

## Body of Christ Church

### How it all began... **The History**

The Body of Christ Church (BCC) was quite literally formed out of a deep desire to praise and worship the one true living God. In 1975 a small group of African American college students at Iowa State University formed the worship group, the Gospel Soul Innovators (GSI), because they had a passion to worship God in the same manner they had in their home churches. Later that same year, the ministry expanded and began to hold church services as the Black Cultural Center Christian Worship Service (BCC). The ministry was under the sponsorship of the Black Cultural Center and Office of Minority Student Affairs at Iowa State University. They began holding biweekly meetings under the guidance of Rev. Marian Eppwright.

In 1976, the BCC came under the leadership of Rev. Larry Harris. As the church grew, it became more independent and established its bylaws. Originally the church's administration was governed by the Office of Minority Student Affairs; however, in the fall of 1980, students from the congregation formed a financial committee to oversee the church's business transactions and BCC continued to move forward and make changes to improve the ministry. The deacons and the finance committee combined in 1982 to form the Official Board, which has since assumed the leadership of governing the church.

God continued to direct the people of the BCC, and in 1983 Rev. Keith Ratliff began to serve as the church's minister. Because of the church's strong desire to serve the Lord, God made it possible for the church to hold weekly services as well as Sunday school, Bible study, and prayer meetings. Additionally, the church continued to sponsor extra activities and ministries so its student members could participate and take on leadership roles. The BCC has always strived to be a "training ground" for students, so that they would discover and live their lives in Christ, even after graduating and moving on from the BCC.

In the summer of 1990, the Lord called Pastor Ratliff to a church in Des Moines. The Holy Spirit led the BCC to select Rev. James Z. Ransom as its

new pastor. During this time, the BCC continued to thrive and added more "helps" ministries to meet the needs of its ever developing congregation. The focus of the ministry began to encompass the needs of all its members, regardless of race, culture, or background.

After fulfilling God's purpose in Ames at the BCC, Pastor Ransom was led to the Cornerstone Family Church in Des Moines. The BCC once again had to seek God's will for the direction it was to go and for who would lead the congregation forward in Christ. In 1994, Pastor Toran C. Smith was selected as the new minister. Under his leadership, the church formally changed its name to the Body of Christ Christian Worship Center. The ministries continued to grow under Pastor Toran's leadership to include Bible studies for men and women, prayer teams, a dance ministry, and a Christian rap ministry.

As a testimony of God's divine timing and plans, the BCC was able to purchase its own building in downtown Ames. After nearly 30 years of meeting on the campus of Iowa State, the BCC moved to its present location in 2005. The move allowed the congregation to flourish, and it continues to be the home of not only more students, but also of families and community members. Once again the BCC's growth has led to the creation of additional ministries to meet the needs of the body and the community. As families make the BCC their home, they will find Christ-centered ministries for every member of their families. Children from three months of age to pre- kindergarten as well as School-aged children , Middle Schooler and High Schoolers (YoBCC) are also ministered to on Sunday mornings. The church also has several opportunities for its members to serve the congregation on Sunday mornings.

The BCC is an amazing testimony of what God can and will do through a small group of believers wanting to worship and serve Him.