

## **History of the Starkville Group of Alcoholics Anonymous**

The first record of A.A. in Starkville was on June 7, 1954, when a member wrote the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. asking for sample literature and suggestions about holding meetings. The letter indicated at that time there were eight potential members attending meetings and sharing a copy of the Big Book.

By November, the group had decreased to six members, but they were already contributing funds to the General Service Board to provide for the further support of the A.A. program. At this time, the address of the local A.A. Group was given as the Sheriff's Office.

Although a small group continued meeting for several years, interest declined and the group ceased meeting until April 1964 when it was reestablished. As before, the Sheriff's Office was a contact place, but meetings were held on Tuesday night on Lafayette St. The membership when the group was reestablished was seven, and the Tuesday night meeting was listed as both Open and Closed. Apparently, this group also met for several years before becoming inactive.

In October 1972, the Starkville Group was again reactivated with a Tuesday night meeting and eight members. Meetings were held in the Chamber of Commerce Building on University Drive in the meeting room. Al-Anon met in the Chamber Director's Office.

The accelerated growth of the Starkville A.A. Group in the 1980s was typical of Alcoholics Anonymous nationwide. Meetings in the Chamber first increased to both Sunday and Tuesday nights with the Sunday meeting being attended by both A.A.s and Al-Anons. In 1982, a third meeting each week was started at the Starkville Recreation Department on Thursdays. It was around this time that the size of the meetings held at the Chamber of Commerce outgrew the space available. The Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday night meetings were all moved to the Student Center at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection. A separate room was also available for Al-Anon meetings on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Meetings were also begun on the Mississippi State University campus in 1984. By the fall of 1985, in addition to the meetings at the Episcopal Church, A.A. meetings were being held on Monday and Saturday nights and Wednesday noon in the MSU Union.

During the last decade of one century and the first decade of another, the group moved to the Episcopal Church Parish Hall and three more meetings were added. By 2011, the meetings had expanded to Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings with a noon meeting on Wednesday. During the second decade of the new century, some meetings came and went, but eventually more meetings were permanently added to bring us to our current schedule. During this time the fourth Sunday was designated as an eating/speaker meeting, but during the rest of the month, the Sunday night meeting became a book study. As of this writing, meetings are held Monday through Friday at noon and 5:30, with a women's meeting on Saturday morning and the meeting on Sunday night. The group is currently considering adding another Saturday morning meeting to run concurrently with the women's meeting. Also during this period, the group started and has maintained an informational website listing the meeting schedule and other pertinent information such as announcements, speakers, business meeting minutes, etc. We have also supported or provided A.A. phone hotlines.

The Starkville A.A. Group and Al-Anon stayed at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection until 2020. To better accommodate the group's expanding schedule, Starkville Alcoholics Anonymous moved to Aldersgate United Methodist Church and held its first meeting in the church fellowship hall on March 1, 2020. In April, the group was forced to close down in-person meetings soon after the move to Aldersgate because of the Covid-19 pandemic/stay-at-home restrictions. The group voted to hold Zoom (teleconferencing software) meetings. The full slate of meetings was available on Zoom, and log-in information was posted on the Starkville A.A. website. The group was fortunate to develop a relationship with a group in Australia during this time. Starkville A.A. also hosted A.A.s from different parts of the country, including some former Starkville members who had moved away. In-person meetings resumed on June 8, 2020 in combo with

Zoom. The group moved from the Fellowship Hall to the Annex building at Aldersgate mid-August and held the first meeting in the new space on August 20, 2020. In-person/Zoom combo meetings were held until the end of March 2021 when the group was finally able to return to in-person only meetings and suspend teleconferencing.

The Starkville A.A. group has benefited from the establishment of the Collegiate Recovery Community at Mississippi State University. CRC was established in 2013, and many of the CRC's college students have attended the Starkville group meetings. The Starkville Alcoholics Anonymous group has also continued to support A.A. through contributions to the national office, election of officers to attend regional and state meetings, and donations of time and money to support the regional and state meetings.

A new Saturday morning open discussion meeting was added in September 2021.

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