



## WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH Proverbs 29: 18

Rev. James Bolton was a man with a vision and a dream. Born in England and educated as a Methodist minister, he came to America in 1893 as a missionary. Soon after his arrival, he met and married his talented wife, Eva. The couple moved to Coconut Grove to minister to the recently settled community of pioneer families.

Rev. Bolton preached at services throughout the area, often arriving on his carriage drawn by his beloved horse, Johnny Brooker. In Coconut Grove, Brooker Street is named in memory of his well-known horse.

On several occasions, Rev. Bolton preached at Union Chapel, a small partially finished building on McFarlane Road. This incomplete chapel was built on land donated by Commodore Ralph Munroe, a founding father of Coconut Grove. He gave this land with the understanding that the building be completed and used by whatever denomination would accept it. Rev. Bolton, with three deacons from Union, applied for and received a \$500 Loan from the Congregational Church Building Society in New York City. With the loan and funds raised by the church members, Union was able to complete the building.

On November 15, 1897, Rev. James Bolton preached his first sermon at the newly established Union Congregational Church where he served as its minister from 1897 to 1901. Rev. Bolton was then succeeded by four subsequent ministers who continued serving Union Congregational Church at this location until 1917, when more dreams and visions became a reality.

*Phyllis Pals, Plymouth Archives*

## Macedonia and Plymouth Share Origins

The lineage of Macedonia and Plymouth date back as far as 1887 when Isabella Peacock was determined to teach the children of the Grove the Bible. The one room Sunday School building was erected and in August 1892 a chapel was realized when Commodore Ralph M. Munroe donated the land on McFarlane.

The facility was named Union Chapel and all races and denominations were privileged to worship together.

The Black worshippers, however, were not accustomed to the traditions and styles of worship service and desirous of having their own church to freely worship. Therefore, in 1895, Rev. Samuel A. Sampson and the fifty-six members organized the first black church, St Agnes, which was later renamed Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church.

*Carolyn Donaldson, Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church*



**Union Chapel**