

Goler celebrates 116 years of service

Goler Memorial AME Zion Church will celebrate their 116th anniversary Nov. 7-9.

The church was established in 1881. The congregation held its first worship service in the Forsyth County Court House, which was commonly referred to as Court House Square. Later the church site was at Fourth and Chestnut Streets. The Rev. Slade, the father of one of the Bishops of the AME Zion Connection, served as pastor.

The next several years were a period of constant moving until the membership became large enough to secure a permanent place of worship. A site at Third and Depot streets was the third place of worship. After a short stay there, the congregation decided to move to a one-room log cabin at 1886 Eight St. The Rev. P.A. McCorkle was the pastor.

At that time, Dr. W.H. Goler, now deceased, gave the Connection the property that is the church's present site. He was among the leaders in the establishment of the church and served as its pastor for a short time. The church was named in his honor.

The Rev. R.A. Morrissey was the first pastor assigned to the church by the AME Zion Conference. The following persons have shared in the pastorate of the church since its establishment: (omitted first names not available) the Revs. Bruce; R.C. Collins; Benjamin Martin; R.A. McLease; McCoy; Miller; Smith; Blake; L.W. Kyles (later elected to the post of Bishop); Thompson; Higgins; Hawkins; H.H. Jackson; S.G. Spottswood (now presiding bishop of the 4th Episcopal District of the AME Zion Church); Cowan; D.G. Garland; P.R. Washington; Lizzie Lindsay; H.B. Bess; A.A. Perry; A.N. Gibson; L.M. Richardson; J.L. Hunt; James French; and Louis Hunter Sr.

The church was destroyed by fire in March 1941 during the pastorate of the Rev. P.R. Washington. Worship Services were held in the YWCA building on Chestnut St. until plans for rebuilding the church could be worked out and executed. During this period of disruption, the congregation divided. Members of the congregation who remained at the YWCA chose the name "Old Goler Memorial AME Zion Church." The Rev. Lizzie Lindsay served as the first pastor.

She was followed by the Rev. H.B. Bess in November 1942. Under his leadership, the church was rebuilt after five years of what a church representative called "toiling, praying, weeping, disappointments, success and above all faith in God." The spokesperson said, "The rebuilding of the church during the time of one of the worst wars in our history was one of God's great miracles of our modern age."

The Revs. A.A. Perry, A.N. Gibson and L.M. Richardson consecutively worked with the congregation to fill the needs of the community.

Prior to the appointment of the Revs. L.M. Richardson and J.L. Hunt to the church, the term "Old" was legally deleted from the name of the church and the original name, Goler Memorial AME Zion Church, was reassumed.

Under the leadership of the present pastor, the Rev. Dr. Seth O. Lartey, Goler has continued to increase in membership and expand-



The Rev. Dr. Seth O. Lartey and family

ed its program of "Ministry, Christian Education, and Christian Witness."

Lartey was born into Methodism. He is the grandson of the late Bishop Solomon D. Lartey. He is married to the former Jacqueline I. Williams of Elm City. They have three children, Solomon, Alicia, and Victoria.

He graduated from the AME Zion Academy (1976) in Monrovia, Liberia, west Africa; Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary (1980), also in Monrovia; earned his bachelor's degree in education from Livingstone College (1987) and his graduate degree in religious education (1990) from Duke University Divinity School in Durham.

He was given an honorary doctor of divinity degree (1994) from Livingstone College in Salisbury.

Lartey's diligent work has not gone unnoticed by his peers. Among his accolades are: the Livingston College Achievement Award (1985-86), mention in "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities" (1986), membership in Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society (1986), a Presidential Scholarship to Livingstone College (1987), inclusion in the national dean's list (1983-1987) and the dean's list at Duke University of Divinity (1987-1990), the Bishop George Leake Outstanding Pastor of the Year Award at the Cape Fear Conference (1989), The Bladen Central Training School Alumni Association and Clergy of the Year Award (1990).

Jacqueline Williams-Lartey also graduated from Livingstone College with a degree in accounting. She is a recipient of the Emma Clement Jackson Award, the Cable Award, the Women's Club Prize Award and was included in the national dean's list.

RESIDENTS

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Rickard, the housing authority turned her down. Because the event would not be on HAWS property, said Hardin, the housing authority could not supply security for the evening. And without security personnel, vans could not be provided either.

"As it stands now, that's where things are," said Hardin. "I can't say one way or another if it will change."

Rickard approached the city's police department and got a commitment from an officer to volunteer for security. Little said he is pleased with the program's planning.

"So far, it's going well," he said. "Things are falling into place ... It seems her hard work has paid off."

This is the first time he and Rickard have collaborated on a project, though they have discussed ideas in the past, and Little said he is impressed with Rickard's commitment.

"She is really into helping the kids in the community as much as she possibly can," said Little.

Still, Rickard and her group are not receiving much help from the housing authority. Transportation to and from the center is still needed, but housing authority commissioners have said that the cost of renting vans is prohibitive. Rickard said she could make do with two vans; Hardin could not estimate the price or how many vans would be needed to shuttle attendees.

Rickard is frustrated. "They took us through a lot of run-around," she said.

Other parents agreed with Rickard, and said that they don't trust the housing authority to provide necessary programs for their children.

"What we're trying to do is tell Cleveland Street that it's Halloween, and a lot of kids get hurt (on that holiday)," said Rickard. Katsue Johnson, who has three children age 4, 5 and 9, said she worries that some HAWS activities, such as the RAID after school diversion program, aren't effective.

"I don't think things are too struc-

tured over there," said Johnson. "The kids end up being bored." Evelyn Rickard, Charlene's sister-in-law, agreed.

"It ain't what it's supposed to be," said Rickard, who has four school-aged children.

Hardin said he has offered to sit down and discuss these concerns with the women. "I have not heard back from Charlene," he added.

Rickard's drive and ambition is appreciated, said Hardin. "I don't want to portray Mrs. Rickard as being a troublemaker," he said. "She is very strong-willed. She has a lot of great ideas ... but it's hard sometimes to get communication going."

Hardin added that he is willing to work with any resident, "without pretense of whose program it is or who gets credit."

But that's what concerns Rickard and the other women, who said that their ideas and work get co-opted by housing authority staff.

"Reeling in the kids — that's no easy job," stated Rickard. "If the women do the work to get the kids out, they should get paid."

The women simply want to feel that they have created something for the children. They want ownership of their program.

That's why the group recently formed a 4-H chapter. They want to provide educational activities that are fun, and start planning for their children's futures.

Some of their goals include coordinating after-school classes for teenagers, such as typing and computer skills, with others such as dance programs and competitions. They also plan to set up college funds for the children.

In the immediate future, though, the group just wants to ensure a safe Halloween for the neighborhood. The group has secured donations from Coca-Cola, Family Dollar, Dunkin' Donuts and others.

Transportation may still prove a problem. So far, the group has raised \$25 toward renting vans. "We don't have much," admitted Rickard.

Coming Soon



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Harry L. Hawkins
Vice-President
9 1/2 yrs. Supermarket Management



Benjamin L. Penn
Treasurer
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Customer Service Manager
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Chris Wallace
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