



TABERNACLE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY

Established in 1950 TO 2023
73rd Church Anniversary

Brief History of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church was founded in 1950, in the Central District of Seattle, Washington, on the corner of 28th Avenue and South Jackson Street. During its 73 years, the church has been steadfast in serving the community and preaching the good news of the gospel. Tabernacle has seen five pastors in its seven-plus decade of existence. It has purchased several properties within the block and in the immediate neighborhood. Tabernacle has revised programs and services to meet the needs of the congregation and the community.

Tabernacle's founding Pastor was Rev. Hezekiah King Griffin, Jr. of Shreveport, Louisiana. In August of 1950, Rev. Griffin was invited by the Ushers of the Progressive Baptist Church to conduct a revival. At the close of the revival, the Minister in charge of the Mt. Baker Community Church invited Rev. Griffin to conduct a three-week revival. During the services, some of the people who knew Rev. Griffin from Louisiana asked him to stay and organize a church, and he did. Forty-seven individuals united with Rev. Griffin and founded Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church on September 12, 1950. The first auxiliaries established were the Deacon Board, Church School, Mission Society, Choir, Pastor's Aid, Prayer Band, and Usher Board.

On April 18, 1964, Pastor Griffin resigned after thirteen and a half years of service. Reverend Alex Watson, a young Minister of the church was asked to provide pulpit services for the congregation. Rev. Watson served until Rev. B.A. Taylor was called in 1964 from West Virginia.

In July 1964 Rev. B.A. Taylor preached at the 11:00 a.m. service and through the following week. During the week he was interviewed by the pulpit committee, and upon recommendation, the committee extended the call to Rev. Taylor on August 8, 1964. He officially began serving on October 6, 1964. When Rev. Taylor came to us, we had a mortgage loan of more than \$5K



with the Washington Baptist Convention and other indebtedness which was paid in full by early 1966. Pastor Taylor came with a vision to build a new sanctuary. We held a Capital Fund Campaign to help raise the funding for the renovation project. The campaign began on January 1, 1966, and closed on January 15, 1966, with \$4k in pledges over our estimated goal. At this time we changed our plans from renovation to building a new sanctuary and renovating the present building for educational facilities. This was the recommendation to the church. The church voted unanimously to accept the plan. We broke ground on November 6, 1966, and on September 3, 1967, we marched into our new sanctuary with joy and praise. Pastor Taylor served us faithfully for nine years before resigning.

Rev. Melvin Darden of San Diego, California was called to Pastor Tabernacle in February of 1973. Pastor Darden served until February of 1977. Under his leadership, the youth choir and young adult choirs reemerged, and the church held and participated in fellowship fundraisers. These fundraisers were known as the 3rd Sunday night fellowship that Tabernacle hosted with four other churches; the New Year's Day Gospel Brunch, the Old Ship of Zion (reenacting Bible stories), and an awards program like the Academy Awards where people dressed up and awards were given out by featured celebrities and guests.

Rev. Clarence E. Henderson was next to lead the congregation. The mortgage of the new church building was paid off under Rev. Henderson's leadership. Rev. Henderson served for five years before leaving in 1982.

In June of 1983, Robert Lee Manaway, Sr. of Hattiesburg, Mississippi was invited to conduct a revival. Because of his age, he was considered too young to be a pastoral candidate. He was the guest preacher for the third Sunday Fellowship service. He began the revival on Monday night. He was interviewed by the search committee, trustee & deacon boards on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. At the close of the revival, he was asked to Preach the Men's Day program on the 4th Sunday of June 1983. At the close of the service, he was asked to pray about pastoring the church. The congregation met on July 12, 1983, and extended the invitation to Pastor Manaway to become the Pastor of the church. He accepted the call and began his Pastoral duties on the first Sunday of September in 1983.

During his tenure, Pastor Manaway continued to lead the church to purchase properties along Jackson and pay off debts. Today we have



secured ownership of several buildings and properties within the block of 28th, 29th, South King, and South Jackson Streets. In 2004, the congregation purchased 415 MLK Way for \$450,000. The mortgage was paid in full in October of 2019. The final property purchased was 415 29th Avenue for \$2,475,500.00. Today the mortgage is \$1,916,000.00. The current debt retirement goal is to pay off the debt by 2030.

Further, Pastor Manaway re-designed the Music Department, participated in prison ministry, and developed and updated resources for new members, new converts, Christian marriages, and more. Under his leadership, Tabernacle has established protocols and processes to help organize and streamline church services and make them more efficient. Position descriptions have been developed to support the work of the church. Financial support for these roles comes through a special weekly offering known as, Operation Mustard Seed, which was reestablished in 2017.

Pastor Manaway has worked to develop more opportunities for young adults, strengthen leadership capabilities, and expand missions and outreach. We provided weekly meals to residents of Nickelsville and today, we provide an average of 400 lunches to the homeless community monthly. A Drug and Alcohol Outreach Program addressed the addiction crisis of the early '80s' and '90s; a Baby Formula Program was established to help single parents provide nourishment for babies; and countless donation drives have been organized to offer hope to those in need throughout the local and national community. In addition, Tabernacle began foreign mission efforts in Belize and Kenya in 1994.

Pastor Manaway has also organized church and bible Institutes. These annual efforts enabled Tabernacle to feature and share powerful local and national preachers with the community.

In 2020, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church's annual theme was "Moving from Ordinary to Extraordinary." In this context, Pastor Manaway was encouraging the congregation to believe that God was able to use ordinary people to do ordinary things in extraordinary ways for his glory and our good.

As the year 2020 began, none of us knew or realized that coronavirus had already begun taking hold of the world. Reports were beginning to surface



about unusual deaths from a novel virus in China. By the middle of March 2020, the virus reached the shores of America and changed the American way of life overnight. The first death from the virus occurred in Washington State at Providence Medical Center in Snohomish County Washington. Later the virus devastated a senior citizen living facility in Redmond Washington. Soon after that, federal, state, and local civic officials issued mandatory shutdowns to slow the spread of the virus and the number of deaths caused by it.

Due to what became known as the COVID-19 pandemic, Tabernacle paused in-person services from March 15, 2020, until May 9, 2021. During that time TMBC reestablished and expanded its virtual presence. The weekly 6 a.m. Hour of Power service and 10:15 am morning worship services, along with Pastoral and Youth bible studies were posted on the church's Facebook page for viewing. As a result, hundreds, and thousands of people around the world were able to participate in Tabernacle services.

In addition to virtual worship services being engaged during this time, the Outreach Ministry began partnering with local organizations to provide meals twice a week to members of our congregation and the community at large. On average 320 families were served every month. In September of 2022, the Outreach Ministry Feeding Program reestablished the third Saturday on-site homeless outreach ministry. On average, they serve 200 hot dinners each month. In August of 2023, the Outreach Ministry restarted the Sack/Snack Program, which serves an additional 325 meals to those who were experiencing food insecurity.

While the congregation was out of the facility, the Capital Campaign Council took the opportunity to complete a full renovation of the women's restroom at a total cost of \$122,312.29. Further, during this time, Pastor Manaway established a coalition with other local African American pastors to meet with local and state officials to help support congregations in receiving funds and media equipment to continue their respective worship services.

On May 9, 2021, in-person services resumed, and the decision was made to have services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays only. Before that service policies and procedures were established to ensure members of the congregation remained healthy and safe. A Medical Team was established to screen participants as they entered the facility, and a pre-registration protocol



was created to ensure the maximum seating capacity was not violated and clear expectations were followed by those in attendance. Unfortunately, due to the surge of different variants of COVID-19 at the end of 2021, the decision was made to once again pause in-person services. Then, on February 6, 2022, in-person services once again resumed and since that time there has been a weekly 9 a.m. worship service that is also live-streamed via Facebook Live and YouTube.

On February 18, 2023, Pastor Manaway was contacted by the Muskelly family informing him that their family had decided to sell the small parcel of land next to his parent's home located at 415 29th Ave. He was offered a parcel that was 30 x 120, but the family decided to keep the family home for future use.

Then, Pastor Manaway was contacted by a real estate broker representing the Muskelly family informing him she had been hired by the Muskelly family to serve as the broker agent for selling the property on behalf of the family. A meeting was scheduled for April 1, 2023, at the church at 11 AM.

The corporate officers and Deacons were invited to hear the proposed property acquisition presentation. When the meeting started the broker agent informed us that the Muskelly family had decided to sell all of the properties and not just a 30 x 120' parcel. The selling price for both parcels including the house was \$2,475,500. The council took a moment to consider the ramifications of what it meant to be able to acquire the total properties that the Muskelly family was offering plus its price. After a brief discussion, we agreed that we would proceed on behalf of the church to acquire the properties. A commitment to purchase the property was signed by Church Business Administrator Elder Thomas James, and a 10% earnest money deposit was made with a Chicago escrow within five days.

The initial closing date was July 15, 2023. During the closing process, the church discovered that several title issues to church properties needed to be cleared up, affirmed and recorded with the title company to meet ownership affirmation.

Meanwhile, KeyBank national loan officials were working with state Key Bank employees to determine the total cost of acquisition and cash financial resources. Tabernacle would need to qualify for a loan to cover the cost of the purchase of the property.



Tabernacle to this point was financially debt-free, and the church possessed sufficient financial and substantial real property assets along with financial supporting documents, which would allow the church to qualify to receive a \$1,926,000 loan from KeyBank. The church would be required to use approximately \$572,000 of its cash reserves as a down payment to secure the property and satisfy financing requirements.

On July 20, 2023, the Business Administrator and Church Administrator (Thomas James, and Michelle Berry Anthony respectively), met with Chicago Title, Key Bank officials, and the broker representing the Muskelly family to sign closing documents for the purchase of the property at 415 29th Ave. The title of ownership was recorded officially on July 27, 2023. As always, the praise, glory, and honor belong to God for allowing us the privilege of stewardship and superintending this purchase process in his name. Glory be to God!

With the acquisition of 415 29th Ave., Tabernacle became the owner of a city block in the central area of Seattle. The borders are now South Jackson St., South King St., 29th Ave., and 28th Ave.

On August 17, 2023, Pastor Manaway conducted a congregational Zoom meeting to inform the congregation of the process mentioned above and ask them to begin praying about financial commitments that each member would be asked to make for the first seven years of this debt retirement effort. The debt retirement plan will begin on September 1, 2023, and conclude on September 1, 2030. It is our prayer that before 2033 Tabernacle will once again achieve her debt-free status.

The goal with all church properties is to develop the entire block to be an urban contemporary village, which addresses housing, family life, sustainability, and social services to the community. God be praised!

For the past forty years, Pastor Manaway has guided the congregation. His focus continues to be developing church leaders to competently serve the congregation. We are excited to see what God will do next, through and with Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.