

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

The Sunday Church School was organized in March 1897 by Reverend Harry W. Knight and Reverend S. Coleman with eight other persons. Reverend Hadden was appointed Superintendent and served from 1897- 1909. The Sunday School grew and possibly reached its peak during the 1920's. A Junior Church was organized to serve the ever-increasing membership. In 1925, a bus was purchased for the Junior Sunday School. The reenrollment was above 500 with 25 teachers. Many teachers attended Moody Bible Institute and were exposed to new teaching methods, which were subsequently incorporated into our program. Reverend E. J. Echols, Reverend T. Hendon, Reverend William Brawner, Mrs. Myrtle Snowden, Mrs. Novella Brown and Reverend Harry D. Reese followed Reverend Hadden.

Mr. General Hadley, the eighth Superintendent of the Friendship Sunday School, was appointed in 1936. The Sunday School grew numerically and financially becoming the largest active auxiliary of the Church, as well as the largest Sunday School of all the churches on the West Side. There were 35 teachers and several substitutes. A Benevolent Fund was started to buy clothing for the needy children in the community, thereby gaining them in Sunday School. Transportation was also provided. The Sunday School purchased a movie projector and each weekend movies were shown to the children of Friendship and the community. Superintendent Hadley was known as the Superintendent of the Neighborhood. His tenure brought us into the present administration under Pastor Shelvin Jerome Hall who came to shepherd us in 1955.

1957-1959: Mr. Ulysses S. Wigfall, a unique yet humble person, with whom we developed a mutual feeling of admiration, became Superintendent. We discovered him to be an individual who willingly and ungrudgingly, gave of his time, talents, goodwill and understanding. The following programs were initiated: (1) Training Classes for preparation prior to class appointments conducted by Mr. Henry Lyles, Jr., (2) In-Service Teachers' Meetings held each Friday concentrating on the following: (a) geographical, (b) historical, (c) illustrative and (d) the lesson proper, (3) The Six-point Record System was adopted, (4) Delegates were sent to the National Congresses with emphasis being placed on information received and acted upon and not lengthy reports.

1959-1964: Mrs. Mary Seymour became the tenth Superintendent. She had worked in the Sunday School for years as a teacher and department superintendent. Under her leadership the Sunday School flourished and became associated with the Older Boys and Girls Conference of Chicago headed by Mr. Jackson Malone. The teachers and students were able to attend various Sunday School meetings and banquets. Tables, teaching aids and recreational equipment were purchased. We became active in the Baptist General State Congress. Mrs. Seymour instituted a Visitation Program, which included children from the Henry Horner Homes.

1965-1966: Mrs. Lucy Mae Hall continued to give meaning to Christian Education. She proved to be a strong, energetic and devoted administrator who delighted us with her quiet, soft-spoken manner. To retain our high level of growth we surveyed the surrounding neighborhood of our new location on Douglas Boulevard. Teachers' Meeting was once a month, which meant that not only were lessons for the month discussed but also planning for programs and groups. Intricate thoughts involving Christian Education caused Superintendent Hall to change our Sunday School literature and methods of presentations. Audio-visuals and recording materials were introduced to the Senior Department. Our young talented musicians were given the opportunity to serve by playing for the Department and the Sunday School as a whole. Realizing that "all work and no play would make Jack a dull boy", Mrs. Hall prescribed the Mother-Daughter and Father-Son Banquet.

1966-1968: Mr. John V. Brown was appointed Superintendent. Mr. Brown joined Friendship as a young man and had been a member of the Metoka Class of Young Men. He became a teacher and later Department Superintendent who loved the Sunday School. He emphasized the need for helping community families. He also made personal visits to their homes and carried clothing to many children as well as brought them to Sunday School. Once again we began sending delegates to the National Congress.

1968-1970: Reverend Alonzo Batts, Jr. began his tenure. First, he evaluated the Departments and set goals for Department Superintendents. These standards were the determining factors as to who would attend the National Congress as delegates. Reverend Batts, being a very energetic young man, therefore, re-instituted the Weekly Teachers' Meetings and also a Weekly Visitation Program featuring weekly progress reports. The Adult Class served a repast after each meeting.

1971-1975: Mrs. Thelma Harston took a look at the past and found many good works, which had been achieved by previous administrations. In order to give better leadership she attended a series of classes and workshops throughout the city including the Greater Chicago Sunday School Association Workshops. Visitation programs were continued with follow-ups to build a larger Sunday School. Enrollment increased and new classes were formed including a Men's Bible Class and young people served as secretarial trainees and musicians. An Annual Sunday School Observance was instituted.

1976-1980: Mrs. Vina Mae Carroll was elected to serve as Superintendent. She continued to encourage members to attend Baptist General State Congress of Christian Education and to attend classes offered by the Congress Department of Salem Baptist District Association. Under Mrs. Carroll, the Home Department was started with Mrs. Catherine Stovall and Mr. Arthur Winfield serving as teachers. This department visited the homes of the Sick and Shut-In, especially the former workers of the Sunday Church School. We continued to attend the Greater Chicago Sunday School Workshops. Teachers meetings were held weekly with teachers from each department presenting the lesson. Each department was assigned to bring the before class assembly Meditation and after class lesson review.

1981-1986: Mrs. Mary L. Jones served as General Superintendent. Under her leadership, a Planning Session prior to the Annual Church Retreat was held and every attendee had a voice in formulating the program for the new year. The Teachers' Training Department was established with Mrs. Jeraldine Bowen and Mrs. Olivia M. Peek as Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent respectively. Mrs. Anna Patten was in charge of the Audio-visuals and Tape Ministry. Delegates were sent to the District, State and National Congresses. The General Assembly Meditation Period was discontinued. Teachers had requested more class time.

1986-1990: Mr. George Dailey served as Superintendent. He continued the programs begun under the previous administrations. Teachers' Meetings were again held once a month. Our Annual Planning Session was continued and Department Superintendents' Meetings were held each 4th Sunday. We participated in Bike-a-Thons and Walk-a-Thons for worthy causes.

1991 - June 1992: Mr. Henry Clark was appointed Superintendent. Mr. Clark had served faithfully as Assistant to Mr. Dailey and had carried on during Mr. Dailey's illness. He served until June 1992. Under his leadership, the George Dailey Memorial Library was created with members donating religious and secular educational literature and music. Library cards were issued to students who needed textbooks for study.

July 1992 - July 1993: Reverend Woody L. Collins served as General Superintendent. Reverend Collins continued to have the Annual Planning Sessions and outlined a budget for us. Prerequisites were given for delegates wishing to attend the National Congress. Reverend Collins encouraged the younger students to learn the Books of the Bible by offering prizes. The Teachers' Training Department was discontinued and the New Members Class was placed under the auspices of the Sunday School at 9:00 A.M. Reverend Freddie Burden and Reverend Randall Harris gave direction in this class. On 4th Sundays, the Adult Department under their Department Superintendent Reverend George R. Bowen, Jr. and the Young People's Department under their Department Superintendent Mrs. Thelma Harston brought the lesson reviews. Due to job changes, Reverend Collins resigned and Reverend Renée Willett was appointed Superintendent.

August 1993 - December 1997: Reverend Renée Willett served as General Superintendent. Under his leadership, we combined the Cradle Roll/Nursery and Primary Departments under Mrs. Josephine Brown, the Seniors' Class and Young Adults under Mrs. Wilma Brown-Griffin. Bi-weekly Teachers' meetings were held and teachers could discuss problems and make suggestions on how to increase our enrollment. Pastor Hall was asked to review the Sunday School lesson each 3rd Sunday. A breakfast program was established catering to the Sunday School and the community. Breakfast was served prior to Sunday School each Sunday. In 1997, The Friendship Baptist Church and her Sunday School celebrated their "centennial".

1998-2002: Rev. Dr. Henry Henard became General Superintendent bringing great enthusiasm. He has a vision for the Sunday School which when fully implemented

would increase our membership. Teacher's Meetings were held on a monthly basis. Mrs. Wilma Brown-Griffin served as Assistant Superintendent. Under Dr. Henard's leadership, the Sunday School purchased a computer, printer, computer workstation and desk to assist the office staff in becoming more efficient.

2003-Current: Mrs. Carolyn L. Davidson took over the helm of the Sunday School. She has great plans for the Sunday School and is enthusiastically working with the Sunday School leadership to move to greater heights. The Young Laymen, a class for young men between the ages of 19 and 25 was established to address the needs of that age group. A Deacons' class was established affording the Deacons the privilege of studying together. Teachers' meetings are now held twice a month and lesson plans are required at each meeting.

In January 2004, a Teachers Training Class began with 12 students. Course cards were given to the students who completed the course. The new teachers taught under the supervision of lead teachers before being assigned to permanent classrooms.

In 2005 the Sunday School traveled to Memphis, Tennessee on a Black Heritage Tour. They visited the Underground Railroad and various historical sites. The Sunday School worshipped with the St. James Baptist and was invited to teach the Sunday School classes.

In 2006 a Teacher's Workshop was held on the first Saturday in April. An Easter Passion Play was performed on Easter Sunday with more than a 35 member cast.

The year 2006 marks the 109th year of continuous dedicated service by committed teachers, department superintendents, secretaries and most importantly, the students. We pray that God will continue to give us committed leadership who will help to increase our knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through the years, the Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad.

