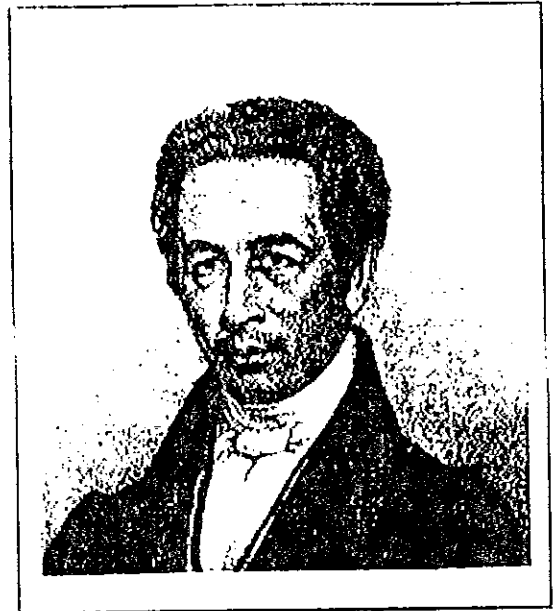


# CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH 1823-1999

## Brief History

The Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church was founded by Reverend James Anderson in 1823. It is part of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination that was established in 1796 in New York under the direction of James Varick, its first Bishop. The Reverend Jehiel Beaman, the son of a former slave from Colchester, became the first Pastor of the A.M.E. Zion Church. An avid abolitionist, he was not only a formidable leader of the church but extremely active in the small African American community in the City of Middletown and became an important leader in the abolitionist and temperance movements on a state-wide level. Due to his involvement, this church was called "The Freedom Church" by many people.



The original church was built in 1829. The members purchased land from Mr. Henry Paddock and the church was constructed on Cross Street, which at this time faced Mt. Vernon Street currently the site of the Science Center of Wesleyan University. The construction of this church was such a financial strain that the members were not able to pay the Reverend Beaman for his services as pastor. So Reverend Beaman and his son Leverett, a shoemaker by trade, opened a shop on William Street in Middletown to support his family which consisted of his wife Fannie and their seven children. One of his sons, Amos, was ousted from Wesleyan for trying to obtain an education. He went on to become a well known minister and abolitionist. His daughter-in-law, Clarissa, founded the Women's Anti-Slavery and Temperance Movement of Women of Color.

The Church was rebuilt in 1867. Not much is known about the church activities during the years following 1867. It was reported that the church was boarded for many years. However, it was awakened under the leadership of the Reverend George Biddle, a civil war soldier and an original member of the famous 54th regiment. Other pastors serving after Reverend Biddle were the Reverends Green, Coleman and Riddick. In 1929, the church was moved to its present site due to the realignment of Cross Street. It was during this move that the church was named Cross Street. Under the leadership of 12 ministers, many renovations were accomplished. However in 1978, the 1867 church structure was torn down and a new building constructed on the same site under the leadership of Reverend Douglas Lawrence.

## Brief History (Cont)

Cross Street and the A.M.E. Zion Church were formed before the Civil War forced an end to the institution of slavery. The sole purpose for its formation was to secure a place for people of color to worship freely. Many men and women rose to this task and it is to their testament that today, we are witnesses to their dreams for we have endured by the power and faith of the Lord.

In May of 1993, the Rt. Reverend George W.C. Walker, Sr., appointed the Reverend Moses L. Harvill, as Pastor of the Cross Street Church. Under his leadership the church continues to grow spiritually, numerically, and financially. The church and parsonage mortgages have been liquidated. The Church has purchased two vans, new state of the art Hammond organ, audio system, computers and copier and other office and church equipment. Pastor Harvill has launched Vision 2000 campaign for the building of our faith, ministries, and new church. We give God all the glory for the things he has done as we celebrate 176 years of Christian Service.

## Cross Street Pastors 1823 to Present

Jehiel E. Beamon	William Jones
H.W. Hutchings	Moses Monzingo
G.H.S. Bell	J.T. Battle
Joseph Murphy	G.H. Coffey
Samuel E. Roberson	J.C. Lodge
J.B. Small	E. George Biddle
Walla	George. F. Green
E. Horton Brown	Coleman
Marshall Brown	William Davage
Thomas Riddick	George C. Battle
David Fogg	N. Roosevelt Scott
Hezekiah Williams	Moses L. Harvill
Douglas Lawrence	

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ML*