



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 752/17

Name and Address of Property: Mount Zion Baptist Church
1634 Reverend Dr. S. McKinney Avenue (19th Avenue)

Legal Description Lots 5-6 and 14-18 in Block 16 of Renton Hill Addition, as per plat in records of King County; situate in the City of Seattle, County of King, State of Washington.

At the public meeting held on October 18, 2017 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Mount Zion Baptist Church at 1634 Reverend Dr. S. McKinney Avenue as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- A. *It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with, an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, City, state, or nation.*
- B. *It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation.*
- C. *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.*
- D. *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction.*
- E. *It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.*
- F. *Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

DESCRIPTION

The Mount Zion Baptist Church is located on the corner of 19th Avenue and East Madison Street in the heart of the Seattle Central District. The campus borders: East Madison Street to the North, 19th Avenue to the West, Pine Street to the South, and 20th Avenue to the East—owning all properties in this square block radius except the house on the corner of 19th and Pine and the house on the corner of 20th and Pine. Mount Zion Baptist Church has served the Seattle Community for over 125 years and is the oldest black Baptist Church in Seattle, reaching out to the communities that pastor emeritus Dr. Samuel Berry McKinney calls “the least, the last, the lost, the locked up and the left behind”.

On the 19th Avenue Location, Mount Zion Baptist Church was built in 1920, a red brick building with a parsonage that had been the worship site since 1918. The red door from the “old church” can be found in the church display at the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle.

The Mount Zion architectural structure is proudly Afrocentric. The sanctuary uses universal themes of simplicity and permanence to express the way African faith heritage and African American faith heritage have merged, to express elements of African American faith history, and to proclaim God’s enduring presence.

The creation of a church that could illustrate Afro-Christian and Baptist history excited Reverend Dr. Samuel Berry McKinney who presented his church design ideas to architects following a trip to West Africa. Those ideas, now listed as a must-see in Seattle’s hotel guides and in several national black publications. Having it truly memorialized as the historic treasure that it is would facilitate its preservation for future generations.

The Sanctuary structure, architecturally designed to facilitate a close communal bond to Africa, resembles a community comprised of three African huts. The colors present in the sanctuary are royal African colors that additionally have theological meaning. In theological terms, red represents divinity and Christ’s blood and purple signifies that we are royal children of Christ the King.

Description of the Site Elements

Mount Zion Baptist Church Campus encompasses the Main Sanctuary and the Educational Unit. Construction of these two entities occurred at different times. The Educational Unit was constructed in 1962 and the New Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1975.

The Educational Unit

In 1963 the Mount Zion Baptist Church opened its \$250,000 Educational Unit which set in motion a program of Christian Education to complement its worship service. This unit housed: classrooms (primary and intermediate), library, lounge, nursery, meeting rooms, parlor,

fellowship hall, kitchen and the church office. Not long after its opening, a Day Care, Nursery and Pre-School was established.

The Educational Unit blends together the Concept of Modern Architecture, Artistic Beauty and Functional Utility to provide a wholesome atmosphere in which we study and serve.

The Education Unit was named *The Mable Leola Frazier Harris Educational Wing* which included the Jessie Shields Fellowship Hall. These entities were named after two longstanding women of Mount Zion who had provided extraordinary leadership in church activities. This facility is where community and church meetings are held that engage the social causes for which Mount Zion is so admired and known.

The New Mount Zion Baptist Church

The Mount Zion Baptist Church boasts an Afrocentric architectural structure that expresses the history of African and American faiths. African Heritage is seen in the structural design, from within and outside of the church. Each element of the design and structure of the church was carefully orchestrated.

The creation of a church that could illustrate Afro-Christian and Baptist history excited Rev. Dr. Samuel Berry McKinney who presented his church design ideas to architects

The *roof*. The triangles on the external borders of the three African-styled roofs of the Sanctuary symbolizes the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The roof also resembles the roof of an African hut.

The church has eighteen stained-glass windows, manufactured by Mr. Douglas Phillips of Cleveland, Ohio. At the time of the construction of this church, Mr. Phillips was the only Black owner of a stained-glass studio in the United States. The ten windows on the east wall of the Sanctuary are eleven feet high and two feet wide, the eight on the south wall of the Chapel are eleven feet high and one foot wide. All are one inch or more thick and made of faceted glass. The windows represent some of the Black church leaders and heroes who have made significant contributions to American civilization and were designed exclusively for the Mount Zion Baptist Church of Seattle. They are named “The Church and the World”, and were designed as a unique work of art for Mount Zion Baptist Church never to be duplicated.

The cast of Honored Persons in the Windows are:

1. George Lisle (1750 – 1820). Pastor of the first Black Baptist Church in America.
2. Prince Hall (1748 – 1807). Ordained minister and Masonic Leader.
3. W. D. Carter (1862 – 1960). Builder of the old Mount Zion Baptist Church and its sixteenth pastor.
4. Jesus Christ: Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and Ending.
5. Nat Turner (1800 – 1831). Revolutionary who led the largest and bloodiest American slave revolt.
6. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968). Preacher, prophet, peaceful warrior. Civil rights leader.

7. Lott Carey (1780 – 1918). First Black Missionary from America to Africa.
8. Nannie Helen Burroughs (1879 – 1961). Educator, President of the Women’s Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
9. E. C. Morris (1855 – 1922). Founder and the first President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
10. Mary McLeod Bethune (1875 – 1955). Founder of Bethune-Cookman College and advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.
11. Sojourner Truth (1797 – 1883). Lecturer and slave freedom fighter.
12. Frederick Douglas (1817 – 1895). Humanitarian, writer, abolitionist and statesman.
13. Harriet Tubman (1826 – 1913). Creator of the underground railroad and freedom fighter.
14. George Washington Bush (1790 – 1863). Father of the State of Washington.
15. Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1872 – 1906). Poet, lyricist, composer, writer.
16. William E. B DuBois (1868 – 1963). Educator, writer, humanitarian and visionary.
17. Booker T. Washington (1865 – 1915). Educator, humanitarian, Founder of Tuskegee Institute.
18. George Washington Carver (1864 – 1943). Lover of nature, scientist, humanitarian and educator.

Description of the Interior of the Church

The basic floor plan of the Sanctuary is in the shape of the cross, the baptistry at the head, the pulpit and the communion table in the center, the choir stand and pipe organ extending north, the chapel extending south, and the center aisle extending from the communion table to the east wall.

The *twelve wooden beams* inside the church, represent the twelve (12) tribes of Israel (named for Jacob’s twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher—Exodus 1:2-4. They also represent the twelve (12) Apostles (Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddaeus, Simon and Judas Iscariot—Matthew 10:2-4, and the unfinished nature of humankind.

The *wood posts* of the African motif are from the natural Northwest. They are unfinished just as we as Christians are unfinished.

The *colors* in the Sanctuary are considered the colors of royalty. The basic colors are *red*, representing, divinity and the blood of Christ and *purple*, representing the color of royalty that accrues to Christians because we are children of the King.

The *communion table* is shaped in the form of a casket, signifying how early Christians would observe communion to celebrate death to self and life in Christ. It is also located in the heart of the cross-floor plan.

The *skylights* represent the four gospel writers of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). They also represent the light of Jesus Christ to every believer.

The *three-manual pipe organ* was designed by church organist Rev. Frank M. Byrdwell and Balcom and Vaughan Pipe Organs, Inc. President William J. Bunch (Seattle).

The organ contains 1,825 pipes ranging from six inches to sixteen feet high. It is in four divisions: The Great Organ, the Swell Organ, the Choir-Positive Organ, and the Pedal Organ. The pipes of the Great and Pedal Organ are exposed in full view to the congregation. The Swell Organ is enclosed behind grillwork on the left side and the Choir-Positive Organ enclosed on the right. The sixteen feet high Kontra Bass pipes and the sub-bass pipes border the front of the enclosed chambers. High at the top, thirty feet above the choir, are the Trompette-En-Chamade pipes—sixty-one pipes horizontally suspended from the ceiling, giving the listener the full brilliance of English horns from the mountain top.

We are happy to have an organ built to satisfy all the musical needs of Mount Zion—one capable of playing the great classics, spirituals, hymns, and gospel songs of the African-American tradition.

The essence of the membership of Mount Zion finds expression not only in pragmatic construction but in esthetic delineation. An aspect of that esthetic construction is represented through a contemporary statement of ecclesiastical art, the *appliqued tapestry*, suspended parallel to the baptistery wall and above the baptistery itself.

The tapestry, a focal point of the pulpit that sits over the baptistry was designed by Larry Metcalf, Professor of Art at Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, Washington. Its vibrant colors and simple design stimulating many provocative questions.

The symbols in the tapestry have fascinating and relevant meanings to Christians that are presented in cross-cultural ways through this form of art.

- The Eye of God. Looking out from the tapestry and down on all the other symbols in the tapestry is a symbol for the eye of God, significant as a manifestation of God's "all-seeingness". It represents God's omniscience in the lives of the world's inhabitants. "The eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the evil and the good".
- The Rainbow. It is a symbol of approval, and, because it appeared after the great flood of the Bible, it also represents both God's pardon of and reconciliation with the human race. In art, the rainbow serves as the backdrop to the throne of God, and, in representations of the Last Judgement, Christ is often seated upon a throne placed midpoint to a rainbow.
- The Dove. Just below the rainbow flies a dove, recognized in ancient and Christian art as the symbol of peace, gentleness, and purity. More significantly, in ecclesiastical art, it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.
- The Hyssop. Held securely in the beak of the dove is a sprig of hyssop, a plant whose twigs were used to sprinkle water in ancient Jewish religious rites. An aromatic plant found growing in solitary places among stones, it symbolizes penitence and humility. Its medicinal attributes as a purgative have resulted in its being a symbol of innocence regained, hence, baptism.
- The Water. The water of the tapestry symbolizes the acts of cleansing and purification. Consequently, depicted is the sacrament of baptism, the immersion and washing of the sinful self and its resurrection to the newness of life in Christ.

- The Fish. In early Christian art and literature, the fish is frequently the symbol of Christ. The Greek word for Christ is “I.C.T.H.U.S.”. Each of the letters of this word represents the initial letter of the five Greek words which mean “Jesus Christ, God’s Son and Savior.” Early Christians used fish as a sign of their being followers of Christ. The fish also reminds believers of the immersion of Jesus when he was baptized in the Jordan.

(Information taken from Mount Zion Baptist Church, “What a FELLOWSHIP! What a JOY DIVINE!” Brochure.)

The Elevator

The only significant change to the structure of the church since it was originally built was the addition of an Elevator. One can gain entrance onto the elevator from the main lobby of the church, by entrance on the lower level on the Madison Street north side or from the Fellowship Hall. The Elevator was installed in 2015 and is named “The Eugenia Gipson Elevator” after the individual who bequeathed a large sum of money to the church in 2010. Mrs. Gipson was not a member of Mount Zion but had visited the church once while touring Seattle and enjoyed immensely the service that she attended on that Sunday.

The installation of the elevator made for significant structural changes to the North entrance into the church from 20th street. The design work for this project was done by Rolluda Architects, Sam Cameron, AIA. Architect. Mr. Cameron is a long-standing member of Mount Zion and his work is well known throughout the city and state.

Sam Cameron is originally from the state of Louisiana, but attended architecture school at the University of Washington. He initially wanted to be an industrial designer but later found that he had a passion for architecture.

Sam has extensive experience working with and managing large scale projects with multi-disciplinary teams. He has an excellent record as a team builder and personnel manager and effectively manages community relations for design projects. His thorough and conscientious efforts and follow-through traits have resulted in timely completion of each of his projects.

Sam has worked at Rolluda Architects since 2008 where he focuses on a variety of projects including mixed-use buildings, affordable and work-force housing, K-12 and higher education projects, as well as projects with various municipalities around the state.

Structures Outside of the Main Church Building

Gideon Bell Tower

The Gideon Bell Tower is in front of the church and honors a former member, Russell S. Gideon (1904-1985).

“Russell S. Gideon was a Seattle, Washington businessman, pharmacist, and pioneer in the development of senior housing. From 1977 until his death in 1985, he was recognized yearly

by *Ebony* magazine as one the nation's 100 most influential black citizens. He was a respected community leader, and a man of great energy and charm. Gideon used these personal attributes to his advantage in pursuing many humanitarian and business interests.

Born October 9, 1904, in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, Canada, Russell Gideon moved with his family to Calgary, Alberta, as a nine year old. He was an All Star Athlete in hockey, baseball, track, and football. As a 15-year-old he worked after school as a drugstore delivery boy. That experience persuaded him to become a pharmacist. In 1932 at age 28, Gideon left Calgary and came to the United States to study at Boston's Patrick School of Pharmacy, an all-black pharmacy school. After his training at Patrick's School of Pharmacy, and soon after Massachusetts's white pharmacy schools began admitting blacks, Gideon enrolled in the Western Massachusetts School of Pharmacy in 1937 and graduated from that institution in 1941. He met his future wife, Lillian Morris, in Boston, Massachusetts. They were married in Boston in 1934.

During World War II Gideon, now a U.S. citizen, served in the United States Army in North Africa and Italy as a technical sergeant in the 366th Infantry Medical Corps. He and his wife Lillian moved to Seattle in 1946. He bought a drug store at 22nd Avenue East and East Madison Street, Seattle which he operated until 1963.

Russell Gideon served on numerous boards, among them the Florence Crittenden Home for Unwed Teenage Mothers, the Seattle Urban League, the Foundation for International Understanding created by students at the University of Washington, and the East Madison YMCA.

In 1963, Governor Albert Rossellini appointed Gideon to the Washington State Board of Prison Terms and Paroles. He was a charter member of the Central Area Kiwanis Club and a trustee at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Seattle.

National honor came to Russell Gideon in 1977 when he was elected Sovereign Grand Commander of the United Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation, Northern Jurisdiction. In that post, he led the 22,000 Prince Hall Masons north of the Mason-Dixon Line. His appointment marked the first time in 84 years that a Mason west of Mississippi had been elected to hold this post. A bust was commissioned in 1984 honoring his time in office and was placed in the Masonic Cathedral's Hall of Fame in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Russell S. Gideon died on September 29, 1985, ten days before his 82nd birthday. On September 13, 1986, a housing complex for low income seniors and disabled residents was named the Gideon-Mathews Gardens in his honor." (Information from *Mary T. Henry, Tribute: Seattle Public Places Named for Black People (Seattle: Static Press, 1997)*; and <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/gideon-russell-s-1904-1985#sthash.hQDyWPxa.dpuf>.)

Russell S. Gideon was a faithful member of Mount Zion Baptist Church and chaired many committees including the Building Committee, Finance Committee and finally honored as Trustee Emeritus. The Mount Zion Baptist Church erected the Gideon Bell Tower on July 11,

1999 in his honor. Donald Wing Architects with Structural Engineer Robert Fossatti and Associates and Electrical Engineers AWA Consultants.

The Gideon Bell Tower is a fitting and beautiful memorial to Brother Russell S Gideon. It is situated at the front entrance to the Mount Zion Baptist Church. The Tower has added beauty, meaning and inspiration to the Church's worship services, the community of faith and the neighborhood.

James Washington Sculpture (information from <http://www.historylink.org>.)

“A large sculpture entitled, the “Oracle of Truth” is located near the entrance of the church off the circular drive. This piece of work was donated by prominent artist and sculptor James Washington (1909 – 2000). Mr. Washington was a member of Mount Zion and dedicated this piece of work in 1987 to children searching for truth.”

SIGNIFICANCE

A Brief History and Legacy of Seattle's Mount Zion Baptist Church

In 1890, thirty-eight years after the establishment of Seattle as a city and one year after Washington territory became the 42nd State of the Union, a group of African Americans from the Memphis, Tennessee area seeking better opportunities and a better future for themselves and their children, journeyed to Seattle. These God-fearing pioneers had faith in God and started a Christian institution that is a blessing to the city of Seattle and beyond. The founders of Mount Zion Baptist Church had no idea that their quest to extend God's Kingdom in this part of the world, would impact Seattle, the Pacific Northwest, the Nation, and the world, for good. Today, Mount Zion Baptist Church enjoys an international reputation as a Christian Institution, proclaiming the whole council of God, and carrying mandates for service to all areas of our existence.

The cornerstone of the Mount Zion Baptist Church family has been self-help, the empowerment of people, and reinforcing the community spiritually, educationally, socially, and politically. Just as Jesus met the needs of the people where they were, Mount Zion Baptist Church has endeavored to continue to follow His example.

Facts are few and for the most part contradictory about Mount Zion Baptist Church's humble beginning, but historical research and available records all show that the church was founded by a man named Austin Anderson in 1890, who wanted a place where colored people could pray and worship God. It is not known whether he was an ordained minister or whether he was given the title of Reverend Anderson by his peers, a common custom in that day. Nonetheless, the efforts of Reverend Anderson were assisted by Reverend George J. Burchett, Pastor of Seattle First Baptist Church and Deacon John C. Keith of the same church. They provided material and spiritual aid and temporary space at 14th and East Madison for the small band of dedicated Christians.

Mount Zion Baptist Colored Church was later permanently organized and established under the leadership of Reverend Anderson in 1894 at 4th and University in the Young Naturalist Hall located on the then University of Washington campus. The Charter members were: Reverend Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Butler, Mrs. Braxton, Mrs. Edmunds, W. H. Teemer, Mr. and Mrs. Eliza Sheppard, Mrs. Eliza Washington, and Mr. B. F. Ward. The elected officers were: Mr. B. F. Ward, Deacon and Moderator; R. A. Clark, Deacon and Treasurer; and R. W. Butler, Secretary. After Reverend Anderson retired, the congregation was led by a series of pastors whose tenure ranged from nine months to two years, up until 1912.

It should be noted that unlike many urban areas where African Americans moved there were communities that already had church buildings, but the part of Seattle where the congregated migrated had no such buildings. For instance, in some areas in the northwest that are stocked with old church buildings, churches as they were organized could move into existing buildings. This was not the case in the City of Seattle. The African American congregations in Seattle had to ultimately construct facilities that would house them.

Additionally, the Church had to move from its temporary University campus location due to the transferring of the property to its owners. This forced the church to hold its services at the People's Church on the corner of Third Avenue and Madison Street.

Weary of moving from place to place trying to establish a place of worship, the Mount Zion congregation realized that they must raise the money to purchase a lot and build. Fund raising efforts became a priority. Fortunately, Mrs. Martha Paine, a member of Mount Zion was responsible for acquisition of the property at the corner of 14th Avenue and Terrace, through her employer, Mr. Waterhouse, who responded to the church's need.

Later, street changes of 14th Avenue and Terrace, became the familiar 11th Avenue, between Union and Madison. The members of the church secured the deed in May 1904. In 1905, the congregation held its first service in its new building. Mount Zion Baptist Church was, at that time, the second oldest Negro church institution of its kind North of San Francisco and West of the Mississippi.

Twenty-five pastors have served Mount Zion Baptist Church since its inception. As stated earlier, some served for very short periods of time ranging from eight months to two years. However, from 1912 to the present time, the church leadership became steadfast. Though basically African American, and functioning in that tradition, the church, like the early Christian Church, attracted persons of all races, classes, and positions in society; all are welcome to the community of believers in Jesus Christ.

More sustained leadership began in 1912.

Reverend W. D. Carter, 1912 - 1925

In November 1912, like a breath of fresh air, the Reverend Dr. W. D. Carter came and gave the struggling church and the city of Seattle a new outlook. Under his prophetic leadership, change was affected in the whole state of Washington. The church mortgage and other

indebtedness was paid off and the membership increased to 350. Moreover, despite the hardships and struggles for survival, the congregation continued to do missionary work in the city, state, and foreign countries.

Certainly, the building was a credit to its founders, but the growth of the membership, as well as the automobile industry and other factors made it necessary for the church congregation to seek a new location. As the members continued to pray and exhibit an undying faith in God, in 1918 the small congregation was able to purchase an 80 x 122 ft. lot on 19th Avenue near Madison Street for \$6,000.00. Along with the church, an eight-room house was built and equipped to serve as a parsonage. This was a wise decision, because much later in 1934, the property was valued at \$50,000.

During the construction of the brick church, the congregation, met in the Masonic Hall at 21st and Jefferson. The architects for the building were Harry James and his brother E. R. James. About three months later, the building was completed and the congregation relocated and moved in.

A local African American Newspaper (*Cayton's Weekly 1920*) carried the following article about the new church.

“... The new church building is 53 feet wide and 87 feet long with a seating capacity of about 700. It is well equipped with a lady's parlor, choir rooms, baptistery, ladies and gentlemen's dressing rooms, pastor's study and a gallery.

The basement has everything to make it a modern workshop for the Sunday School. This property is evidence of the church's pride and the members and race in general. It is valued at \$50,000 and bespeaks of the sacrifices made by the congregation and friends...from little acorns, big oaks grow!”

Meanwhile, Seattle continued to prosper, primarily because of several events: the opening of the Panama Canal in 1915, which shortened the water route between Seattle and New York, and a year later, the Federal Government's completion of the Ballard Locks, which made it possible for ships to go into Lake Union, and the canal between Lake Union and Lake Washington.

Reverend Carter was not only a loving pastor, he was also a philanthropist and a philosopher. Shortly after he arrived, Pastor Carter became active in civic, social, and political affairs and was known for doing charitable work throughout the city of Seattle. He was a compassionate man, who was deeply interested not only in the youth of Mount Zion, but the young people in the city, who were not members of the church. He spent long hours helping young boys and men who were incarcerated and promoted programs to prevent them from going to jail. Indeed, one of the greatest sources available to those he served was the Boys and Young Men's Community Club of Mount Zion Baptist Church, which was under his direct management. The youth not only benefited socially but spiritually as well.

Mrs. Corrine Carter was equally as busy with girls and young women. She was a trained Y.W.C.A. Executive, and had completed her Social Service and Recreational Training in

Chicago, Illinois. She used her gifts and talents to organize the first Negro Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) in Seattle on 21st Avenue North. It was named the Phyllis Wheatly Branch after the famous poet and is currently located on 28th and East Cherry.

Reverend Dr. J. Sterling Moore, 1925 – 1932

When Reverend Carter resigned in 1925, Reverend Moore became the pastor and won the respect of the congregation. He believed foremost in teaching the word of God, fiery preaching, and the power of prayer.

Reverend Dr. Taylor M. Davis, 1932-1940

Sent by God, Reverend Davis had the ability to hold the church together during the hardships of the great depression. In 1933, under Reverend Davis' leadership, the mortgage was burned, and the membership continued to grow.

Reverend Dr. Fountain W. Penick, 1940 - 1942

At the time Reverend Penick became the pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, the church was in financial trouble, but he was a natural fund raiser and soon the membership was inspired to give more. Reverend Penick left Mount Zion in 1942 to organize and pastor People's Institutional Baptist Church which still stands today here in Seattle.

Reverend Dr. F. Benjamin Davis, 1942 – 1955

In, 1942, the country was involved with World War II. Seattle was a bustling city with a population of more than 400,000. Civil Defense Wardens were commonly seen enforcing the familiar air-raid Black-out Laws. Ration stamps were issued for meat, butter, sugar and canned goods, gasoline and other commodities. Military men, of all branches of the service, could be seen in uniform everywhere. Seattle citizens could not travel near the waterfront unless they had a pass and Japanese Americans were removed to Relocation Camps in Idaho and Montana. For some, it was a time of uncertainty and fear.

Mount Zion was again divided and without a pastor until Reverend F. Benjamin Davis was asked to serve as pastor of the church. In addition to many theological degrees, Dr. Davis was the author of several theology books that were used in many seminaries. He was known for his intellectual preaching and spiritual insight and guidance not only in the church but in the community.

Pastor Davis visited many military bases such as Fort Lawton and Fort Lewis to invite the young soldiers and officers to visit the church. Many came and the membership increased.

Dr. Davis loved people. He was active in community affairs and was a champion for racial equality. He was a board member of the Y.M.C.A., the Mayor's Committee on Civic Unity, a Trustee for the North Pacific Baptist Convention, a member of the East Madison USO, Worshipful Grand; Master of Prince Hall Masons, State of Washington and its jurisdiction; President of the Seattle Branch of the NAACP, and a Board member of the Seattle Urban League. He also became the first African American pastor to run for a seat on the Seattle City Council. He remained pastor for twelve fruitful years. He resigned to pastor his father's former church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Reverend Gil B. Lloyd, 1955 - 1957

The call to pastor Mount Zion Baptist Church was extended to Reverend Gil B. Lloyd in 1955. He was educated at Fisk University and attended graduate School at Harvard Divinity School. Reverend Lloyd continued the building fund endeavor by starting a very successful fund-raising activity – the All Church Tea. Under his leadership, the building fund grew from \$16,765.98 to \$40,000.00. Reverend Lloyd resigned in 1957 to return to Chicago. Not long after, however, he returned to Seattle to organize Cherry Hill Baptist Church, where he ministered until he retired.

Reverend Dr. Samuel B. McKinney, 1958 – 1999

In February 1958, Reverend McKinney became the 22nd pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church. A visionary, Dr. McKinney has led Mount Zion, a church with humble beginnings, to a place of prominent service to God and His people. He is not unmindful of the rich history and heritage from the past connected to this present generation and generations to come, who will do even greater things for the Lord God's honor and glory.

A man of faith, he led the completion of a \$300,00.00 Educational Wing named the Mable Leola Frazier Harris Educational Wing that included the Jessie L. Shields Fellowship Hall in 1963. The hall was completed in order to house a program of Christian Education, the Mount Zion Preschool and Kindergarten, the Mount Zion Ethnic School, and to provide space for Civic and Civil Rights groups seeking a facility that would accommodate their meetings.

Thankful for the growth of the building fund, the pastor and congregation realized that it was time to build a larger church sanctuary due to a growing membership, Reverend McKinney envisioned a very unique sanctuary. One in which the cultural expression and heritage of African Americans could be manifested through an African theme and motif (see attached photos of the church).

The new sanctuary was completed in 1975 and the joyful congregation and guests worshipped the Lord in the new edifice in October 1976. Mount Zion Baptist Church in its present form continues to stand as a beacon of light. The church is not only known throughout the city, but the state, nation, and the world. It is a historical landmark. Visitors come from all over the

world to not only view the structure but to worship the Lord as well. This includes China, Ireland, Germany, etc. Additionally, each year students from Seattle Pacific University, come to fulfill theology course requirements.

Through Dr. McKinney's leadership the church established Washington State's first Protestant Church Credit Union, a full-time Pre-school, Kindergarten and Day Care Center, a radio ministry, the purchasing of property surrounding the church, building the Samuel B. McKinney Retirement Manor for seniors which was completed in 1998, and the Russel L. Gideon Bell Tower, completed in 1999.

In demand for his skill and leadership qualities in the greater faith community, Reverend McKinney has served as President of the Board of Directors of the Greater Seattle Council of Churches; President of the Baptist Ministers Conference of Seattle and Vicinity, Vice-president of the Washington-Northern Idaho Council of Churches. Past president of the North Pacific Baptist Convention, past Board member of the National Baptist Convention USA Incorporated, former member of the Board of Trustees of the American Baptist Churches of the Pacific Northwest, and in many other capacities.

Locally, Reverend McKinney's civic involvement included: Board member of the Seattle Branch of the NAACP; Board member of the East Madison Branch YMCA, and serving on the Seattle Human Rights Commission. The congregation is also active in the Seattle Plymouth Church Partnership, Vacation Bible School, Feeding Program Ministry (both home and street centered) which serves the homeless and shut-in, a Chore Ministry that provides assistance to those who are disabled, a tutoring program for public school children, a Charity Ministry for those who are in need monetarily, and Senior Citizen and Women's Ministries.

Mrs. McKinney, a well-known educator and Specialist in Early Childhood Education, founded the Scholarship Ministry at the church. Hundreds of members of the church are the recipients of thousands of dollars to assist them to reach their educational goals.

During Dr. McKinney's tenure, the congregation grew to over 2,000 members. He retired in 1999 and became "Pastor Emeritus" in April 1999 after more than 40 years as the Pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church.

Reverend Dr. Leslie David Braxton, 1999 - 2005

Reverend Leslie D. Braxton became the pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church on August 29, 1999. Dr. Braxton was an outstanding leader and preacher. Under his creative leadership, the congregation continued to grow and prosper. On July 3, 2005, Reverend Braxton resigned as Senior Pastor and preached his last sermon on July 28, 2005.

Reverend Aaron Williams, 2008 - Present

The Reverend Aaron Williams became the Senior Pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in 2008. He preached his first sermon on Sunday, May 18, 2008. Reverend Williams is a young pastor, who has a dynamic way of teaching and preaching. He is a man of God, who believes in the power of prayer, forgiveness, restoration, and the unity of God's people through the Holy Spirit and love. As the 24th pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, his charge is to continue God's work and the great legacy left by the founders of the church. His community related goal is to serve the people by establishing a day-care facility. He currently serves on the Community Police Commission as part of his out-reach service.

(The above History of Mount Zion Baptist Church is documented in the Archives of the Church.)

Architects (information from *Docomomo-wewa.org/architects*)

The Architectural Firm of Durham Anderson Freed, AIA, designed the New Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1975. Robert L. Durham was the lead architect.

Durham, Robert L. (1912 - 1998)

“Durham was born in Seattle on April 28, 1912, and was raised in Tacoma graduating from Lincoln High School. After starting school at the College of Puget Sound, Durham transferred to the University of Washington and graduated cum laude from the School of Architecture in 1936. Upon graduation, he joined Stuart as a draftsman. He then went on to work with the Federal Housing Administration in Okanogan County as a cost analyst. While there he designed several homes and commercial buildings in Omak and the surrounding areas.

Seeking to move back to the Seattle area, Durham spent three short months as a plans examiner for the Seattle Building Department before rejoining Stuart in a formal partnership in 1941. Durham was a talented designer and a vocal proponent for modern design. He lectured frequently on the topic. Such stops on the lecture circuit included talks given to the Seattle Home Planners Institute on home design (1946); the Society of Residential Appraisers where he spoke on current problems in housing (1951); and for the University Women's Club giving a lecture on “Architecture, A Tool for Modern Living” (1951). Durham also served on a panel for Seattle Master Builders discussing how to “Cut Standards of Waste and Save Standard of Living While Arming” (1951); and was invited to speak to the Engineers Club to discuss working relationship between architects and engineers (1952).

Durham was keenly interested in residential design and entered several design competitions. In 1943 he was named first prize winner in the “House of Tomorrow” competition sponsored by the AIA and Frederick & Nelson Co. and he also provided designs for Bon Marche's “Salute to Northwest Homes” campaign (1947).

Under the name of Stuart & Durham projects include the Smith-Gandy Ford (1946) in Seattle; Rainier Poultry Co. Building (1951) in Seattle; All Saints Episcopal Church in Burien (1951);

Associated of General Contractors (1950) on south slope of Queen Anne; Shorewood Heights on Mercer Island (1949); 200 units of housing for Lowe's Terrace; Beverly Rae Apartments (1949); Queen Vista Apartments (1949); Laurel Crest Apartments (1950); Laurelon Terrace Apartments (1949).

In 1951 Stuart and Durham parted ways. Stuart continued to practice into the late 1960s before passing away in Seattle in 197. After a brief period as principal of his own firm, Durham formed a new partnership with fellow architects David R. Anderson and Aaron Freed in 1954. The new firm was named Durham, Anderson & Freed.

After attending the North American Conference on Church Architecture in Columbus, Ohio in 1950, Durham began to specialize in Church design. Between 1951 and 1975 the firm designed over 200 churches, many of which received considerable local and national attention. Among them was their design for the Fauntleroy Congregational Church, which received a National AIA Honor Award for Institutional Buildings in 1952; the First Methodist Church in Mount Vernon which also won in National AIA award in 1961; and the Highland Covenant Church of Bellevue which placed first in the 1964 Church

Awards Competition of the National Association of Evangelicals. Other notable church designs include St. Elizabeth's Episcopal (1956) in Burien; St James Presbyterian (1957) in Bellingham; the

Congregational Ezra Bessaroth Synagogue (1969) in Columbia City; and the African inspired sanctuary at Mount Zion Baptist Church (1975) in Seattle.

The firm Durham, Anderson & Freed also designed a variety of schools, banks, residences, and other civic structures. Among their best known work is Seattle Fire Station No. 5 (1963), an all concrete structure with a 60-foot tower which received a citation in 1964 from the Pre-Stressed Concrete Institute. Other projects include the Association of General Contractors' (AGC) Seattle Headquarters Building (1965); SW Branch Seattle Library (1961); Atmospheric Sciences Building on the University of Washington campus (1970); Evergreen State College library (1971) in Olympia; the Horizon Retirement Home (1971) in Seattle; and the Main Library (1970) in Richland.

No stranger to civic involvement, Durham was very active within the architectural community both locally and nationally. A former president of the Seattle Chapter AIA, Durham went on to head the Washington State Chapter in 1954. As chairperson for Seattle's Municipal Arts Commission, he was selected in 1961 to lead the Cultural Arts Advisory Board for the World's Fair. The AIA College of Fellows inducted him in 1959, and in 1961 the AIA NW Region elected him to the national AIA Board of Directors. At the 1966 Convention in Denver, the national membership elected him First Vice President/President-elect, and in 1967-68 he served as the AIA 44th President - only the fourth West Coast architect to hold the highest elected office in the AIA's. To date he is the only North westerner to have served as the National AIA President. Robert Durham served as Chancellor of the AIA College of Fellows in 1980, and in 1981 received the prestigious Edward Kemper Award for outstanding service to the Institute - becoming the only person to have served as President, Chancellor, and Kemper Award

recipient in the AIA's 141-year history. In 1985, he received the AIA Seattle Medal, the highest local honor to an architect, recognizing outstanding lifetime achievement.

Durham retired in 1977 and passed away on July 25, 1998. Previously in 1975, the firm was acquired by the Nebraska based Henningson, Durham & Richardson (HDR). HDR maintains a Seattle based office to this day.”

Civil Rights Era

Mount Zion Baptist church, during the Civil Rights Era, was a place to receive inspiration and make plans for the future.

During the civil rights era, Mount Zion Baptist Church was used as a meeting place for community activists, community based organization leaders, clergy, and others to plan freedom rallies against institutional racism and discrimination which was prevalent throughout the city of Seattle.

Moreover, during the 1970s and 80s, in keeping with the phrase “Keep Hope Alive,” hundreds of men and women, young and old, Black and White came to Mount Zion Baptist Church to hear words of inspiration from the pulpit from Reverend Jessie Jackson; Reverend Ralph Abernathy, a confidant of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; U.S. Congressman Reverend John Conyers; Reverend Andrew Young, Ambassador to the United Nations; Reverend Benjamin Hooks, National President of the NAACP; and Reverend Bernice King, daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Another historical event held at the church was the Annual City Wide Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s annual birthday, sponsored by the Benefit Guild of Seattle, Washington, an affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). It was led by community activist Mrs. Freddie Mae Gautier beginning in the late 60’s. In the 1970s, re-dedication speeches were given by Dr. Constance Rice, wife of former mayor Norman Rice, the Chairperson of Ethnic and Women’s Studies at Shoreline Community College, and Martin Luther King, III.

In the mid-70s to 2005, Seattle Church Women United, a unit of the national racially, culturally, and theologically inclusive Christian women’s ecumenical movement held its monthly meetings at Mount Zion Baptist Church. For more than 75 years, the National Church Women United has provided leadership, through prayer, study and action, in promoting the kind of justice and reconciliation so badly needed in a society of diversity. Leaders of the local and state CWU movement included Dr. Janice Cate, United Methodist; Reverend Dr. Phyllis Beaumonte, American and National Baptist; Mrs. Jeraldine Bright, First African Methodist Episcopal; and the Reverend Dr. Jean Kim, Presbyterian Minister. Dr. Kim was the first pastor of Seattle’s Church of Mary Magdalene, founded by Seattle Church Women United in 1991. Mary’s Place was established in 1999 as an extension of the Church of Mary Magdalene’s to provide service to homeless women and children.

Each year Seattle Church Women United had three ecumenical Celebrations: World Day of Prayer, May Friendship Day, and World Community Day. Mount Zion Baptist Church hosted

the celebrations throughout the existence of Seattle Church Women United. Prayer, worship services, workshops, and planning for social action were parts of the celebrations' activities.

The Current Use of the Building

The historical Mount Zion Baptist Church of Seattle, Washington, is known throughout the city, state, nation, and beyond. On any Sunday morning, you will find visitors from Europe, Africa, Asia, Norway, Russia, Germany, the middle-east, Canada, and elsewhere worshipping God with the congregation. They come because they have been told that there is a church in Seattle, Washington that has a unique architectural form -- there is none like it in the world. When they come, they do not find a hollow structure. They find a place where people experience a common bond of joy in worshipping and praising the Lord. Currently, Mount Zion Baptist Church has a multi-racial and multi-ethnic congregation that reflects the family of God.

Students from Seattle Pacific University visit Mount Zion very often. Sometimes it is to fulfill a theology course requirement and some end up joining the church.

The church has been steadfast in its love for all of God's people and its mission to serve the community and the greater Seattle area. In spite of the shift in demographics due to the gentrification of Seattle, Mount Zion ministries, community groups and other organizations continue to use the building for weekly, monthly, annual meetings, and various events. For example:

- "Grandmothers Against Gun Violence" meet monthly either in the Jessie L. Shields Fellowship Hall or the church parlor.

- the Washington Rhinestone Club often holds its annual educational scholarship luncheon at Mount Zion in the Spring.

-The Mount Zion Feeding Ministry under the umbrella of the Christian Board of Education, continues to prepare and feed hundreds of homebound and street people since the 1980s.

-The Mount Zion "Helping House" provides slightly used clothing, books, and furniture to those in need. The Helping House is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 11:00am – 1:00 p.m.

-Team Issachar is a youth mentoring Ministry at Mount Zion, which reaches out to young boys beyond those who are members of the church. They meet each Saturday morning in the Fellowship Hall.

-The National Council of Negro Women meet monthly at Mount Zion Baptist Church.

-The Seattle Alliance of Black School Educators holds its annual scholarship dinner during the month of June at the church in the Jessie L. Shields Fellowship Hall.

-The Mount Zion Baptist Church Veterans Ministry meets at the church once a month. its mission is to provide counseling, resources, and other services for veterans, who are not only members of the church but all veterans in need of help who live throughout the city of Seattle. Each year, there is also a program and luncheon honoring veterans.

-The First Lady's Chari-Tea, meets monthly to plan for their event to raise money to purchase toys, food, and clothes for those throughout Seattle, who are in need. The items are given out on Mount Zion's Christmas Day of Caring.

-The Christmas Day of Caring is held each year during the month of December. At this event children, parents, grandparents, and friends are invited to come and receive gifts of toys, clothing, and food. In addition, there is a special program designed to honor those in need. This event is open to the entire community.

-The Seattle Central Community College's annual observation of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, is held at Mount Zion Baptist Church on the Friday prior to Dr. King's birthday. The program at this event is dedicated to the memory and work of Dr. King. Pastor Emeritus, Reverend Samuel B. McKinney, a classmate of Dr. King, also presents his annual scholarship to a deserving student.

Mount Zion considers itself to be a crossroads for the community; multicultural, multi-faith and other groups working toward issues of social justice regularly meet at the church.

Dr. Samuel B. McKinney, Pastor Emeritus, most eloquently put it this way..." *somebody has to speak a word of hope, and love in word and deed in a world of darkness and despair. Mount Zion must continue to speak a word of judgment when and where necessary to systems insensitive to the needs of people. Along with the Great Commission, this has been the role of the church and it must remain the role of the church...*"

Mount Zion Baptist Church's Historical Achievers

Carrying out the Gospel in word and deed by several members of Mount Zion Baptist Church has left an indelible impact on the City of Seattle.

-The Honorable Samuel J. Smith was elected to the Washington State Legislature. In 1958, he served five two-year terms as State Representative for the 37th Legislative District. He was also elected to the Seattle City Council in 1967, where he served for 24 years. While serving on the Council, he was elected City Council President for eight years and served briefly as Mayor Pro-tem. Councilman Smith was president of the Mount Zion Baptist Church Brotherhood Ministry and taught Sunday School for over 30 years. Because of his commitment to the betterment of humanity, a Seattle park was named after him.

-The Honorable Judge Charles M. Stokes became the first African American Republican elected to the Washington State House of Representatives as well as being the first to be elected to the bench of the Seattle Municipal Court. He served as a Trustee at Mount Zion for a number of years.

-Missionary Clara J. Bonner came to Seattle in 1925. She became the first president and organizer of the Sojourner Truth Home for Missionaries as well as the first president of the Seattle Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. Because of her spiritual insight and leadership, she served as Chairperson of the Mount Zion Baptist Church Deaconess Board, President of the Women's Missionary Society, and president of the Women's Convention of the General Baptist Association of Washington State.

-The Honorable Ronald Sims, was licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ by Mount Zion Baptist Church. His outreach ministry included feeding the poor and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are in need of salvation. In 1985, he became the first African American in history to be an elected official to the King County Council and later as County Executive. He was appointed Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Urban and Housing Development by President Barack Obama. One of Ron's favorite scriptures was "...we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field and God's building." (1st Corinth.3:9).

The Honorable Norman B. Rice became a member of Mount Zion Baptist Church early in the 1970's. He was elected to the Seattle City Council and served for eleven years. He was elected Mayor of Seattle in November 1989. One of his quotes was: "*As a Christian and public servant, I am reminded daily about the importance of my faith in God and His faithfulness to me..*"

Dr. Rosalind Woodhouse joined Mount Zion Baptist Church during the 1970s and served on the Board of Christian Education. In 1977, Dr. Woodhouse was appointed by Governor Dixie Lee Ray to be the Director of the State Department of Licensing making her the first African American woman in the state of Washington to hold a cabinet level position. Her out-reach work included: serving twice as president of the Seattle Women's Commission, a Trustee at Central Washington University, and a charter member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Minority Trusteeship in higher education. Dr. Woodhouse has served in numerous other capacities including the Chief Executive Officer of the Seattle Urban League.

Reverend Dr. Phyllis Ratcliff Beaumonte joined Mount Zion Baptist Church and was baptized at age 12. She has been a member of the church for over 60 years. In addition to church work, Dr. Beaumonte's outreach included the following: Former President of Seattle Church Women United, Past President of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, Past President of Church Women United of Washington and Northern Idaho, former President of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, Inc., past president of the Board of Directors for the Central Area Senior Center, Board member and 2nd Vice-president of the Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Regional Unit of the NAACP and a recipient of numerous Education awards. Reverend Beaumonte is currently an Associate Minister at Mount Zion Baptist Church, and Chairperson of the History and Archives Ministry.

Central District - Surrounding Neighborhood (information below from <https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Central-District-Seattle>)

"The Area, commonly called the Central District or CD is a mostly residential district in Seattle located east of Cherry Hill (12th Avenue and Rainier Avenue); west of Madrona, Leschi

and Mt. Baker; south of Capitol Hill, and north of Rainier Valley. Historically, the Central District has been one of Seattle's most racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, and was once the center of Seattle's black Community.

“The culture and demographics of the Central District have changed repeatedly throughout many years. It started out as a predominantly [Jewish](#) neighborhood. Jewish residents built Temple De Hirsch on Union Street in 1907. [Temple De Hirsch Sinai](#) on the opposite corner of the same block is a successor to that congregation; the original Temple De Hirsch is largely demolished, though some fragments remain. Other former [synagogues](#) in the neighborhood are the former [Sephardic Bikur Holim](#) synagogue (now Tolliver Temple), Herzl Congregation synagogue (now Odessa Brown Clinic), and [Chevra Bikur Cholim](#) (now Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center).

A few decades later, the Central District became a home to [Japanese-Americans](#) in Seattle. The blocks between 14th and 18th Avenues and Yesler Way and Jackson Street still retain a strong Japanese presence—the [Buddhist](#) Church, Seattle Koyasan Church, Konko, Wisteria Park, Japanese Congregational Church, Keiro Nursing Home, and the Kawabe Memorial House. During [World War II](#), presidential [Executive Order 9066](#) made possible the removal of American citizens of Japanese descent from the West Coast. All Japanese residents were immediately taken out of their homes and sent to internment camps. This and many race-restricted covenants to the north and south paved the way for many [African Americans](#) to find a new home in the Central District.^[5] By the 1970s, Central District became largely an [African-American neighborhood](#) and the center of the civil rights movement in Seattle. In 1970, Blacks made up nearly 80% of the neighborhood's population. However, it also marked the neighborhood's decline into poverty and crime for another two decades.

In the early 21st century, several demographic trends are changing the population of the Central District again. Low-income segments of the population are moving southward toward the Rainier Valley, while more affluent residents, who might otherwise have purchased homes on Capitol Hill, [Madrona](#), Leschi, or Mt. Baker are moving into the Central District as [real estate](#) and rental property become more expensive in the former neighborhoods and commuting times and costs make suburban areas less attractive.

Due to this market pressure, [housing](#) in the Central District is mixed, with some homes on the verge of [condemnation](#), and others having recently undergone extensive renovation. Many condemned houses are being replaced by multi-unit [townhouses](#) and [condominiums](#). Easy access to [Interstate 5](#), [Interstate 90](#), and Downtown, as well as ample street [parking](#), also make the Central District an attractive and convenient place to live.

Despite the demographic shifts since the early 1970s, many locals still think of the Central District as a predominantly African-American area. One reason for this is that despite the decline in the African-American population, there is black history in the neighborhood. It is home to the [Northwest African American Museum](#).

During the early 1960s, the neighborhood was a hotbed for the Seattle civil rights movement. In 1963, civil rights protesters took to the streets and protested against racial discrimination.

Later, they participated in a sit-in in [downtown Seattle](#). At the same time, the [Black Panther Party](#) used the neighborhood as a staging area for their movement.

As of 2010 the total population of the Central Area is 29,868 with a population that is 59.6% White or Caucasian, 21.4% Black or African-American, 9.1% Asian, 0.6% Native American, 0.3% Pacific Islander, 3.2% from other races and 6.1% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race consisted of 7.3% of the population.”

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include: *the site; the exteriors of the church building, educational unit, and bell tower; the interior of the sanctuary; the James W. Washington Jr. sculpture “Oracle of Truth”; and exempting all elements of the building and site that are liturgical in nature.*

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Sarah Sodt
City Historic Preservation Officer

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