responsible for the signage outside the church - the name of the church on the wall that is very visible in the neighborhood.

The new program ministries established after 2005 included the new Audio-Visual ministry coordinated by Ernest and Delouis Booth; a new Photography Ministry coordinated by Dr. Doris Harrington; the newly formed Ordered Steps of Praise senior dance group coordinated by Sally Holston; the Care Ministry Team chaired by Edith Banks that had yearly ceremonies for the 90+ Club, the Sophisticated 80's, and the 50's Club ( married couples of 50 years), as well as caring for our sick members and families of our deceased members. Alexis Moore was the standard-bearer for taking care of our sick members and grieving families starting in 2011. Her work has continued through the assignments of the next two pastors. The church's breakfast and lunch ministries were two important outreach programs that involved the community. District Superintendent Schuermann and Dr. Theo Triplett presented a plaque to Rev. Kosh and Cheryl Hines in 2009 to acknowledge the church's community outreach lunch program.

Rev. Kosh and members hosted the MO Conference Bishop's Holy Boldness Conference. This key event involved all of the United Methodist churches and church members throughout MO. The church was involved in other significant mission and outreach initiatives. A key outreach initiative is our support of Sabie United Methodist church in Mozambique, Africa. Mildred Smith has served as the Mozambique Ministry Coordinator since 2006.

Rev. Kevin Kosh remained as pastor of Union Memorial UMC until June, 2016, after which he returned to Beloved Community UMC as pastor. He has served as Treasurer of the Alumni Association of Gammon Theological Seminary, and is Campus Minister for St. Louis University and Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis.

In June, 2016, Rev. Dr. Cheree Trent-Mills became the 25<sup>th</sup> pastor of Union Memorial United Methodist Church. She was appointed by Bishop Robert Schnase of the Missouri Annual Conference. She was Union Memorial's first woman pastor. Before coming to Union Memorial, she was assigned as pastor at North Park United Methodist Church. Rev. Dr. Trent-Mills graduated from Princeton University, attended Southern Illinois Medical School and completed her medical training at the Mayo Clinic and Washington University in St. Louis. In 2012, she graduated from Eden Theological Seminary.



Pastor Cheree preached her first sermon on June 26, 2016 during the 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. worship services. During her tenure at Union Memorial, she focused on providing outreach activities at the Union Memorial Outreach Center. She also had a keen interest in working with children and youth in the community and church. In her



**second year as pastor, she was ordained an elder by Bishop Farr. She served on the Board of Ordained Ministry for the MO Conference.**

**On Good Friday of 2017 and 2018, Dr. Cheree Trent-Mills and several members processed the cross in the neighborhood. Upon returning to the church, 'the tomb was sealed' until Easter Sunday morning. The tomb was created by William Curtis, Union Memorial's resident artist. The sanctuary remained dark until Easter Sunday morning.**

**In late Spring, 2020, Bishop Robert Farr, Resident Bishop of the Missouri Conference, appointed the Rev. Dr. Antonio M. Settles as the 26<sup>th</sup> pastor of Union Memorial UMC. Dr. Settles arrived in the middle of a pandemic, one of the worst crises our country has ever experienced. The church had been closed since March, 2020. But, Dr. Settles was on a mission and had a vision. And, he was coming home. Years before, he was a member of Union Memorial UMC.**



**Pastor Antonio came back to us well-armed, having pastored several churches and preaching a sermon in Kenya in 2011. He authored a thought-provoking book, "Power Moves-Moving Power in the Right Direction". The basic tenets serve to guide him in a specific direction as pastor. He is also a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry for the MO Conference.**

**Pastor Antonio preached his first sermon from his home via facebook on June 28, 2020. He was, and continues to be, very passionate. He is a teacher as well as preacher. He set the tone for orienting and training some of the members on key facets of the Simplified Structure, the new organizational structure of many of our United Methodist churches. The new Leadership Team continues to be in training. District Superintendent Robin Bell facilitated the voting and approval of the new structure on January 17, 2021.**

**The church re-opened on Easter Sunday. The COVID19 Team and its coordinator, Colette Neal Kelly, have taken great care to ensure the safety and well-being of the members and guests. The church has welcomed about twenty new members. In serving the church and community, several initiatives are being carried out. Namely, the Wednesday Night Bible Study with some months done in collaboration with Green Trails United Methodist Church via Zoom; the early morning prayer line twice a week; and, emphasis on boys and men during the worship services in June.**

**As president of Fathers United to Raise Awareness (FUTRA), Chester Deanes has held weekly meetings with fathers. Leadership Team monthly Church Council meetings for church members are convened. Monthly meetings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderwoman Shameem Hubbard and her constituents are held at Union Memorial.**

**Along the way, Mildred Smith continues as Union Memorial's Mozambique Ministry coordinator. Alexis Moore emphasizes the care and comfort of all members when they are ill or have family members who pass away. Further, she and the church continue to recognize and acknowledge our Veterans in special ways. Other ministries are taking shape in the church.**



Dr. Antonio Settles is not above hitting the streets and ringing doorbells to invite community folks to join Union Memorial UMC. In addition to Alderwoman Hubbard, he and Union Memorial are forging a relationship with Malik Ahmed, immediate past CEO of Better Family Life, to work with members in the church's neighborhood and community.

With excitement and anticipation, Union Memorial UMC is now planning the celebration of its 175<sup>th</sup> Church Anniversary which will take place on November 21, 2021. The theme is "Deeply Rooted" and the guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon, pastor of the Washington Metropolitan AME Zion Church in St. Louis, MO. The planning team includes chairperson Carletta Thomas, Denise Collins, Diane Johnson, Maxine McKinney, Alexis Moore, Michelle Sanders, and Dr. Antonio Settles, pastor.

We salute some of our past candidates for ministry whose call by God led them on a fruitful journey of service. Those candidates for ministry were Stacey Powers, Antonio Settles, Linda Settles, Stephanie Leonard, Dr. Cheree Trent-Mills, Kevin Kosh, Jr., Michelle LaGrone, Vickie Perkins-Gray, and De-Rance Blaylock.

We also salute, in this 175<sup>th</sup> year, some of our Church Historians - Martha C. Lewis, Alberta Douglas Gantt, Renee Gates, Linda Johnson Pirtle, and Dr. Doris Harrington.

**OUR MISSION: Transforming Lives, Making Disciples for Jesus Christ**

**OUR VISION: Connecting People to God Through Compelling Worship, Compassionate Outreach, and Genuine Faith Development**

**CORE VALUES: Worship, Outreach, Relationship, Discipleship**

In darkness, we can see no difference in things; it is light that enables us to discern, and it is Christ that gives light. And surely, it was light which inspired the saints who founded this great Methodist Church and, subsequently, saints who have kept it intact. Their purpose - to build a church to God, and not to fame. May we be inspired by their courage, devotion, and love of God as we continue to build our church on a firm foundation of Love, Faith, and Hope. *(These inspiring thoughts were first appended to our history in the 1980's by Church Historian, the venerable Miss Martha C. Lewis.)*

*"...and on this rock I will build my church, and  
The gates of hell will not prevail against it. I  
will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
and whatever you bind on earth will be bound  
in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will  
be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:18-19*