



Church History

**“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.”
(1 Corinthians 2:9)**

Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church is the oldest Missionary Baptist Church in West Perrine, Florida. It is a well-established traditionally faith-based Missionary Baptist Church, rich in legacy and family/community values. This chronological history is based on the best recollections of the late Sister Ruby Grant and the late Sister Lillie Saunders.

The first place of worship for the members was a “Bush Harbor” church somewhere on Eureka Drive. It was called “Bush Harbor” because it was an open area enclosed by loose bushes, vines and branches bent over to form the top giving it a canopy appearance. After worshipping under the “Bush Harbor” makeshift church, the members’ dream became a reality, the completion of their first sanctuary. It is estimated that it may have taken five years to build the first sanctuary, placing the original date of birth of Mt. Moriah around 1919.

The original sanctuary was constructed at 18290 Southwest 102nd Avenue, Perrine Florida. It was very small with a maximum capacity of twenty-five local members as well as “*seasonal*” members. The “*seasonal*” members attended worship services when they migrated to Peters Quarters during harvest season. After a spirit-filled worship service, it became a Sunday tradition for the congregation to fellowship at J.L. Johnson’s Café where a stew beef dinner was only twenty-five cents.

Reverend Charlie M. Williams, a resident of South Miami, Florida, was the first officiating Pastor until he passed away in the mid to late nineteen twenties. After which, Reverend Frank Harding became the second officiating Pastor.

In **1924**, Sister Ceola Bruton became the first Mother of the Church until she went home to glory in 1977.

In **1926**, the original sanctuary was destroyed by a great storm and another makeshift structure was built where wonderful praise and marvelous sermons continued to uplift and inspire the congregation. Also, at that time, the members changed the name from “Bush Harbor” Church to Mount Moriah. Eventually, some of the members decided to branch out and create neighboring churches which included Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church and Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church.

In **1928**, a new sanctuary was constructed. After its completion, Reverend Frank Harding retired as Pastor of Mt. Moriah and Reverend Oscar W. Wells became the third officiating Pastor of Mt. Moriah. Reverend Wells guided the Mt. Moriah congregation for a spirit-filled ten years. Under his leadership, the first Mt. Moriah choir was organized. Mr. E.G. Lucky led this ministry with the assistance of Brother Upshaw. The first Usher Board was also organized with Deacon George Coleman as the first elected President. Reverend Wells also had a very dedicated and supportive Deacon Board that helped in the growth of the Church. Some notable Deacons of that time were Deacon Lee Jordan, Deacon Kairen Russell, Deacon Grover (Bish) Jackson, Deacon George Coleman, Deacon Henry Hall, Deacon Henry Williams, Deacon Dobbins, Deacon Fletcher Bruton, Sr., and Deacon E.L. Williams, who was the first Chairman of the Deacon Board.

In **1938**, Reverend Willie Carl Edcar, Jr. became the **fourth** Pastor of Mt. Moriah. Under his leadership, Mt. Moriah experienced even further growth, such as additional Deacons were ordained and new ministries were formed which included the Women's Chorus, the Youth Choir, Youth Ushers, the Red Circle, the B.T.U. (Baptist Training Union), the Missionary Board, and the Trustee Ministry.

In **1940**, Deacon Fletcher Bruton, Sr. was elected Chairman of the Deacon Board and served until his health failed and he passed away in 1974.

In **1974**, Deacon Joseph Williams succeeded Deacon Fletcher Bruton, Sr. as Chairman until his health failed.

In the years that followed, Mt. Moriah never ceased growing. Eventually, the congregation outgrew the sanctuary on 18290 Southwest 102nd Ave and constructed a new sanctuary.

In **1977**, through prayers of thanksgiving and songs of praises, the congregation moved into the new and current sanctuary located at 16900 Southwest 100th Avenue in Perrine, Florida.

In **1990**, Deacon John C. Bruton became the Chairman of the Deacon Board.

Unfortunately, on **August 24, 1992**, history repeated itself again. Another great storm hit, "Hurricane Andrew". It had a devastating impact on the community, and it destroyed the church building but not the spirit of the members because services continued and were held outside under a tent during the two-year rebuilding phase.

In **December 1992**, Reverend Edcar became the Pastor Emeritus due to his health issues. Reverend Adam Evans, who was the Interim Pastor, Minister Thomas Ballard, Deacon John C. Bruton and the other members of the Deacon Board guided the congregation and kept the church membership together until a new pastor was chosen.

In **November 1993**, Reverend Keith L. Marshall became the **fifth** Pastor of Mt. Moriah. Under his leadership, new Deacons were ordained, and new ministries were instituted which included the first Mt. Moriah Praise Team, Marshall Inspirational Choir, Hospitality Ministry, Women's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Dance Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Caleb Ministry, Singles Ministry, Evangelistic Ministry and the Nurse's Guild.

Finally, in **1994** with much prayer and supplication, the congregation was able to move from worshipping outside under a tent to the fellowship hall in the rear of the church. Services recommenced in the sanctuary two years later.

On **January 23, 2003**, Reverend Marshall resigned as Pastor of Mt. Moriah. Again, Minister Thomas Ballard, now Elder John C. Bruton and the Deacons of Mt. Moriah kept the congregation together until another Pastor was called.

In **July 2003**, by an overwhelming majority vote, the active members of Mt. Moriah expressed their desire for Reverend Joseph Dwayne Turner as their new Pastor. As it is written in Jeremiah 3:15, "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding."

On **November 9, 2003**, Dr. Joseph D. Turner became the **sixth** Pastor of Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church. Under his spiritual leadership, membership increased tremendously, and subsequently, additional Deacons were ordained as well.

In **2014**, Deacon John C. Bruton passed away and Deacon Melvin Dennis was elected Chairman of the Deacon Board.

In **2015**, Deacon Reginald Lester succeeded Deacon Melvin Dennis as Chairman of the Deacon Board.

In addition to the changes to the Deacon's Ministry and the growth in membership, Dr. Turner implemented the 7:45 am worship service and instituted new ministries which included the Prison Ministry, the Men's Ministry, Health and Wellness Ministry, Friends In Training Together Ministry (F.I.T.T.), Mime Ministry, Married Couples Ministry, Bereavement Ministry, Armor Bearer Ministry, Peacekeeper Ministry, Media Ministry, Good Samaritan Ministry, Volunteer Ministry, Senior Advocate Ministry, and the College Bound Ministry.

As a community activist, Dr. Turner was committed to making every effort to meet the deepest human need by implementing several community outreach activities such as the Thanksgiving Community Feed, the monthly Men Ministry Community Feed, the Back-to-School Evangelistic Block Party, the Family Fun Festival (Carnival), the Pacesetters Summer Camp Program, the Summer Food Service Program and the Farm Share Program. Dr. Turner was also instrumental in getting Mt. Moriah involved in the Miami-Dade County Adopt-A-Road Program in which Mt. Moriah adopted Southwest 104th Avenue from Southwest 168th Street to Southwest 184th Street.

Dr. Turner's vision changed Mt. Moriah's focus from individual worship to community engagement and empowerment to fulfill the mission of transforming unbelievers to committed disciples of Christ. Dr. Joseph Turner resigned as Pastor of Mt. Moriah on April 15, 2018.

As we reflect on our rich history of God's faithfulness to the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, we acknowledge that we have come this far by faith.

On August 24, 2019, Mount Moriah celebrated one hundred years of faithful service in the community. As part of that celebration, on August 10, 2019, a concert was held featuring the legendary, multi award-winning gospel singer, Pastor Shirley Caesar. Other celebratory events during the month of August included a 100 Women in White Worship Service, 100 Men in Black Worship Service, a Greek Sunday Worship Service, as well as worshipping with our sister churches, Mt. Sinai MBC and St. Peters MBC, who came to help us celebrate.

God's power and presence continued to guide and sustain the Mount Moriah Church family because in the absence of a Pastor, Rev. Thomas Ballard, once again, along with Rev. Jeremy Young, the Chairman of the Trustees, Bro. Johnnel Harris, the Chairman of the Deacons, Deacon Reginald Lester and other members of the Deacon Ministry, along with the Mount Moriah Leadership Team kept the church membership together until a new pastor was chosen.

On **January 20, 2021**, Rev. Dr. Remiel Lockwood was called to be the seventh Pastor of Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church.

Dr. Lockwood's Mission for Mount Moriah, which he so affectionately calls, "The Mount", is to fervently fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples as exemplified by Christ through the vehicles of sincere worship, dedicated scholarship, intentional fellowship and the efficient stewardship of our talents, gifts and treasures.