

Ebenezer Methodist Welcomes You

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HISTORY OF EBENEZER METHODIST CHURCH (GHANA CONFERENCE) (1992 – Present)

Ebenezer Methodist Church (EMC) is a vibrant church located in Hyattsville, Maryland. Our congregation is largely Ghanaian but very welcoming to all Christians of other nationalities. Ebenezer Methodist Church will be celebrating its 18th year in May 2010. EMC's Mission is to demonstrate God's love and care through charity and benevolence to all humanity by engaging in activities to serve both the spiritual and social needs of the Church's congregation and the community in which we live and worship.

History

Ebenezer Methodist Church (Ghana Conference) was formed in 1992 by four individuals, namely, the Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Kow Ghunney, the late Brother Dr. Joseph Attah-Quartey, Brother Kofi Abruquah and Sister Cecilia Ghunney. Through the inspiration and guidance of God, these four individuals came together to discuss the necessity and feasibility of establishing a church in the Ghanaian Methodist tradition and liturgy which would cater to the spiritual and pastoral needs of Ghanaians in the Washington Metropolitan area. The outcome of the discussions was the formation of the Ebenezer Methodist Church (Ghana Conference). The Church was incorporated in the State of Maryland in 1993 with the Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Kow Ghunney as the resident minister.

Leaders' Meeting

The highest governing and decision-making body of the Church is the Leaders' Meeting presided over by the Resident Minister.

EMC Logo

The Church adopted a distinguished emblem depicting the Cross of Christ ascending with a halo and embedding the traditional Akan symbol, "GYE NYAME" (Except GOD). That logo has a subscript culled from 1 Samuel, 7:12 "Hitherto Hath the Lord Brought Us", in recognition of the sure hope that that tiny mustard seed sown in faith as a Church of God, would sprout, grow and bloom into a mighty tree.

The maiden service was attended by twenty-one pioneering members and consisted of the following: Very Rev Dr. Joseph Kow Ghunney, the late Brother (Dr.) Joseph Attah-Quartey, Brother Kofi Abruquah, Sister Cecilia Ghunney, Sister Yvonne Ghunney, Sister Aya Ghunney, Sister Felicia Ekuia Amissah, Brother Peter K. Forson. Sister Ama Sekyiwa Abruquah, Sister Faustina Abruquah, Brother Isaac Ebow Pesseh, Brother Kweku Bosomtwe Pesseh, Sister Maggie Pesseh, Sister Agnes Duker, Sister Baaba Odduro, Sister Ekuia Odduro, Sister Aba Esiaw Dufu Odduro, Sister Gladys Ako-Adjei, Sister Naa Baake Ako-Adjei and Sister Naana Efisima Ako-Adjei.

The maiden service was held at the Free United Methodist Church, Layhill, Maryland on May 17, 1992. Eight months later, due to the rapid growth in membership, the Church moved to the First United Methodist Church, Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Maryland.

The Ebenezer Methodist Church Choir was formed to enhance the quality of singing during the afternoon divine service.

EMC Inauguration

On Sunday, June 11, 1995, Ebenezer Methodist Church was formally inaugurated by the then President of the Ghana Methodist Church, the Right Rev. Professor Kwesi Dickson. In 1997, as the congregation increased in membership, the Church moved once again to the Annex of the National Wesleyan Church, Riggs Road, Hyattsville, MD. This move was accomplished with the help of Brother Kwabena Nketia, a church leader at the National Wesleyan Church. That same year, the Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Kow Ghunney left for Ghana to assume a position as the Vice Principal of the Trinity Theological Seminary at Legon, Ghana. The pastoral duties of the Church were therefore entrusted in the hands of Rev. Ebenezer Ato Afful, an ordained Presbyterian Minister. He was assisted by the Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin. Under Rev. Ato Afful, EMC developed a strategic plan to raise funds to purchase or build a permanent place of worship. Ebenezer Methodist Church still has that goal in its sights.

The First Split

In October 1998, the then Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Most Rev. Dr. Samuel Asante-Antwi, made an administrative decision to replace Rev. Ato Afful with the Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin as the pastor of Ebenezer Methodist Church. This decision, which came as a huge surprise to the EMC membership, created a rift in the church. This eventually resulted in the first split in the Church. With the support and help of some members, Rev. Ato Afful left Ebenezer Methodist Church to form a new Church. In the interim, Rev. Alfred Kwamina Ainooson, an ordained minister of the AME Zion Church was appointed by the Presiding Bishop to temporarily assist the Very Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin in overseeing the affairs of the Church. Less than a year later, in August 1999, Rev. John K. Bassaw, an ordained Methodist minister pursuing graduate work at the Wesleyan Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. was appointed by the Methodist Church, Ghana as co-pastor of Ebenezer Methodist Church. Rev. Bassaw served in this capacity until 2002 when he left to start his doctoral studies at a seminary in Indiana.

EMC Leadership Role in the Washington Metro Area

At various stages in its existence, EMC played an active and leading role in the growth of Ghana Methodism in the Washington Metro area. The Very Rev. Dr. John A. K. Bonful, a member of Ebenezer Methodist Church, whilst waiting for his re-instatement of connexion, left in 1997 to form the Calvary Redeeming Methodist Church in Rockville, MD.

Under the direction of the Very Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin and the Very Rev. John Bassaw, a preaching post was started in Virginia for our members who lived in Virginia and had to travel long distances to attend church services at Ebenezer in Hyattsville. That preaching post was inaugurated and named the Gaddiel Acquaaah Memorial Methodist Church in October 2001 with the Very Rev. John Hammond as its first resident minister.

In July 1998, the Ebenezer Methodist Church Choir in conjunction with Ghana United Methodist Church Choir of Bronx, New York, Ghana Community Church Choir of Atlanta and Ghana Methodist Church Choir of Toronto, Canada formed the Association of Ghana Methodist Church Choirs of North America. Following the formation and a successful conference of the Association of Ghana Methodist Church Choirs of North America, Rev. Kofi Bart Martin with the advice from Brother Kofi Abruquah, initiated the formation of the Association of Ghana Methodist Churches of North America in September 1998. This association later became the Fellowship of Ghanaian Methodist Churches of North America. Its aim was to bring together all the Ghanaian Methodist churches in North America. Its first meeting, organized under the auspices of Ebenezer Methodist Church was attended by Ghanaian Methodist churches in North America at Hyattsville, Maryland.

Ebenezer's Move to be hosted by St. Matthews' Anglican/ Episcopal Church

In 2002, as a result of the rapid growth and expansion of the Church, EMC was felt compelled to look for a new and more spacious place for worship. By the Grace of God, the Rev. Noreen Dubay Seiler and the Trustees of St. Matthew's Anglican Episcopal Church (Nicholson Street & 36th Ave., Hyattsville) approved our application to use their sanctuary and the Church facilities for worship and other worship-related activities. In January 2003, EMC started worshipping at St. Matthew's.

Formation of the Washington Mission Circuit and the Second Split

In early 2002, the three Ghanaian Methodist Churches in the Washington Metro area were constituted into the Washington Mission Circuit by the Presiding Bishop, the Right Rev. Dr. Asante-Antwi. The Very Rev. John Hammond, resident minister at Gaddiel Acquah Memorial Methodist Church was appointed the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit. The Very Rev. John Hammond was also assigned jurisdiction over Ebenezer Methodist Church, the mother church of all the Ghanaian churches in the metro area. The Very Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin who was the resident minister at EMC was stationed at Emmanuel Methodist Church in Newark, New Jersey. Unfortunately, the leaders and the members of Emmanuel Methodist Church rejected the stationing of the Very Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin as their pastor. The outcome of this rejection and the failure of the Methodist Church Ghana to find a station for the Very Rev. Bart-Martin resulted in another dissension at EMC, and the second split, with some members leaving the Church to form the Covenant Methodist Church in 2003. The new Church invited Rev. Kofi Bart Martin as its minister.

To ease the burden of pastoring two churches, one in Maryland (Ebenezer Methodist) and the other in Virginia (Gaddiel Acquah Memorial Methodist), EMC Leaders' Meeting recommended to the Very Rev. John Hammond to devote his full attention to the congregation at Gaddiel Acquah and to assist EMC in searching for a new resident minister. The recommendation was accepted by Rev. Hammond and, in the interim, Brother William Percival Brown-Orleans was appointed the Caretaker of Ebenezer Methodist Church in 2004.

In July 2005, EMC accepted the Very Rev. Dr. Helena Araba Grahl, a post graduate doctoral student at the Andover Theological School in Massachusetts, to do her Optional Practical Training as part of her program as the resident minister for a period of one year. The Very Rev. Dr. Grahl completed her internship in June 2006 and left for Ghana the following month. After a successful search and interview, EMC appointed the Very Rev. Francis Acquah as the pastor of EMC in November 2006. Rev. Francis Acquah, an ordained Methodist minister, was in the United States pursuing a doctoral degree in Theology at the Hartford Seminary Institute.

INTER-GENERATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Over the period of eighteen years EMC has grown into a full-fledged Methodist Church with the following the inter-generational organizations active in the church:

1. The Church Choir was inaugurated on 1996 and is currently an active member of the Association of Ghana Methodist Church Choirs-North America.

2. The Women's Fellowship, inaugurated 1997

3. The Sunday School (Children's Ministry) inaugurated 1996

4. The Methodist Youth Fellowship, inaugurated 2000

5. The Men's Fellowship, inaugurated 1998
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6. The Methodist Singing Band, inaugurated 2003

7. The Lay Movement, inaugurated 2010

The Mission House:

In 2007, Ebenezer Methodist Church was bequeathed a large cash donation by an unknown benefactor, the late Frances Marsh. Part of that bequest was used to purchase a Manse to be used as the Church's Mission House and the residence for EMC pastor. In recognition of this wonderful deed, the single family home has been appropriately named EMC-Frances Marsh Mission House. In addition, the second Sunday in March has been set aside as Frances Marsh Day to celebrate our benefactor, and to perform acts of kindness and benevolence to the community by engaging in charitable work.

With its mission as a guide, EMC will continue to play an active role in the religious lives of its members.