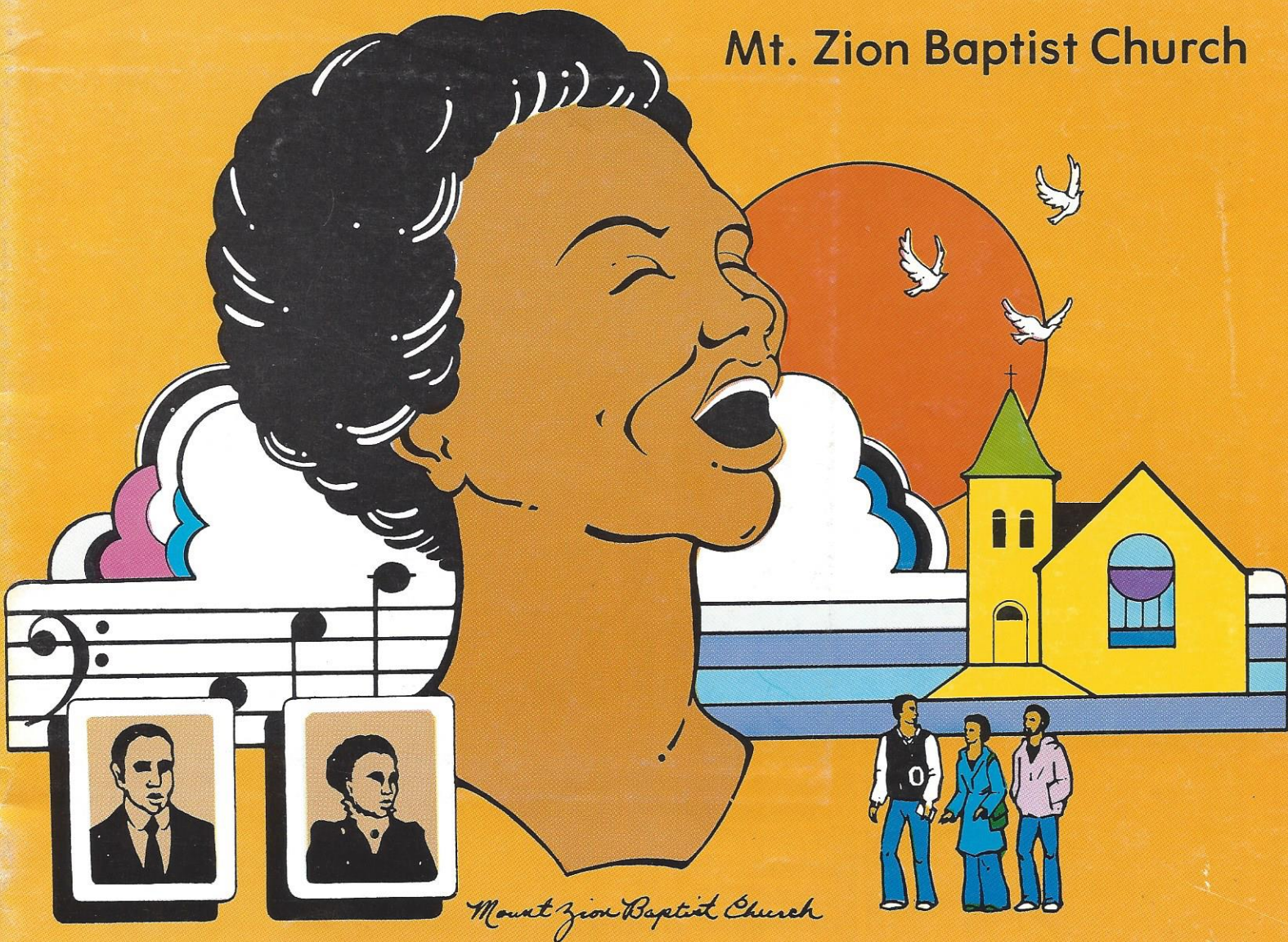


# Athens magazine

Autumn 1979 75¢

Mt. Zion Baptist Church



Architect row

Flue season sweeps the country

Bare your arm and grit your teeth

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2  
architect row



Nature, art, engineering and people can coexist. McDuggleville shows how to do it with creativity and cooperation.

6  
flue season  
sweeps the country



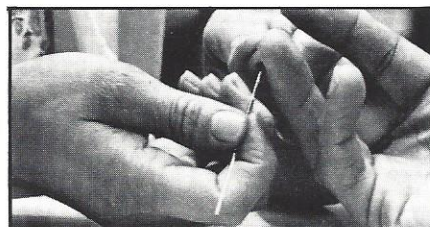
The energy crunch has brought back one picturesque character—the chimney sweep. Three area sweeps detail the traditions and techniques of the trade.

21  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
where harmony means  
more than music



Harmony can stem from many things such as music, cooperation or unity. In Athens, all three have created a spiritual retreat at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

28  
bare your arm  
and grit your teeth



What really goes on when you "sell your blood"? Find out the facts behind the local plasmapheresis center.

32  
who says  
talk is cheap?



For some, the cost is higher than others. Stuttering is a misunderstood speech impediment that probably affects someone you know. Therapy is available, however, and it's closer than you think.

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*With a gesture of exultation, the Rev. Buffington delivers the gospel message.*

Patty Foster

# Mt. Zion Baptist Church

## where harmony means more than music

by Jeff Richardson

Athens has been called everything from a cultural oasis to "out in the sticks." With many people gathered from vastly different backgrounds, it can be rough trying to find your niche—especially if you're black in an overwhelmingly white community. This dilemma is related to the popularity and success of the Mt. Zion Baptist

Church.

Located on the corner of Congress and Carpenter streets, Mt. Zion serves a unique purpose for its members. Since it is the only predominantly black church in the area, it has become a hub of activity in the local Afro-American community, which comprises both students and townspeople.

Mt. Zion's roots date back to 1872 when a group of black Christians met at the home of Joseph and Henrietta Miller to join in a search for free and equal worship. As the group expanded, a church building was erected at 21-23 S. Lancaster St. The current building was constructed in 1905 during the



*Songs of praise are not limited to the choir.*

students are welcome to participate in most of the church functions. As an added service to the students, information on university and voter registration is included in the scheduled announcement portion of the Sunday service.

Some gain preaching experience and may even be licensed. Buffington said that in order for him to confer a license on a student, "they would have to be called by God, then we would listen to them preach. If they preach and we don't think they're ready, we will have them preach more sermons." He added that if someone satisfies the trial sermon requirement, they become eligible for a license on the condition that it will be revoked if abused.

Buffington, who calls himself a little

pastorate of the Rev. Joseph Wilson.

Although most of the founding families have long since moved from Athens, their spirit has survived. The transient student population has helped

the church continue to grow.

"They are a tremendous help to Zion. They help us in two ways: spiritually and financially," the Rev. Edward Buffington said. A resident of Gallipolis, Buffington added that

Patty Foster

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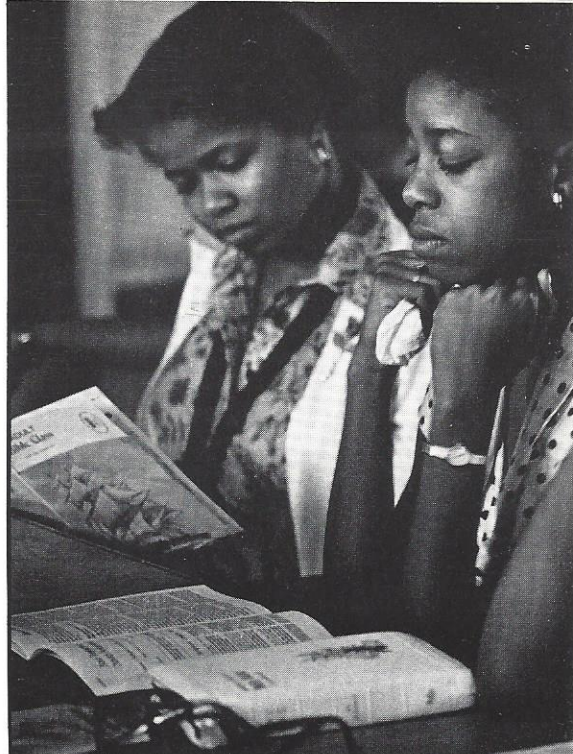
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Patty Foster

country preacher, uses a combination of gospel and anecdotes to deliver his message. His sermons often stress achievement, and the choir backs him up in more ways than one.

The Gospel Voices of Faith is a co-ed

ground in, "uplifting the name of the Lord in exultation and songs of praise."

Francine Childs, the choir's adviser, cites the program variety as one of their strengths. "We think that is what makes GVF unique. We do gospel, a cappella,

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"Many people have tried drugs, parties, the wild life and the streets but still find emptiness."

---

choir composed of 35 students, although faculty and community residents are welcome. Not all of the singers are born-again believers, according to Choir President Willarene Williams, but they all find a common

fast, mellow, slow. We try to project a certain sense of liberation and freedom, fulfilling a spiritual need in ourselves, others and uplifting the name of Christ."

New members are accepted during

the first three weeks of fall and winter quarters. Spring quarter is excluded because of the choir's heavy performance schedule.

Three annual events stand out on the engagements calendar. Each spring the

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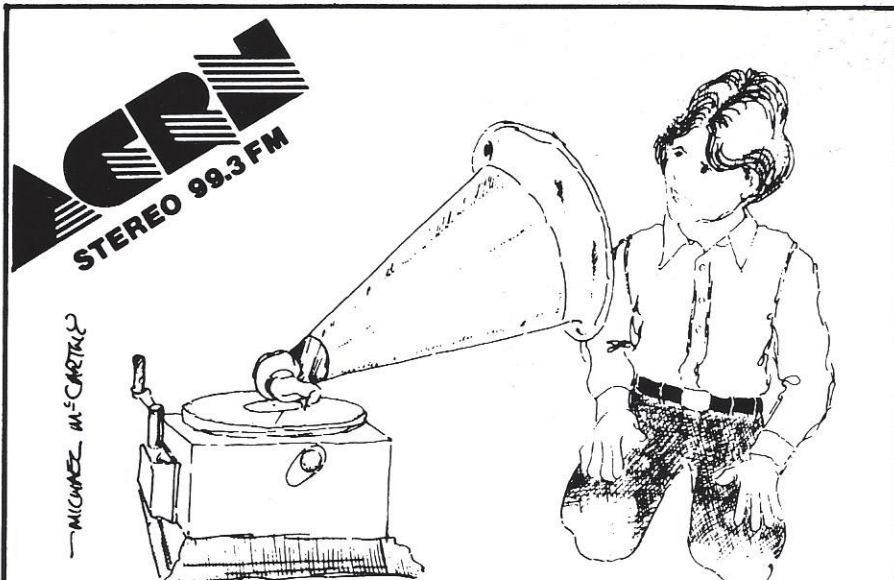
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choir embarks on a Southwestern America tour that, in the past, has included universities and churches in Dallas, Austin, Memphis and St. Louis.

During spring quarter, the choir gives a special Mom's Day concert to honor

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Choir members share a common goal of "uplifting the name of the Lord in exultation and songs of praise."

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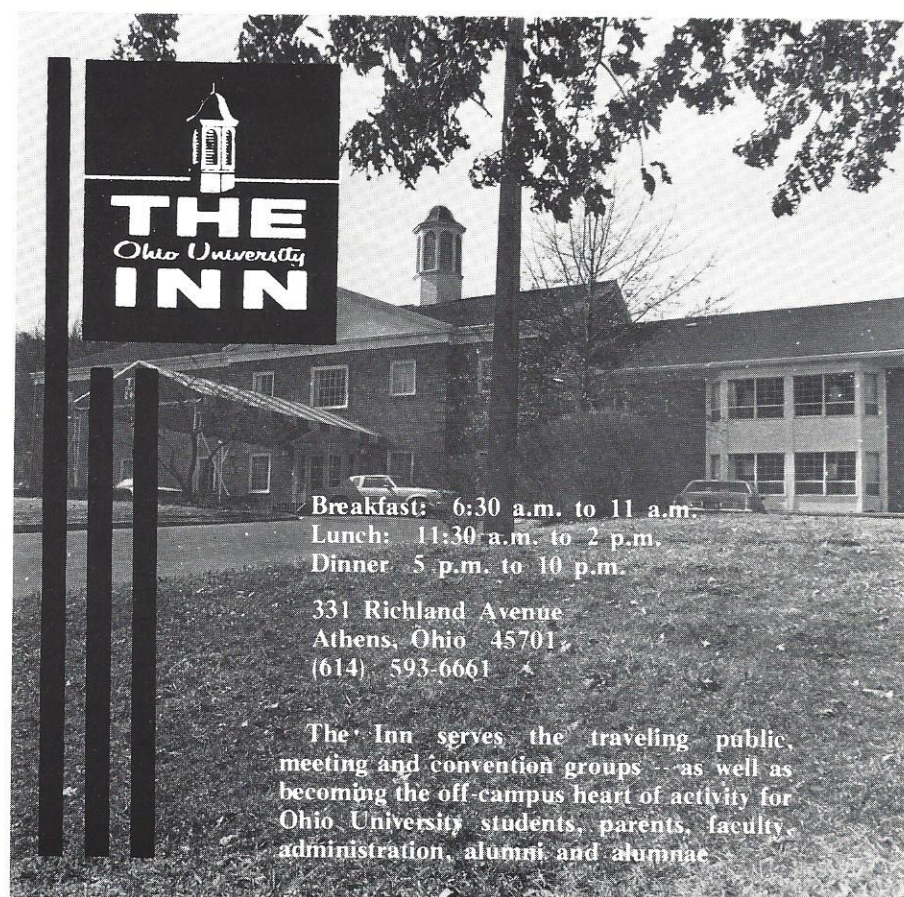
visiting mothers. Another popular event is the Variety Extravaganza which is held each February. The competition, which is similar to an amateur hour, is open to campus and community residents. Certificates are awarded to the best acts.

With so much traveling it seems that little time would be left for schoolwork, but Williams is quick to point out that all choir participants must maintain at least a 2.3 grade point average. The only other requirements are attending practices, which are usually held three times a week, and singing in the weekly service.

Choir members also participate in various fund-raising projects, such as bake sales, car washes, potluck dinners and soliciting sponsors from local businesses. The proceeds go to meet traveling and performing expenses.

Additional performances are given for senior citizens, other churches and university functions such as banquets and award ceremonies.

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It may be the most visible, but the Gospel Voices of Faith is but one of many groups active at Mt. Zion. The congregation is also involved in Bible study groups, receptions, workshops, potluck dinners and meetings of civic groups such as the N.A.A.C.P.

In these ways, Mt. Zion tries to meet the needs of both students and community residents. Childs has confidence in the church's ability to serve the congregation. "Many people have tried drugs, parties, the wild life and the streets but still find emptiness," she said.

Childs and Williams agreed that the church fills the universal need to belong. "It's a good identity source," Williams said, adding that Mt. Zion gave her a reason to return to O.U. after a difficult sophomore year.

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"... (the students) are a tremendous help to Zion. They help us in two ways---spiritually and financially."

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Mt. Zion means different things to different people. Jack Sullivan, the assistant adviser to the choir, explained that the church is open to people of all races and denominations. "Folks come to worship God the way they choose. If you want to clap your hands, you can. If you want to shout, you can. If you want to stand back and observe, you can."

Childs agreed, adding that many



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Gally Foster

Participation is a key element at Mt. Zion.

people, "in a last resort turn to Christ and the church." She said that some students who probably do not go to church at home come to Mt. Zion because of the relaxed atmosphere.

"I think there has been an attitude

change," she said. "There is a sense of urgency to fill a void. There is a feeling that we need to have a spiritual renewal."

Perhaps the most important aspect of Mt. Zion is the freedom it offers from

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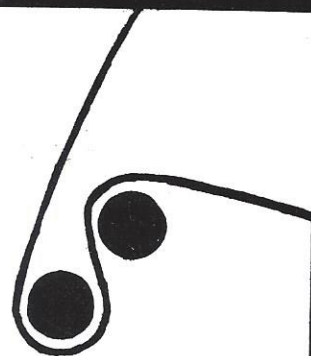
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pressures of the job or classroom. "There is a feeling of serenity," Childs said. "The church is a place for emotional outlet."

For whatever reason, the energy and support of the congregation is evident. Members take on the jobs of cleaning, painting and making minor repairs to the church. This effort, plus the success of the Gospel Voices of Faith and other church groups, show an enthusiasm that would have made Joseph and Henrietta Miller proud.

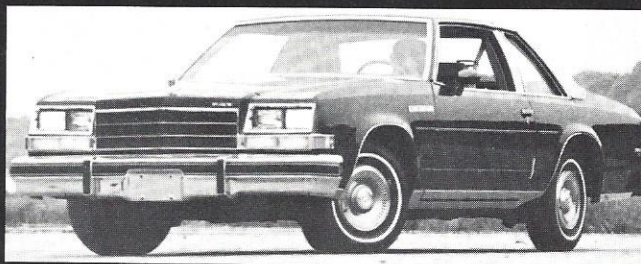
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