



Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society

2022 Annual Report

cover photo by Ahmed Hamed



A Message from the Board President

Dear Supporters & Stakeholders,

I believe this Annual Report paints a picture of what you have helped make possible. You've shared our vision, our mission, and helped us surmount challenges through generous funding, donations, skills, time, and attendance at Mount Zion programs.

As the only remaining structure in Athens County built by the formerly enslaved and freeborn Black community, it is part of the historic and ongoing Black Movement that preserves their legacy. Important to this mission is the restoration of the building with its beautiful 100+ year-old stained-glass windows which once served as the "Beacon of Light" for uptown Athens and surrounding townships in the Ohio River Valley.

An African Proverb states: "It takes a Village..." to accomplish what we do in life. So, to youth as well as seniors, public schools, universities, entrepreneurs to local, federal, regional, and state philanthropy, who have all helped; Thank you! Together we are "BUILDING OUR FUTURE BY PRESERVING OUR PAST".

Ada-Woodson Adams, President
Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society



A Message from the Executive Director

My family moved to Athens in 2017. While visiting the Middle School with our 8th grade daughter, we drove past the Mount Zion Baptist Church, and I marveled at the site of the century-old building with the impressive stained-glass windows. I love history and, in my lifetime, have witnessed the destruction of important buildings and sacred sites being replaced by parking lots and strip malls. I felt that this building was welcoming me and any newcomer to the community.

Flash forward five years, and I am invited to become the Executive Director of the non-profit Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society, a group of caring, hardworking professionals laboring to restore the building and repurpose it as a vibrant cultural center. I am deeply honored to work with the Board of Directors, community partners, and advocates as we all take on the mantle of restoring a symbolic structure built by former enslaved and freed Black citizens following the Civil War.

I welcome aboard all who wish to assist us in our effort to save a symbol of history for future generations to love and learn from.

Sincerely,
Nadya S. Hinson, PhD.

Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society Board of Directors



Ada-Woodson Adams
President



Susan Urano
Vice-President



Beth Amoriya
Secretary



Leslie Fleming
Treasurer



Dr. Vibert Cambridge



Dr. Trevelya Ford-Ahmed



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Travis Gatling



Jenny Nelson



Marlene Jenkins



Elizabeth Williams



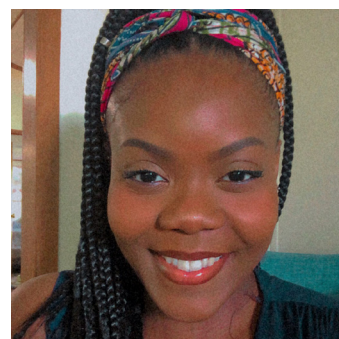
Jessie Roberson



Cherri Hendricks



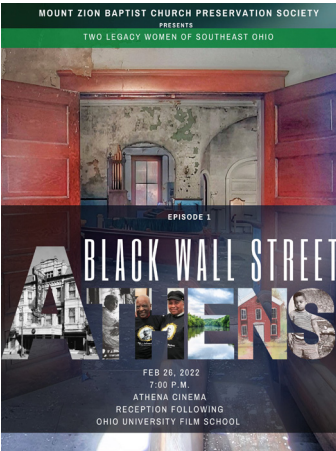
Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr.



Carmesha Smith

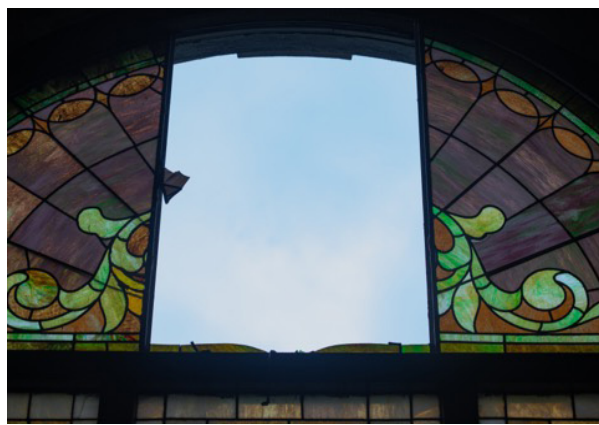


A Pandemic like COVID hasn't been experienced in 100 years, but in spite of hardships placed on so many, Mount Zion persevered. It's quite a challenge to spread cultural and educational programming without a building in which to operate. However, with the help of Stakeholders like the Southeast Ohio History Center, Ohio University's Campus & Community Engagement, the Tantrum Theater, Athens Public Library and City Schools, aided by federal, local funders and a host of dedicated volunteers, we were able to offer historically relevant programming that the community supported with great enthusiasm. The year began with a MLK Grounds Crew and the documentary film *Black Wall Street Athens: Episode 1* followed by Juneteenth's Bessie Smith drama and the introduction of the *Invisible Ground* Historical marker/podcast and ended with the *Hotel Berry* play. Mount Zion also spread its cultural education wings into Appalachia via the Waymakers Collective Convening in Knoxville, TN, Keene, NH's Radically Rural Conference & the Ohio Social Studies Conference held in Bexley.



To all who have been there with us THANK YOU for helping us keep Mount Zion's Black Cultural Center spirit alive and closer to preserving an iconic space.





Milestones

BUILDING ADVANCEMENT

The MZ Baptist Church Preservation Society and Ohio University's Campus and Community Engagement performed landscaping at the church with the help of students, and administrators led by a member of OU's Facility/Ground staff. Nzilani Glass Conservation completed a survey assessment of the stained-glass windows in preparation for their removal and restoration before rehabilitation work begins on the church basement.

GRANTS/STAKEHOLDER ASSISTANCE

With the help of community volunteer grant writers, MZ received support from **a)** The Appalachian Community Fund's Wayfarer's Collective and an Anonymous donor for the docuseries *Black Wall Street Athens, Episode 2*. **b)** The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio's African American Community Fund granted support for research and artistic designs to be placed on plywood that will replace the cavities left by removal and restoration of the churches stain-glass windows and, **c)** Athens County Foundation provided Capacity Building support for new staff. **d)** Kindred Market provided a percentage of Saturday sales, **e)** Court Street Coffee and Casa Nueva gave their monthly earned tips.

PRESENTATION/TOURS

1. *American Black History National & Local Level* was the title of the presentation requested by Ohio Health's History group. **2.** A Brief Mount Zion History of the Preservation Board was presented at the request of the Athens City Council **3.** Noon Rotary was publicly thanked for stained-glass removal funding. **4.** *Black Wall Street Athens, Episode 1* was viewed 6 times/day at Knoxville, TN's Wayfarers Collective 3-day Convening. **5.** The National Endowment of the Arts requested a MZ Representative to speak at the Radically Rural Conference held in Keene, New Hampshire. **6.** Rural Action's Appalachian Understories tours asked MZ for presentations at the church, the Berry Mansion, and the Albany Enterprise Academy sites **7.** OU's Campus & Community Engagement invited MZ to lead the First Athens City Juneteenth Heritage Celebration Tour. **8.** Invisible Ground, Brian Koscho's multimedia history project, created a podcast episode on the story of Mount Zion. Invisible Ground also broke ground in November on an augmented reality

Immersive Historic Marker at the building that allows you to use the Invisible Ground app to see historic photos of Mount Zion while on location.

PROGRAMMING

Black Wall Street Athens Episode 1 premiered at the Athena Cinema followed by a Reception at OU's School of Film for Black History Month and a Juneteenth celebration featured West Virginia's First Lady of Blues, Doris Fields, in *The Lady & the Empress*, an original dramatization of the Life of Bessie Smith. MZ in cooperation with OU's Black Alumni Reunion honored Dr. Francine Childs, the first tenured Black female Director of African Studies, with a viewing of Liz Pahl's film *Legacy Women*.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Black Wall Street Athens Episode 1 was shown in Athens High School and at the Middle School's A. J. Davison 3rd Annual Black History Month Program where a Saving Places Challenge Contest for Visual, Written & Social Media entries were solicited from students. Entries resulted in **a)** clay model of bedroom which a senior proclaimed, "is my kingdom, and were it destroyed it would be like tearing a limb from my body," **b)** a pencil drawing of riverbank which a student stated this is "my posse's hang out where we share all out stories & secrets," **c)** an artistic rendering of worker-owned Spanish cuisine restaurant, **d)** an origami constructed in a box with a sign that said simply, "Stop deforestation!" and, **e)** a pencil drawing by a student with different abilities of the Middle School.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Waymakers Collective: Appalachian Arts and Culture Assembly features MZ on their website, as does Smithsonian's National Trusts African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, and the National Endowment for the Arts Citizens Institute on Rural Design profiled Mount Zion in their Summer Newsletter.

2022 Balance Sheet

This summary is based on sound & responsible principles of fiscal management, which we continue to follow. It will take time to move the development of Mount Zion to the economic & cultural space we desire, but we continue confronting our challenges while also seeking to build opportunities for our community.

- President Ada-Woodson Adams

ASSETS

Checking/Savings Account	\$139,109.87
Building and Land	\$98,280.00
Security Deposits Asset	\$75.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$237,464.87

LIABILITIES

W/H Federal	\$340.32
W/H FICA	\$180.84
W/H State	\$125.12
W/H City of Athens	\$107.92
W/H SD	\$58.32
W/H Medicare	\$42.30
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$854.82

EQUITY

Temporarily Restricted Funds	
National Trust	\$37,500.00
Building Improvements	\$6,437.08
Black Wall Street	\$20,500.44
Building and Land Fund Balance	\$98,280.00
TOTAL TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED FUNDS	\$162,717.52

Net Income	\$73,611.53
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$281.00
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS	\$73,892.53

TOTAL EQUITY **\$236,610.05**

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY **\$237,464.87**

Federal, Regional, State, and Private Stakeholders



African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund



African American Community Fund



Mount Zion Supporters

