

## FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN CHURCH (D.O.C.)

### A NARRATIVE HISTORY

May 1988 – September 2013

After Quindaro Christian Church, the only predominately Black Christian Church affiliated with the Christian Brotherhood was disbanded in 1983, concerned ministers, including Elders S.S. Myers, King David Cole, and George Lakes, met with Dr. David Downing, Regional Minister. After a period of discussions, they decided that a Black Christian Church should be formed in Western Wyandotte County.

A search was made for a Pastor Developer, whose duties would include canvassing the area, knocking on doors, and approaching prospective members. Finally, Rev. Dr. Desmond M. Walker, a man with extensive experience in this field, was called and brought to Kansas City, Kansas with his wife Barbara.

A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed of members of the new congregation and interested members of the Brotherhood to guide and support the effort. A feasibility study was made, and it was determined that an area west of I-635 between State Avenue and Leavenworth Road offered potential.

Rev. Walker went to work as developer. Some members of local Christian Churches assisted Rev. Walker in canvassing the community to invite families to become a part of this new congregation. Under the guidance of Rev. Walker, a nucleus of prospective members was established to form a congregation. The small group of members held meetings and bible studies in various members' homes.

Sunset Hills Christian Church on Leavenworth Road opened its doors and allowed Rev. Walker to establish an office in their building. Choir rehearsals, baptisms, Fellowship's first Mother/Daughter/Friends Banquet, committee meetings and special congregational meetings were also held there. At one of these meetings a steering committee was selected. The purpose of the committee was to build a membership and work on various projects to help bring the new church into being.

Mignon Roberson was elected chairperson. At a council meeting, it was recommended by Earline Roland that the church be named "New Fellowship Christian Church, Disciples." The council pending ratification by the congregation approved the recommendation provisionally. The name, "New Fellowship Christian Church" was the name written in the "Provisional Constitution and By-laws (March 15, 1988). The congregation voted to delete the word "New" and approved the name of the church as "Fellowship Christian Church" as appears in the approved Constitution and By-laws adopted May 1, 1988.

The first regular worship service was held in April 1987 in the Performing Arts Center at Kansas City, Kansas Community College. A decision was made to continue meeting there until a permanent site could be found. The Charter was opened in April 1987 with thirty-nine (39) people signing. Some of the former members from the disbanded Quindaro Christian Church joined the Fellowship family. When the Charter closed on May 1, 1988, ninety-seven (97) people had joined.

A Site Selection Committee was formed of members from Fellowship, Swope Parkway United and Central Christian churches, chaired by Ted Bowler. Amos Coleman, a local realtor, and charter member of Fellowship found a site. National and Regional representatives of the Brotherhood agreed with the committee and congregation to purchase the land and the building. In April 1990, the congregation moved into the building at 8844 State Avenue, a very small structure that accommodated approximately eighty-five (85) people.

Rev. Walker left Fellowship Christian Church on December 31, 1989. A supply minister, Elder Andre Darden, assumed pastoral duties in January 1990 serving until June 30, 1990. Afterwards, Dr. William K. Fox agreed to serve as Interim Minister for a period of 5 months.

Pastor Rolland Perry of Xenia, Ohio was called and assumed full-time duties as Pastor of Fellowship Christian Church on February 3, 1991. Under Pastor Perry several auxiliaries were organized, and programs started. The Sunday school was re-established. Evangelism and Outreach were brought to the forefront. The Youth Ministry, Children's Moment, and trips for the youth to Tall Oaks Camp were started.

In April 1994, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) met with David Downing, Regional Minister, who informed them that the Region would pay off the balance of the church's loan on the property. The church had already decided to remodel and enlarge its small building. A program of pledges was initiated to support this effort. A Building Committee was formed, and Ella Marie Grant served as Chairperson. The architect was engaged, and plans were drawn and approved.

When considering bids from three contractors, the contractor whose bid was far below the other two, was chosen. It was later determined that the contractor's finances were limited, which prevented the construction work on the building expansion from progressing smoothly. Nevertheless, we were able to enlarge the building and finish the Fellowship Hall with the help of members of other Christian Churches. Pews were also donated for the Sanctuary.

Pastor Perry resigned in September 2003. A Search Committee was formed to interview prospective pastor candidates. An interim pastor was chosen. After a short period as Interim, Pastor Warrick M. Graves was asked to consider becoming our full-time pastor and after some consideration, he signed an agreement with the church. He brought with him his wife Cynthia and two daughters, Ericka, and Jennifer.

Earl and Rosemary Harris donated a van to the church when they saw that some of our members needed transportation.

The church's mortgage was paid off and a special mortgage burning ceremony was held at Fellowship's Annual Church Banquet in the fall of 2006.

Under Pastor Graves, many ministries have been added: Food Giveaway, Celebrate Recovery, Healthy Lifestyle, Youth Group, Junior Usher Board, Men's Prayer Breakfast, Senior Noon Bible Study, Bus Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, Women's Ministry, New Members Class, Scholarship Program, Christmas Store, Card Ministry, Praise Dancers, Praise and Worship Team, and a male quartet—the "Fellas Fo." Ministers called to serve were Rev. Sheryl Tucker, Rev. Caroline Calloway, Rev. Robbie Tillman, Minister Carl Alexander, Minister Jill Calloway, Pastor George Kemper, Sr., Evangelist Deborah Peterson, and Evangelist Carrynel Scott.

In 2008 several events occurred, a new sound system and video screens were installed in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall; the church's first Church Directory was completed; the summer brought in nineteen (19) new members; another van was donated by the estate of Earl Harris; and stained-glass windows, the vision of Minnie Fine Hayes, were installed in the sanctuary. Unfortunately, Minnie was called home to be with the LORD before the windows were installed.

Pastor Graves conducted a "Debt" Revival in September 2009. He showed us how to trust God to get out of debt. Thirty (30) new members were welcomed into our congregation from January through December 2009. Also, during this year members were given business cards and were encouraged to pass them out.

In May 2010 Pastor Michael Portley, Senior Pastor and Revivalist of Transformation Family Life Center, led a revival. The theme was "Revival Fires are Burning," based on "Jeremiah 18:1-10." Twenty-five (25) new members were also welcomed into our membership. During that summer we found that our septic system was worn out, which prevented many events from being held. Nevertheless, with prayer for enough finances to correct this problem, faith, patience, and cooperation from the city, we were able to install a better system. A comedy group of ladies— "The Cha'urch Ladies," made their debut at the afternoon Anniversary Program on Sunday, September 26, 2010.

In 2011 eight (8) new members were added to our congregation. A new ministry was added, "Sisters of Jericho." Our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Church Banquet was held. The theme was "A Time to Laugh," Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:4. The year also included Fellowship's hosting the "Black Disciple Churches of Greater Kansas City" at the Annual Thanksgiving Service on Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

In addition to Pastor Graves, ministers currently serving our congregation are: Rev. Sheryl Tucker, Minister Jill Calloway, Rev. Caroline Calloway, Rev. Robbie Tillman, Pastor Gloria Parker, Evangelist Deborah Peterson, and Minister-in-Training, Stephanie Johnson. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Fellowship Christian Church and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Pastor Warrick Graves. The church's year long theme: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,"— [Romans 12:1, 2] began in September 2012 and ends September 2013.

Each month the church has an evangelism thrust. There are presently One-hundred-and-four (104) active members.

Before going home to be with the Lord, Eldora Gray worked with Pastor Graves and his assistant, Rev. Sheryl Tucker to make plans for our yearlong celebration. In September 2012, a

“Kick Off Rally” was held with Rev. Kevin Harris, pastor of the New Vision Christian Church as our speaker. Pictures were taken of each auxiliary and ads collected to be put in a souvenir journal to be presented at our Annual Banquet.

On Sunday, March 3, 2013, Fellowship Christian Church observed, “Miracle Day.” Several members gave testimonies on God’s healing in their lives. We have had door hangers and yard signs made and given out telling our community “Because of the Grace of God, healing has occurred constantly in our church.” Also, on Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup> our first “Café 55”, meeting was held. The Senior Ministry led by Rev. Sheryl Tucker and Rev. Caroline Calloway designed this program. It is held each fourth Friday of the month and is designed to be an educational and support group for persons in our congregation and visitors age 55 years and older.

Fellowship has had its share of problems and setbacks, but with God’s help, and much prayer and faith, the church membership has been able to overcome each problem as it arose.

On a final note, the Fellowship family would like to express, that all people, regardless of racial, religious, or ethnic background, are welcome here.

History Provided by: Brenette Gardner, Historian  
and  
Earline Roland, Charter Member



**FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**8844 STATE AVENUE**  
**KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66112**  
**Warrick M. Graves, Pastor**  
**(913) 299-1400**

**Sunday School:** 9:00 a.m.

**Morning Service:** 10:30 a.m.

**Bible Study:** Senior Bible Study – Wednesday at 12:00 Noon  
Evening Bible Study – Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.  
**(All Ages Welcome!)**