

The Springfield Redeemer



**“Where there is no vision,
the people perish.”
Proverbs 29:18**

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Vision, Faith, and Persevering! By Roberta D’Amico

February 24, 2019, was an exciting night for Pastor C.S. Cooley who was a guest speaker at the First Church of God in Christ in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. For him, it was an experience of “coming home” in the sense of going back to his beginnings!

It started 40 years ago, Pastor Cooley said, “Six months after I came into the church, a new Christian, I became a driver for Bishop Robinson Sr. He had started this church in Fitchburg and was going back and forth every week and needed a driver. For 18 years we went from Springfield to Fitchburg every Sunday.” This new church in Fitchburg was a mission church, which was supported by the “mother church” Macedonia Church of God in Christ, in Springfield.

In 1976, God had called Bishop Robinson Sr. to go to Fitchburg and start a church, so they went and pitched a tent there in a park. Thus, the First Church of Fitchburg began as tent meetings. As they were taking down the tent, there was no place to store it for the next week until a man appeared and suggested using the laundromat across the street which was

closed, so Bishop Robinson Sr. went to the owner and asked if they could store the tent there in the unused building.

So, for a few years Bishop Robinson Sr. and C.S. Cooley and 3 others, a team of 5, drove to the former laundromat every Sunday to have church, and every Sunday Bishop Robinson preached to a small group of missionaries and the folks who came with them from Springfield. And week after week, as Pastor Cooley drove back and forth to Fitchburg he learned so much, with Bishop Robinson discipling him. “We persevered in spite of the fact that no one came, believing that “God sent me to them and I’m staying!”

Then one Sunday it happened! One lady came! “She lived across the street, and one Sunday she came over,” Pastor Cooley said, “and popped her head into the church to tell us that she was with us! Then she went back across the street to her porch where she had been listening to us every Sunday. We did not know it, but she had been coming over and bringing fresh water to the church every Sunday! Later, her family came and eventually she became the pillar of our church.”

After a while, they were able to rent that building at 82 Snow Street for their meetings, and then God put it on their hearts to buy the building. They were able to make a deal with the owner to “rent to buy,” so all the rent that they paid became the down payment on the building. Bishop Robinson Sr. raised a lot of money by his tireless efforts. In one year, they were able to buy the building. It is ironic that God took an old building that was used to wash clothes and made it into a place to wash souls!



First Church of God in Christ, Fitchburg

Many times the small group from Springfield had wondered, why are we still doing this? No one is coming to our meetings but us, they thought, but God had given them a vision and so they kept coming out of faith and obedience. Finally, the church started growing and after 20 years, they tore down the old laundromat and built this beautiful building to worship in.

So, every year they have this special service to celebrate Founders' Day! This year, as always, a group of faithful people came from Springfield and gathered with the folks at First Church of God in Christ on that Saturday night in February to celebrate.

Pastor Cooley was so excited to be going this year to First Church of God in Christ in Fitchburg. For many years Bishop Robison Sr. led this congregation, imparted his vision that God gave him for the church there, and lived to see it grow and prosper. Now Pastor Cooley's friend and mentor has gone on to glory to his reward, and "today I am going back to First Church where my ministry began," Cooley said,

"but as the Guest Speaker! It's like going home."



The service that night was wonderful and full of joy. Believers gathered to participate in this event to lift up praise to God with singing, especially songs that were Bishop Robison Sr.'s favorites. Even the children participated. Then Scripture readings, many testimonies about his vision, his integrity, and his generosity! What a legacy!

The hours went by quickly and then Pastor Cooley got up to preach.

"A vision," Cooley said, "is what you want the future to be! When I was young, coming out of the streets, Bishop Robison Sr. had a vision for me. As I drove him to Fitchburg week after week, I grew along with the congregation at First Church. He challenged me with his intensity, and I surrendered my life to God, and put myself in His hands. Any choice we make other than to obey God is hurtful to yourself, your life, and your relationship with people and God."

Before we left for home, we had some wonderful food in the church's fellowship hall and talked about how good God was!

Coffee House Clean-up!



Kudos! to the wonderful volunteers at Holy Grounds Coffee House. We gathered on Friday morning, February 22, 2019, to do a major cleaning of the facility, washing every shelf, bin, and cupboard, cleaning windows, ceiling fans, walls, bookshelves, appliances. Every one worked with enthusiasm and a willing spirit. To help the task along, we played music and bought pizza for lunch. The building looked so sparkling clean when we were done! All of us at Holy Grounds really appreciate your hard work.

Ongoing Events

SUNDAY SERVICES: 8 a.m. Redemption Gate Church with Pastor Brian Greene (new time); 10 a.m.-Motivated by Faith with Pastors Bobby & Kim.

MONDAY – FRIDAY: Morning Bible Study at 7:30 a.m.

WED – Trust Jesus Recovery at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY: Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.; FIAT 2nd and 4th Thursday 7 p.m.

SATURDAY: No Saturday lunch until further notice. 1ST SATURDAY: April 6, "Marriage with God" 4 to 6 p.m.

SATURDAY NIGHT: April 27, 7 PM. Carl D Worship Band! For more details, call Cathy Marvici at 413-233-7242.