

Bryant Manor Complex, built for two (2) million dollars, offered a completely new opportunity for First Church. It was acquired under the leadership of Reverend Cecil Murray. This acquisition represented a joint venture between First A.M.E. Church and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.). Reverend Murray brought inspiration to the youth of First Church and the community. He initiated the Commission of Social Concerns which included voter registration, and the Prison Ministry. He organized the F.A.M.E. Young Adult Choir during his leadership. A \$40,000.00 mortgage was paid off and a \$25,000.00 renovation project to the sanctuary was completed.

In 1977, Reverend Dr. Fred Stephens was assigned to First Church. Dr. Stephens believed that our church reflected love of God, so many improvements were made to the buildings and grounds. Reverend Stephens organized the Men's Brotherhood and the Chancel Choir. He was instrumental in widening the participation of our church members in the Commission on Social Concerns which included Voter Registration and The Prison Ministry. This program has been inspiration to all participants.

Reverend Dr. James H. Oxley's appointment as pastor of First Church in 1983 heralded a new program toward modernization and renewed community involvement. Under Reverend Oxley's leadership, the church has taken more responsibility for its housing and day care programs. An \$151,000.00 renovation of the sanctuary, plus refurbishing of restroom facilities has been completed. Future goals include the development of a much needed educational wing. The Prison Ministry Program flourished. More Prisons were included.

On October 3, 1984, Mayor Charles Royer signed City Ordinance #111928, designating First Church as a historical landmark. This document, co-signed by City Councilman Norm Rice, states that First A.M.E. Church is a "significant" way with major aspects of Seattle's cultural, political and economic heritage.

In summary, First African Methodist Episcopal Church has a rich and deep history, steeped in tradition, rooted in Christianity and the A.M.E. doctrine of racial self-help, self-esteem plus religious freedom. From 17 original parishioners, our rolls have grown to over 2,000 and, by the grace of God, we have reached 100 years of service.

This is another major milestone of which we can be proud, but still merely a marker. Thanking God for His blessings upon this congregation, let us go into the next century with the same faith, plus determination, that brought us through the first. And let us strive, in soul and spirit, to follow the Gospel of Christ:

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:29-30

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