



Clark Memorial United Methodist Church

Celebrates 150 Years of Ministry

Our History

In 1865, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church purchased Andrew's Chapel, located on Franklin Street in South Nashville. The church had purchased this property in 1847. The 1865 purchase was made under the direction of Bishop Clarke, and the name of the structure was changed to Clarke Chapel. The intent was to use the building as a house of worship and a school for Negro youth. By 1867, the school had grown so large and its curriculum so strong that it became known as Central Tennessee College. The name was later changed to Walden University. Meharry Medical College became a department at Walden in 1876, before becoming an independent institution in 1915.

In 1868, the congregation purchased the Clarke Chapel structure and land. By this time, the white members of the congregation had moved out. In 1899, a new structure was completed and dedicated, with the name changed to Clark Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church. This property was eventually sold, and in 1936 the congregation relocated to North Nashville, worshipping in quarters loaned by the Seventh Day Adventist Church on the corner of Meharry Boulevard and the 12th Avenue, North, until its own facility could be built. On Palm Sunday of 1945, the congregation marched joyfully and prayerfully from its loaned quarters to its new and present home on the corner of Phillips Street and 14th Avenue North.

Over the years, there have been two structural additions to the church. In 1956, an Educational Unit was completed, with an adjacent parsonage completed a year later. As the church grew, there was need for renovation of the Educational Unit to accommodate the broad range of activities. In 1981, the renovation and expansion were completed, and the Grady Sherrill-Matthew Walker wing (named after two of Clark's most dedicated members) was consecrated, with the cornerstone of the old Franklin Street Church included in the structure.

With time, there have been church name changes, in accordance with the Methodist Church's connectional changes and Clark's status as a connectional church with Methodism. Clark Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church became Clark Memorial Methodist Church in 1939, and Clark Memorial United Methodist Church in 1968.

An ever-increasing range of church activities in both congregational ministry and outreach areas has accompanied building additions and name changes. Clark is today still growing, with plans underway for a new building that will enhance the opportunities for Christian education, fellowship, and family life. We have become more than a "Sunday Church," with two worship services on Sunday; three on Wednesday; and Bible study, prayer groups, and other activities throughout the week.

The Reverend Dr. Kennard Murray became Clark's forty-second senior pastor in August 2012.