

# ***History of The Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church***

*During the year of 1917, Reverend Allen B. Baity recognized the need of a church in the town of Athens, AL that would be a part of the Round Island Creek Missionary Baptist Association. With that in mind, he organized and built the church known as MASON CHAPEL.*

*Reverend Baity's personal home was located on the site of our present church. He loved the place so much that when his home was demolished, he, along with his wife, grandchildren and a small group of Christians, built the church on the exact site. After pondering over the new building and with inspiration from God, he named it SWEET HOME. Pastor Baity served for 23 years.*

*A few loyal and faithful souls helped to establish Sweet Home M. B. Church: Della Horton McKinney, Sid Harris, May Eliza Harris, Son Stinnett, Harriet Allen, and Clara Crutcher.*

*Eight ministers have served as pastor since the church was established, namely: Reverend A. B. Baity, Reverend F.D. Sowell, Reverend A. B. Booker, Reverend M. C. Cosby, Reverend Thomas Sanderfer Jr., Reverend Troy L. Garner, Reverend Marvin R. Winston, and Reverend Jeffrey Moseley.*

*Reverend F. D. Sowell became pastor of Sweet Home Church in the spring of 1940. The membership began to grow steadily under his leadership. Pastor Sowell served for 10 years*

*In 1950, the members elected Reverend A. B. Booker as pastor. The members, as well as the Pastor, felt a need to replace the old building with a new one. Plans were drawn up to build a new sanctuary. However, Reverend Booker did not see the erection of the new building. He passed away in July of 1959. He was pastor for 9 years.*

*In the fall of 1959, Reverend M. C. Cosby, Moderator of the Round Island Creek Missionary Baptist Association was elected as pastor of the Sweet Home M. B. Church. The new church building was completed in 1961 under the guidance of Reverend M. C. Cosby and Deacons Joe Hamby, Aubrey Horton Son Stinnett, Claude Kirk, Carlos Kennemer, Van Gilbert, Willie J. Cauthen, Richard McLin, and Willie Heard. A fellowship hall was later added to the church to accommodate the growth in Sunday school attendance and other religious functions. In 1976, the pastor and members saw a need to add the following deacons to the board in order to further promote spiritual growth and harmony within the Sweet Home family: James Moore, Leo Turner Jr., Charles Malone, George Beasley, Hubert Ward, and Edward Gilbert. Reverend Cosby was called from labor to reward in January 1984. Reverend Cosby was pastor for almost 25 years.*

*After the passing of Reverend Cosby the church elected Reverend Thomas Sanderfer Jr., as its spiritual leader to carry on God's work. Reverend Sanderfer accepted his first pastorate at Sweet Home M. B. Church in January 1984. He organized a Bible study class, established weekly church counseling service and hospital visitation.*

*In the Fall of 1992, because of an increase in Sunday school and church membership, the pastor, officers and members saw a need to build a larger sanctuary. This building was completed in*

*February 1993 and the old sanctuary was converted into classrooms.*

*As the church continued to grow, more deacons were added to the board. Deacons Johnny Horton, Earl Malone, Alfred King, and Charles Sledge, Sr. were ordained in 1994. In 1996, Arthur Jordan, Sr. was added to the Deacon Board.*

*In February 1999, additional renovations to the church were completed including renovation of the fellowship hall and the addition of a conference room. A van was purchased to provide transportation for individuals who would otherwise not be able to attend church services. Reverend Sanderfer resigned as pastor in November 2002, after seventeen years of faithful service.*

*The Lord kept Sweet Home through the fifteen months the church was without a pastor. In April 2003, the church elected Reverend Troy L. Garner as pastor. Reverend Garner loved teaching and preaching God's word. During his pastorate a church newsletter named "The Sweetest Connection" was started. Reverend Garner served as pastor until April 2004.*

*Reverend Marvin R. Winston served as Interim pastor of Sweet Home M. B. Church from June 2004 until December 2004, when he was elected to the full pastorate. He was installed in February 2005.*

*Reverend Winston cared about our spiritual growth and realized that a Christian life is a journey of growing, maturing, and learning to walk more intimately with the Savior. He demonstrated this by introducing the song, "We Are One In the Spirit", to the church family with it becoming our theme song.*

*In order to promote spiritual growth within the church family, in March 2006 the following deacons were added to board in harmony with Biblical teaching: Robert Nichols Sr., Earnest Cosby, Sr., Dale Smith, Kerry Maclin, Jonathan Nichols, and Terence Brown. In May 2008, the church purchased property adjacent to the west wing of the building.*

*Being filled with God's grace and full of faith, he taught and proclaimed the gospel with power and authority. After six years of dedicated service, Pastor Winston's resignation was accepted as of April 25th, 2010.*

*Following the resignation of Pastor Winston, Rev. Jeffery Moseley was appointed as interim pastor. After guiding and directing our flock for 5 months in this capacity, he was elected as pastor and was formally installed on November 28, 2010. Under the guidance of Pastor Moseley and our Deacons, the Lord blessed us to acquire additional properties along Westmoreland Street. Rev. Moseley was pastor for 6 ½ years.*

*In October 2018, the church elected Rev. Howard Middlebrooks as our Pastor. The vision for Sweet Home will continue under our new Pastor.*