

Bethel AME Church

*Highway F & New Palestine
Speed, Missouri 65237
Phone: (660) 838-6431*

*Rev. Rachel Williams-Glenn, Pastor
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
11.00 a.m. Worship Service
every second and fourth Sunday*

Township: T-47-N
Range: R-17-W
Section: 8
Latitude: 38. 845400
Map: [Click Here](#)

Organized: 1887
Disbanded: No
Active: Yes
Longitude: -92.802700
Updated: October 6, 2004

Cemetery: There is no cemetery associated with this church.

Area: Located just outside the town of Speed, Missouri

Records: Unknown at the present time.

History:



Photograph courtesy of H. Stone

Bethel A.M.E. Church Speed, Missouri

From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F. Chesnutt, 1993

The Bethel congregation has been at the corner of South Broadway and Parrish Streets since 1887. The town was then known as New Palestine as it was largely made up of businesses that had moved to be close to the railroad from the original town of Palestine, begun in 1833.

The Osage Valley and Southern Kansas Railroad began its operation in the late 1860's shipping passengers and cattle between Boonville and the Pacific Railroad at Tipton. The town of New Palestine changed its name around 1903 to honor Austin Speed, the railroad conductor from 1876 to 1890.

The Bethel Church has always been the center of social life in the community. The May Homecoming and Fall Festival are attended by friends and descendants from all over the state. At times the Church sponsored a baseball team.

Some of the charter members were Mr. and Mrs. William Banta, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Basket, L.G. Gilliam, Mrs. Fannie Williams, Mrs. Nannie Williams and Mrs. Clara Wright.

Rev. R.A. Clinton led the Church in building the present structure in 1917 by subscription and donated work. He was assisted by trustees: B. Williams, William Banta, L.G. Gilliam, and Arthur Basket.

Records show the Rev. Harold Davis served as pastor in the 1960's, Mrs. Clifford Jackson was Sunday School Supt., Miss Joan Wright, pianist, and Mrs. Robert Williams, choir president. There were junior and senior choirs at the time. The parsonage adjoined the Church property. Barbecues and dinners were held supervised by Jules Shield (who provided the Big Barbecue when Dr. Nelson ran for governor in 1916), which raised funds for new pews, hardwood floors, the kitchen, and piano.

Wes Basket, son of Arthur and Anna Wise Basket, was an outstanding baseball player and joined the Kansas City Monarchs in the late '20s.

With the closing of Mt. Moriah A.M.E. Church in the Pleasant Green area many parishioners joined the Bethel congregation in 1974. In the 1980's improvements were added; the enclosed entry, a new organ, and recently a privacy fence. The Rev. Gwendolyn Lowe conducts services 2nd and 4th Sundays with Mrs. Gwen Wright as choir director. The Church continues to play an important role in rural Cooper County.

Bethel A.M.E. Church of Speed

Although the streets are now known as F Highway & New Palestine, the Bethel congregation has been at the corner of South Broadway and Parish Streets since 1887. The town was then known as New Palestine as it was largely made up of businesses that had moved to be close to the railroad from the original town of Palestine, begun in 1833.

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The Bethel Church has always been the center of social life in the community. The Homecoming and Basket Dinner is attended by friends and descendants from all over the state. At times the Church has sponsored a baseball team. The church has also provided recreational activities during the Memorial Day Celebration given so that family members may fellowship and visit the gravesites of people buried in the Church's Cemetery.

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Under the current leadership of the Rev. Rachel Williams-Glenn, several additional improvements have been made. The church and cross were painted, a new sign was erected, the front steps were repaired and a Culligan water tank was added to the vestibule. Last year, Pastor Rachel added something she called "The Question of the Day" to our morning worship service which she used to strengthen our knowledge of the bible.

Our goal for this year is to growth spiritually so our pastor has implemented a few changes. This year, she transformed "The Question of the Day" into a Bible Study and asked that we begin reciting the Apostle's Creed and Lord's Prayer during our services so that we would gain a better grasp of what we believe. She has also added Pre-Women's Day and Pre-Men's Day workshops to our Women's Day and Men's Day Celebrations.

Our connections to the local and world communities remain strong. Last year, we donated money to the local Red Cross and YMCA. This year, we donated money to our denomination's Mozambique Relief fund. We also hosted the local Church Women United's World Day of Prayer Celebration in March.

In other words, the Work is All Divine!