

Brothers and a church's mission

Chapter continues shaping lives, sharing Jesus Christ

By Jim Goodson

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Brothers at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church attend one of the nation's most historic Episcopal Churches.

Their church, one of the nation's first predominately black Episcopal congregations, played an important role during the civil rights struggle. And it continues to operate programs to help its downtown Cleveland neighbors.

The latest, begun last year, helps recently-released inmates readjust to regular life. The chapter's nine Brothers did their homework, seeking collaboration with experts in the field of salvaged, formerly incarcerated people.

"We are continuing this program," chapter president Les Blakemore said.

Brother Blakemore and vice-president Harry Painter are attempting to organize what they call a "Brotherhood summit" with nearby chapters. They want to find more ways to bring people to Jesus in downtown Cleveland.

Brothers also sponsored a two-day financial seminar and a multi-cultural festival.

In bi-monthly meetings, Brothers talk about their commitment to Christ and how it is manifested through the Brotherhood.

St. Andrew's has always combined salvation with societal struggles. One of its early members was Negro Globe editor Richard A. Jones. The 31st national convention of Colored Workers of the Episcopal Church met at St. Andrew's in Oct. 1919, an early-day commitment to the struggle for civil rights.

In 1986, St. Andrew's opened a neighborhood ministry next to the church.

In 1991, pastor The Rev. Austin R. Cooper authored leg-



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in downtown Cleveland played a prominent role in the U.S. civil rights struggle. Today, its Brothers help former prison inmates transition to civilian life.

islation establishing the Episcopalian Legacy Fund, a national scholarship program for minority students. The church also launched a \$250,000 endowment campaign in June 1983; the goal was realized in 1995.

Brothers also offer roses to the church's women on valentine's and Sweetheart days and cook an Easter breakfast for the parish.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church-Cleveland brothers are Roderick Adams, Angus Arrington, Jonathan Benjamin, Les Blakemore, Charles Bradford, James Bragg, Joe Carter, Leon Dudley, Elvin Jones, Harry Painter and David Wooley.

St. Andrew's Cross editor Jim Goodson can be reached at jimgoodson@aol.com.