

Question #1

What does the word “Bethel”
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Answer

Bethel, or Beth El, is the Hebrew term for “House of God”

Question #2

What was the significance of “Bethel” in the Old Testament?



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Answer

It was the place at which Jacob saw angels ascending and descending a stairway to heaven, “Jacob’s ladder”. Jacob built a monument that he called “Bethel” because it was at the doorstep of God’s House.

Question #3

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Answer

In February 1845, Bishop Joshua Soule called to order the first meeting of the newly formed Florida Conference of the Methodist church at Trinity Church in Tallahassee. The pulpit used then is the furniture item that the question refers to. It's also the pulpit that is currently in use at Bethel.

Question #4

Where, when and under what circumstances was Bethel Church have its beginning?



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Answer

It was in August 1834 at a campmeeting on the banks of nearby Bethel Pond.

Because of the unhealthy conditions in “frontier” cities at that time, especially during the summers, these were popular gatherings.

Question #5

When did Bethel Church settle at its current location?



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Answer

On March 17, 1847 a deed for two acres of land “on which to erect a Meeting House” was given to a group of Trustees for Bethel by Joseph and Thirza Hale.

A “small frame church was built...on the site where the Sunday school rooms are located today”.

Question #6

What is the oldest date on a marker in Bethel Cemetery?



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Answer

According to a book compiled in 1978 for the nation's bicentennial the birth date of Elizabeth Barineau, 1826, is the earliest date on any monument. The earliest date of death is Aug 20, 1877 for Florence L. Crowder, the 3-year-old daughter of A.H. & M.A. Crowder.

Question #7

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Answer

The earliest written account of Bethel's history says that this is unknown, but the history notes on the back of Bethel's bulletin, which were prepared by church and neighborhood historian Thelma Royce, indicate that it was placed in Bethel church around 1895.

Question #8

When was the current church building constructed?



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Answer

The current church building was begun in 1909 but it “remained unsealed” until the Summer of 1945 when the interior was finally completed. An interior renovation took place in 1960 and the most recent changes to the structure were made in 1970 (with the addition of the narthex and interior modifications) and 1972 (with the placement of the steeple).

Question #9

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What is unusual about his ministry?



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Answer

On the insert of ministers in the bulletin today, C.C.Smith served the longest of these, for 11 years between 1920 and 1934, and the church history verifies that no other minister served as long, dating back to 1838.

A surprising fact is that he was a layperson from Trinity, not an ordained minister.

Question #10

When did Bethel Church celebrate its Centennial?



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When did Bethel Church celebrate its Centennial?

Answer

Not when you might think, as we are celebrating 184 years since the 1834 brush arbor meeting on the banks of Bethel pond.

Bethel's history, written in 1947 made no notice of a centennial celebration but a notation on the back of a 1962 photo said it was on the occasion of the 115th Homecoming. So it would appear that 1947 was considered a *Centennial Celebration*.

Question #11

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Answer

The church history notes that the “Youth Fellowship Group” worked during the year 1946-47 on raising money and beginning construction of “The Community Center”. The two-story structure was completed with meeting/dining area above and kitchen/gathering area below and was the site of many church/social events over the next 34 years or so.

Answer

In fact, nestled behind the double doors at the back of the current Fellowship Hall, it continues to serve as a meeting place for Bethel's youth services and meetings.

Be sure to take a look in there when we gather in the fellowship hall for dinner after this service.

Question #12

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When?

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Answer

While minister Russell Bean provided the encouragement, Delma Monfort served as the contractor, and retired bridge builder Wm Bennett acted as overseer and brought in much of the skilled labor, the entire congregation (and many “friends of Bethel”) had a part in the actual construction work. From the digging of the foundations, to the shingling of the roof, the children, men and women of the church all took part.

Answer

The date on the front corner of the porch is 12/23/80, but the "pay as you go" project (from funds collected in a concrete block placed in the narthex by Rev. Bean) took more than a year to complete.

The dedication took place on April 17, 1983, with acting Bishop Earl G. Hunt presiding.

Question #13

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Answer

That would be Rev. Les Jackson, who was a retired chaplain when he came to Bethel with his wife Aggie in 1978. They were both short in stature, but that didn't seem to affect Aggie's playing the organ so much as Rev. Jackson's ability to look the congregation in the eye while delivering his sermons...until the box was put in place.

Question #14

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Answer

When he came to Bethel in 1985, Joe Stiles found that the top of the pulpit was too far away to comfortably read his notes. A portable extension was built that provided a work surface about 4-5 inches higher as well as a storage compartment under it for books and notes.

