

The History

From Men & Women's Day to Family and Friends Celebration

In March 1985, a visionary pastor took the initiative to launch a fundraising program at The House of God Church at Daytona Beach, FL. The goal was ambitious – to raise \$10,000.00 for an urgently needed roof repair. The then pastor, Reverend Charlene M. Jamison, spearheaded the organization of the first Men and Women’s Day Program, which took place in August 1985. The result of the weekly motivational conversations given by Reverend Jamison to the congregation was transformative – it marked the first time in the history of the Daytona Beach Church that such a substantial amount of money had been raised in a single fundraising event: \$30,000.00.

Reverend Jamison led by example by providing different fundraising examples to the members, such as candy sales, the Hat Tea, Tom Thumb Wedding, Fish Frys, our Super Big Souvenir Book, and reaching out to our local community and our brothers and sisters from all over The House of God Church. People from all corners of the United States, including the South Carolina State Choir, gathered to support this noble cause. The inaugural event commenced with a Saturday prayer breakfast at the gracious Brown Family's home and then continued at City Island Park, where it blossomed into our beloved annual picnic, overflowing with a diverse array of foods to delight our visiting saints. The atmosphere during the service was electric, with standing-room-only attendance. Over time, this event has evolved into an annual celebration of generosity and spiritual nourishment, where participants joyfully come together for a bountiful feast of both the heart and the pocket. As the years passed, the overwhelming turnout necessitated a move from the church sanctuary to a larger venue, eventually finding a new home at the breathtaking Resort Hotels on the World's Most Famous Beach in Daytona Beach, FL.

The House of God Church, Daytona Beach, took on an unprecedented endeavor. The record books record how Bishop Jamison, and several prayer warriors entered the Convention Center Conference room in the early morning hours to intercede for the people of God and the success of the service. As fervent prayer was uttered, the holy cloud of smoke filled the room, and those in attendance could feel the presence of the Lord, solidifying that God was in the midst of His people. This supernatural experience was an awe-inspiring and deeply moving time that will forever be etched in the annals of time.

A reflective memory of this momentous event was from the Fifth Administrator and Chief Overseer, the late Bishop Rebecca W. Fletcher, as the event speaker. Bishop Fletcher spoke of being in awe of the creative presence of the Almighty God as she looked out of her hotel room in the early morning hours to see the sunrise on the beach. The spirit of the Holy Ghost was truly in that place.

Later, the event was renamed from Men & Women’s Day to Family and Friends Celebration and extended from the 4th Sunday in August to a three-day Labor Day Family and Friends Weekend Event. Attendance increased from a packed little church at 736 Campbell Street to over 500 individuals per year in palatial places throughout the beachside of Volusia County, FL.

With all of these endeavors completed and lasting memories in tow, it should be noted that not only was the Daytona Church roof replaced, during the 5-year tenure of Bishop Jamison as the Daytona Pastor but also

additional land adjacent to the church was purchased to expand parking and possible building expansion. A total church renovation took place, new pews were purchased, and the outside of the building was stuccoed and painted.

The power, favor, and miraculous nature of God have been with us, as stated in Ephesians 3:20, "...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...". Notably, our first program featured joint sermons by General Elder Janie L. Beard and the Late Bishop Bernard Davis; the Late General Elder Evelyn Future Campbell; the Late Bishop Grover M. Dozier; the Late Chief Overseer, Bishop Rebecca W. Fletcher; State Elder Hilda Alston; Bishop Aubrey Ghent; Tr. Bishop Tommy Phillips, Sr.; Bishop William Carter, Jr.; Elder Gilgad Davis; our current Chief Overseer, Bishop Clary K. Butler, Sr., and Trial Bishop M. Christopher Brown, just to name a few.

The Family and Friends Celebration continued its fellowship under the tutelage of Bishop Charlene Jamison for over 25+ years bringing family and friends of The House of God Church and other reformations together for a weekend of love, fun, Christian fellowship, and financial support for various dioceses of which she presided and assisted, in appointed and non-appointed capacities. This event and its connections and resources have benefited church planting in Orlando, FL (West Coast of FL Diocese), 2. Restoration of the local church in West Hollywood, FL (Florida East Coast Diocese), 3. Execution of loan repayment and facility upkeep (Florida East Coast Diocese State Complex), 4. Community and church expansion as State Bishop (Florida 4 Diocese), and 5. Assisting churches, dioceses, and communities in need in the capacity as Assistant Bishop (Florida East Coast Diocese and State Bishop of the New Jersey Diocese). Regardless of where Bishop Jamison has been assigned to serve as a servant leader or just a friend of the faith, she believes in uniting the people of God for purposes of unity and growth.

We have made so many wonderful memories from our Friday night meet and greet. Guests checked into their hotel rooms and the F.A.F.C. Committee provided each attendee with a light snack to take back to their rooms. On Saturdays, we enjoyed picnics at various parks in and around the City of Daytona Beach, as well as picnics on the beach with a variety of food, fishing, and fun games. Saturday nights were filled with music, fun, and fellowship. On Sundays, we savored dinners at the Duff's and Morrison's all-you-can-eat buffets. And if anyone was still hungry, hot fish was available at the Sunday evening fish fry at the hotel poolside. We can't forget the fire at the Plaza Resort and Hurricane Andrew. The preparation required many hands cleaning hundreds of pounds of chicken and fish in readiness for the Saturday and Sunday evenings. The annual fellowship dinner banquet that followed Sunday service was a joy to behold and look forward to. Poolside, we developed lifelong friendships with saints and friends from various dioceses all over The House of God Church and reformations from around the world. People came from all over: the states of Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Florida, and Nevada, just to name a few. We are grateful for the many people we met at the venues, who heard the music, and laughter, and experienced the immediate love of God.

There are many who started out with us and were great supporters who are no longer with us; we can't help but miss the Late Sister Brenda Mingo, who worked untiringly in support of our event: The Late Ministers, Deacons and Deaconesses of the Daytona Church, along with Deacon James Lee & Deaconess Inez Edmondson, Deaconess Alice Baker, General Elder Evelyn Future Campbell and countless others who are still with us, too numerous to name.

As we continue to rebuild this time of fellowship, we invite you to take this message with you: "Be the light and change the atmosphere of darkness to a place where unity can thrive in the glory of God." - Bishop Charlene M. Jamison.