The church is now pastored by the Reverend Dr. Thompson is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Educated in the Pittsburgh Public School System, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mana-gement from the Massa-chusetts Institute of Tech-nology (MIT)
St. John African Me-thodist Episcopal Church located at 2261 E. 40th St. is the oldest African American Church in Gr-eater Cleveland. St. John A.M.E. Church was foun-ded in 1830 by the Rev. William Paul Quinn.

The present location was purchased December 3, 1907 with Rev. Ira Collins as the pastor. The church was built at the cost of $55,000.00. The deal was reported to have been the largest real estate transaction by "Negroes" during the period.

St. John A.M.E. is 175 years old and was organized in 1830 with a membership of six. By 1945, its membership numbered 3,100 people.

A glance into past history of St. John A.M.E. reveals in 1848, the members purchased a lot for $300.00 on Bolivar St. east of Erie St. on the site of the Pick Carter Hotel (Carter Apartments). This location was considered the outskirts of the city. According to the 1848 city directory, there were 15 members.

The church building was named Bolivar St. AME church and was built at the cost of $400 with a debt of $200. In 1863, property for a second church was purchased on Ohio Street. The church was known as the Ohio Street AME Church (1862-1878). In 1877, due to a fire that partly destroyed the church, the membership decided to move to a new location on Erie Street (now E. 9th St.). It was at this time that the church was renamed St. John AME Church even though many members referred to as "Old Erie Street Church". Rev. Ira A. Collins was the minister.

In 1893, St. John suffered another fire at the Erie St. Church. Services were held in Giessen Hall at Central and Woodland. In 1907, under the administration of Rev. Ira A. Collins, land was purchased on Dec. 3, 1907 to build the present building located at 2261 E. 40th St.

In 1908, the cornerstone was laid. A parade of uniformed bodies of Negro lodges of the city led by Phillegans Full Brass Band took place beginning at 24th street marching to 40th and Central. The Masons had charge of the corner stone laying and Bishop Derrick was the featured speaker. The event was of considerable significance to Cle-veland Negroes since it was the first time in Cl-eveland's history that Negroes erected a costly brick building for their worship.

The Late Marian An-derson, international Afri-can American opera contralto, gave her first concert in Cleveland at St. John.

On Oct. 7, 1974, St. John A.M.E. Church was designated a Cleveland Historic Landmark and St. John was also placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1982. In February 1995, the church was added to the African American Heri-tage Trail Tour (site No. 7) of historic places in the city of Cleveland.

St. John AME Church has been a part of the foundation in the community and the city of Cleveland. In 2008, our present building will be 100 years old. With new homes being constructed in the community, the new Pastor of St. John AME Church, Rev. Dr. Taylor T. Thompson's goal is to renovate the church to a new shining light on Fortieth Street, going forward as the new St. John AME Church of the 21st Century, operating a seven day a week ministry and serving the greater Cleveland community.

The AMES grew out of the Free African Society (FAS) which Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others established in Philadelphia in 1787. When officials at St. George’s MEC pulled blacks off their knees while praying, FAS members discovered just how far American Methodists would go to enforce racial discrimination against Af-rican Americans. Hence, these members of St. Ge-orge’s made plans to transform their mutual aid society into an African congregation. Although most wanted to affiliate with the Protestant Episcopal Chu-rch.

In 1794 Bethel AME was dedicated with Allen as pastor. To establish Bethel’s independence fr-om interfering white Me-thodists, Allen, a former Delaware slave, successfully sued in the Pen-nsylvania courts in 1807 and 1815 for the right of his congregation to exist as an independent institution. Because black Methodists in other middle Atlantic communities encountered racism and desired religious autonomy, Allen called them to meet in Philadelphia to form a new Wesleyan denomination, the AME.

The geographical spread of the AMEC prior to the Civil War was mainly restricted to the North-east and Midwest. Major congregations were established in Philadelphia, New York,

Boston, Pitts-burgh, Baltimore, Wash-ington, DC, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, and ot-her large Blacksmith's Shop cities.

Numerous northern co-mmunities also gained a substantial AME presence. Remarkably, the slave states of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, Loui-siana, and, for a few years, South Carolina, became additional locations for AME congregations. The most significant era of denominational de-velopment occurred during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Oftentimes, with the permission of Union army officials AME clergy moved into the states of the collapsing Confed-eracy to pull newly freed slaves into their denomination.

“I Seek My Brethren,” the title of an often repeated sermon that Theophilus G. Steward preached in South Carolina, became a clarion call to evangelize fellow blacks in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Texas, and many other parts of the south.

Hence, in 1880 AME membership reached 400,000 because of its rapid spread below the Mason-Dixon line . When Bishop Henry M. Turner pushed African Methodism across the Atlantic into Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1891 and into South Africa in 1896, the AME now laid claim to adherents on two continents.

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Dr. Thompson has se-rved as a member of the World Methodist Council Executive Committee, the National Pan-Methodist Commission on Cooperation and Union, past president of the Faith Community Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, past president of the Metro-politan Area Religious Co-alition of Cincinnati (MAR-CC), the Cincinna-ti Mayors Community Action Now Task Force, the Council of Christian Communions of Cincinna-ti, and past president of the Interdenomination-al Ministerial Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, the boards of Cincinna-ti, Hamilton County C-ommunity Action Age-ncy as treasurer and the Ohio Council of Churches. He is the president of the AME Ministerial Alliance of Greater Cleveland, a member of the Metho-dist Ministerial Allian-ce of Cleveland and a member of the United Supreme Council AA-SR PHA 33d Degree Mason.

Dr. Thompson is married to Dr. Barbara J. Hunter Thompson,