

# The 161 Year History of Second Baptist Church

The year was 1862. President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation ordering the emancipation of all slaves in the Confederate States of America on January 1, 1863. The Mississippi and Missouri rivers became their Exodus, carrying hundreds of former slaves to what was thought to be the Promised Land, particularly Kansas. When they arrived here and were short of money, the Armour Packing House provided a sanctuary job for many of those who lived in encampments near the riverbanks, at a place known as Missouri City. Missouri had not been affected by the new law, since Missouri never joined the Confederate States. For those formerly enslaved, making a stop in a state where buying and selling slaves was still legal was a very bold, daring, and dangerous move.

In 1864, Robert Lowery composed a song later called "Shall We Gather at The River". Was it fate that by the time of that song's publication, on the banks of the Missouri River near 4th St. and Troost, Rev. Clark Moore had already started a mission for those "Exodusters", that was lovingly called "Stragglers Camp"? This was a bold choice, since at this time in the state of Missouri, gatherings of this kind were illegal for those still enslaved, as well as those who were seeking refuge on the way to Freedom's Land. Believing in God's protection, they often met for late hours of prayerful teaching and worship, combining both with melodious singing voices. One could also hear the shrieking whistles of steamboats in the distance. In October of 1863, before Missouri's Manumission Day on January 11, 1865, Rev. Moore, assisted by Rev. Lovelace, gave each convert the opportunity to express his choice of denominational affiliation, either Baptist or Methodist. Two-thirds chose Baptist, the other

one-third, chose Methodist. By this action, the two groups eventually came to be known as Second Baptist Church and Allen Chapel A.M.E. Rev. Moore became the first pastor of Second Baptist Church. He faithfully served for several years until he was called to plant another church in Independence, Missouri. He was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Strothers, an "Exoduster" himself. Led by Rev. Strothers, the church later was moved "up the hill" to build and worship in a small wooden framed building, located in "Walnut Grove". For a while it was known as the Charlotte Street Baptist Church.

Under the leadership of another God-sent man, Rev. Henry Roberson, the congregation was led to fund and build a larger brick and mortar edifice at 10th & Charlotte streets. The cost was \$5,000.00 and it housed more than 500 members. After serving and growing the Second Baptist congregation for 27 years, while also serving the community-at-large as a mentor and educator, Rev. Roberson retired and was replaced by the much younger Rev. Samuel W. Bacote. Very shortly after passing on the mantel, both Rev. Roberson and his wife Mary went home to glory, departing only one year apart.

At the start of his service, Rev. Bacote immediately began organizing various groups in order to aid in the support of the growing church. From the beginning of his tenure in 1895, he hit the ground running. Following Rev. Roberson's second building expansion, there was a remaining debt of \$4,000.00. Rev. Bacote oversaw efforts which quickly paid off that debt and within three years a super-structure, valued at more than \$100,000.00 was erected. It was completed in 1898, just in time to host

that year's National Baptist Convention.



**10<sup>th</sup> & Charlotte KCMO Location**

One item of note was a Monday, Nov. 16th, 1895, article printed in the Kansas City Journal, a white newspaper, that was entitled "A Monument to Their Zeal". This article reported on the efforts of "members of a colored congregation building a new church." In July 1907, Second Baptist's membership roll listed 911 persons. At that time, a lot of the black population lived in an area from 9th to 11th St., Campbell on the east, to Grand on the west. There were often people of note attending for special occasions. Among them was Paul Lurance Dunbar, the leading Negro poet of that time, Booker T. Washington, and later opera singer, Marion Andersen.

In the May 1926 issue of the Kansas City Call, an article appeared detailing the fire at our historic church which destroyed the sanctuary and damaged the building to the amount of \$20,000.00. Until such time as the structure could be rebuilt, the members worshipped at the Y.M.C.A., located at 1924 the Paseo. "A dream deferred but not denied" was the theme that kept the congregation faithful. Within two years, the first unit of a new edifice was completed. They worshipped there until 1941.

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It was in 1941 that another miracle took place. With the help of J. A. Carpenter, a member of Central Baptist Church, Second Baptist was offered another location at 10th & Park for the sum of \$2,000.00 even though the value was more than \$150,000.00. God, in awesome love provided for the faithful worshippers of Second Baptist!



10<sup>th</sup> & Park KCMO Location

Looking back at the fifty-one years of excellent service of Rev. S. W. Bacote and his family, the time came for him to face his health issues and step down from the pulpit, on June 1, 1946. The call then went out to Rev. E. E. Chappelle, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Suffolk, VA. With him came his wife, Mrs. Thelma Chappelle and their two children, Charles and Bernice. Mrs. Chappelle went to work as a teacher and superintendent in the Sunday School department and served on the evangelism committee.

Rev. Chappelle presented a new ministry revolving around finance, believing the guiding philosophy of giving to be "*Christian giving is an essential part of Christian living.*" His flagship program was called "Homecoming Day" The first speaker was Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, President of Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA. The program had four purposes: 1. To welcome former members who had been away for various reasons, 2. To inspire us toward

nobler goals in Christian living, 3. To raise the necessary funds to balance our budget, and 4. To contribute to the cultural life of the community by bringing distinguished speakers and leaders. Two other new ministries were introduced, giving attention to our youth by recognizing their accomplishments at senior high schools in the Kansas City area. These were "Youth Achievement Day" and the Boy Scout program.

It was during the tenure of Rev. Chappelle that the membership decided to move to a new location at 39th & Monroe. More than seventy-five cars led the members into its new building on February 17, 1963. Later, four young men were added to the ministerial staff in the person of Rev. Charles Briscoe, Rev. David O. Shipley, Rev. E. B. Stevenson, and Rev. William E. Singleton. Learning was also encouraged as space was given to the "W. E. B. DuBois Learning Center" to tutor youth in reading, math, and science after school and on Saturdays. A bus ministry was added to enable those who lived further out, a way to get to church.

Many people will always remember Rev. Chappelle for his daily visits to various hospitals not only to see our members, but any who needed a smile or a prayer to encourage them as they mended. This, like the burdens of being a pastor, led to a time of admitting weariness and after 50 years of service, Rev. E. E. Chappelle stepped down from the pulpit.

When the young Rev. Shipley left Second Baptist, he continued his education receiving his A.B. from Baker University, his B. D. & M. D. from Central Baptist Theological Seminary and was granted the Doctor of Ministry in Marriage and Family Counseling from

Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, so he was well prepared to take over as Pastor of Second Baptist Church, where he had grown up. He returned home in 1980. He, much like his predecessors, wrote books and made changes in the worship service. Rev. Shipley reorganized the order of service into four areas: 1. *Act of Diving Adoration*, 2. *Act of Personal Contribution and Sacrifice*, 3. *Act of Sacred Instruction*, 4. *Act of Commitment*. New observances were begun Advent & Lent, Black History, Prayer and Christian Fellowship, and another newsletter was added. A church manual was written and adopted by the membership. With his tenure, other young ministers were added to the ministerial staff. They were, Rev. Sam Carpenter, Rev. A. Mosley, Rev. Jerry Holly, Rev. Karlous Kalu, Rev. Adrian Scott, Rev. Coleman McClain, Rev. John Brown, Rev. James Harshaw, and Brother James Wesley.

For the first time at Second Baptist Church, Rev. Shipley permitted, welcomed, and encouraged women to serve in the pulpit. The first women so honored were Rev. Ruth Collins, Rev. Margaret Roberts, and Rev. Emilie M. Townes.

In October of 1988, Second Baptist celebrated its jubilee with a series of events honoring the 125th year of existence. This message stands out for the present and the future.

## **TWO GRATEFUL HANDS**

to thank the Lord whose blessings never cease.

## **TWO FAITHFUL HANDS**

to glorify the Father and the Son

## **TWO GENTLE HANDS**

to ask that God grant all enduring peace

## **TWO READY HANDS**

to toil until the Master's work is done

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The years advanced and with them Rev. Shipley felt the need to rest. On May 1, 1998, Rev. Kendall Jones of Little Rock, Arkansas became the seventh Pastor of Second Baptist Church. Along with him was his wife Mae Helen and their two sons, Kendall Dwayne, Jr. and Allan Jermaine. With a focus on a more contemporary worship, a praise and worship team, praise dancers, and musical instruments were added as spoken of in Psalms 150. A block fellowship became a ministry in which we also worked with Community Services Summer Food program. Needing to increase outreach, Rev. Jones appointed Deacon Arthur Franklin who organized a Prison Ministry, and Rev. Roy Brown, who journeyed to Swope Ridge Nursing Home monthly, to serve and uplift the residents. Rev. Jones delegated members to find out the purpose of the new teaching "Purpose Driven Church." Through this, what had been called committees or organizations were now ministries with scriptural guidelines and mission statements. These helped to better focus the efforts of each ministry.

As sometimes happens, we face situations that can only be resolved by separation and because of this, Rev. Jones accepted a post to pastor the New Bethel Baptist Church in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Into the breach stepped Rev. Karlous Kalu, ready, willing and able to lead this historic church onto the next step. As Interim Pastor, he was joined by his wife, Mindy and their daughter, Blessing. A man called to "Stand in the Gap".

There were many changes in 2008. The country saw the election of our very first African American President, in the person of Barack Obama. That same year we welcomed our eighth shepherd, Rev. Vernon P. Howard, Jr.,

his wife Frances, and children, Sophia and Vernon III. With a vision for the future, Rev. Howard began organizing a Spiritual Task Force to plan and implement "The Miracle on 39<sup>th</sup> Street", M39 as it was called, with the hopes of erecting a new sanctuary. As this was being done, he also started a "Ministers of the Miracle" Training and Development Series which mentored, served and trained twenty-seven persons. With this and other endeavors, Rev. Howard served until he left to head another post in June of 2014.



**39<sup>th</sup> & Monroe KCMO  
Present Location**

On March 5, 2016, the people of Second Baptist Church heard the Holy Spirit and a new Angel was appointed as leader. Rev. Kevin L. Nelson became the ninth Pastor. Rev. Nelson was licensed by the Late Rev. Earl Able of Palestine Baptist Church and ordained by Pastor Delano Benson of the Pleasant Green Baptist Church of Kansas City, Missouri. Rev. Nelson was an Associate Minister at Second Baptist Church under Rev. Howard. He served as Interim Pastor at Second Baptist Church beginning March of 2015. As we entered our 153rd year of God's leading us through the paths of this Christian journey, we celebrated under the leadership of Rev. Kevin Nelson who, with his wife Rev. Dana Nelson, daughter Gabrielle, and sons, Jacob and Joshua took up the call of

the cross of Christ to serve the people of Second Baptist Church.

Rev. Nelson encouraged Second Baptist Church leadership to develop its own New Membership Orientation Manual which was completed in January 2016. Second Baptist Church began its Social Media ministry first with our online streaming of morning services in August 2015. Second Baptist Church then installed video screens in the sanctuary to enhance the worship service experience in 2017. After two years of service, Second Baptist Church decided to move in a different direction as Rev. Nelson's tenure ended on April 1, 2018. Each time we had faced a crisis, God allowed Rev. Karlous U. Kalu to step in to shoulder the mantle and guide the church, and this time was no different.

Second Baptist had been praying and listening for guidance of the Holy Spirit to call its tenth Pastor. This call was answered on March 1, 2020, by Rev. Joe L. Callahan, Jr. from St. John Baptist Church in Clovis, New Mexico. First Lady, Dr. Tamara Callahan is a child of Second Baptist Church, having grown up worshipping and celebrating in these halls. They have brought with them a complete trust and faith in God, an exhorter's gift, an educator's mindset, a dreamer's vision, and a "Can-Do" spirit. God has truly placed His hand on Second Baptist Church.

Second Baptist Church has several families with legacy dated back to its rich history of the 1800's. We invite you to get to know them and actively become a member of this congregation where God can use and bless you.

May God continue to bless those He has brought this far by faith!

