

# *FORK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH*



*“Celebrating 187 Years  
Of Ministry”*

1813 - 2000

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## ***FROM MY HEART TO YOURS***

Dear Friends,

It is with great joy and admiration that I write these words to you for a day of such wonderful excitement and enthusiasm, in which we, together, celebrate 187 years of Fork Hill's ministry. When I ponder about such longevity and tenure that many of you and your relatives have contributed in the way of time, effort and hard work to the church's ministry, I see more than just history - I see a legacy and rich heritage. As children of our King and Laborers for His Kingdom, many lessons from the past can be gleaned and applied to our future work as we continue the heritage and further the legacy of developing Kingdom people.

As with any church, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is the driving force from the past as well as for the future: "Go into every land, teaching the precepts of the mission and message of Christ, persuading the unbeliever to accept the Life and Spirit of Christ for himself or herself, baptizing them in the name of our triune God and developing those into fully mature disciples of Christ themselves." (Paraphrased)

As you will read in the pages that follow, Fork Hill Baptist Church has endured hardship and struggle, experienced renewal and revival, and enthusiastically continued expanding and adapting to the changing times without ever compromising the message of the Gospel Truth. As each generation grew and some moved away and each pastor came by way of calling, the impressible mark of Holiness and Righteousness continued to be instilled into the Life of this Body of Christ.

The challenge for this Generation is to further the "Mission of the Church" while remaining open to how we, in our methods, will accomplish this mission. Such an endeavor can be wonderfully and fruitfully enjoyed if we continually sense that the Body of Christ is "one" body with "many" members - "laboring together with God" for his Great Name and His Magnificent Cause. Enjoy your day in His Name and in Fellowship with each Believer.

Laborers Together with God,

Benjy Simmons, Pastor

## BEGINNINGS

In the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and thirteen, on January thirteenth, two members of the Flat Creek Baptist Church traveled northwest until they arrived in the Fork Hill area of Lancaster County. They found a large group of unchurched people eager for leadership and a place to worship. The two men from Flat Creek were Reverend Charles Ingram and Reverend John Kennington. Fork Hill was a wide open field for the gospel because there were only two other churches in the county. There was no Association until two years later when Moriah Baptist Association was organized.

Among the Fork Hill group was a man by the name of Mr. John J. Blackmon. Through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Mr. Blackmon was led to generously donate the land on which the church was built and the current membership worships today, 187 years later and still thriving.

The first building of Fork Hill Church was parallel with the road. There were two doors in this building and one window. One door opened from the shed room which was toward the woods and one from the other section. The window was in the opposite end. The slaves sat in the shed room to worship. (This building information came from the late Mr. Connie Bowers.)

On January 7, 1882, the church voted to purchase an additional portion of land adjoining the present church property. Then on March 11, 1882, the committee reported that the papers were ready for the purchase of the land. The land was purchased from an unknown source.

A resolution that the church take up a collection to erect a new building came from the building committee during a church conference on March 10, 1900. They received \$114.85. On April 7, 1900 the old building was sold in lots for five and ten dollars. Mr. Connie Bowers said that he helped his father, Mr. Jim Bowers, cut and saw the logs to frame the new building. It was reported at this time that \$3.10 was paid on the church's wood stove.

This second building had two doors on the front facing the road. The men used the steps on the right and the women the ones on the left. There was a door on the left side of the building facing the cemetery. Inside this door on the front seat was a bucket of water and a dipper which was used to quench members' thirst. In the center of the building was a large wood stove for use in the winter.

Fork Hill Church has aided in the organization of several churches through the years and is known as the "Mother Church" of the Association, although two churches are older. Flat Creek Baptist Church is the oldest, founded in 1776; Beaver Creek Baptist Church is second, founded in 1811; and Fork Hill Baptist Church is the third, founded in 1813. The churches that were organized from Fork Hill are listed below:

On January 29, 1834, fifty members were granted their letters by the Fork Hill Church for the purpose of organizing a church in the Tradesville community. Reverend Staunton S. Burdett and Reverend Jesse Lewellen were leaders in this movement. (Spring Hill Baptist Church was established from this movement.)

On October 13, 1894, the following were commissioned to form a church at White Bluff: J. N. Estridge, Duren Lyles, Sara E. Lyles, Henrietta Hinson, W. J. Horton, Isabelle L. Horton, Sara A. Horton, Minnie L. Horton, Ellen O. Horton, Thomas E. Williams, Emmer S. Williams, and Almetta C. Sims. (White Bluff Baptist Church was established from this movement.)

The need for another church in this area led more than twenty members from Fork Hill Baptist Church to organize the Flint Ridge Baptist Church in 1903.

On November 10, 1906, the following were granted letters of commission to organize a church at Rich Hill: J. W. Blackmon and wife, Amanda and daughters Sara and Etta; R. A. Blackmon and wife, Lee; D. T. Blackmon; Dr. L. V. Bishop and wife; W. T. Deese and wife, Alice; W. T. Shehane and wife, Mattie; S. Emmie Shehane and James Shehane; and Mary Mackey. (Rich Hill Baptist Church was established from this movement.)

## CHURCH MINUTES

July 8, 1882: Church voted to have preaching services twice a month. Pastor's salary to be raised to \$250 per year for first year.

August 11, 1883: Resolved that the church build a fence around the graveyard. Resolved that the pastor be granted the privilege of laying off a plot near the church for a burial place for himself and his family. (John S. Croxton was the pastor.)

Reverend Tom A. Dabney was a Methodist but he became a Baptist before he was licensed in the year 1886. He was ordained to the ministry of Flat Creek Baptist Church in 1887. The presbytery consisted of Rev. Nathan Faile, Rev. John Faile, Rev. D. P. Montgomery, and Rev. David Powell. Reverend Dabney was the pastor of Fork Hill from 1907 until 1925.

July 12, 1913: A motion carried that the church pay for having a photograph of the church building inserted on the back of the minutes of the Moriah Association. The Moriah Association Annual Meeting will be held at Fork Hill Church in October.

November 25, 1915: The Fork Hill Community Schoolhouse burned and the trustees asked Fork Hill Church to let them have school here until further arrangements could be made.

July 8, 1916: In conference, permission was given for summer school to be held in the church.

November 13, 1920: (Saturday) Motion carried that the church take up a collection for the purpose of purchasing suitable cloth to curtain off separate rooms for the Sunday School children (in the auditorium).

June 11, 1927: (Saturday) Motion carried that the church adopt the envelope system as a plan of supporting the church.

June 12, 1927: The committee that was appointed to get prices on a piano for the church brought the following recommendation - that the church offer Mr. Moore \$300 and the used organ for the piano that the church has for trial use.

October 13, 1928: Motion carried that the committee get a carpenter to draw plans for Sunday School rooms.

November 10, 1928: The committee recommended that the Sunday School rooms be built at the back of the church. Estimated cost \$150 in addition to labor and timber that can be used from the church grounds.

October 23, 1932: Recommendation that a two story building be built to the back end of the church. The church accepted the recommendation providing sufficient funds could be raised.

December 12, 1938: Voted to accept budget for 1939 - \$1,500 - and give 25% of the collection to missions.

February 14, 1943: Motion carried that a church bulletin which will carry a program for the Sunday School and church twice a month be purchased at fifty cents per copy.

November 21, 1943: Church accepted the recommendation that the church conference be the first Sunday of each month.

August 1948: It was decided that the church begin having a prayer meeting on each Wednesday night. The church also decided to get a heating system and discussed plans to build a baptistry pool under the church floor. The committee suggested a plan for a heating system.

January 1950: Church decided to build restrooms. R. T. Ellis and Charley Broome were recommended to do this work.

\*January 18, 1953: A dedication of the parsonage and mortgage burning was held.

March 8, 1953: Church voted to start a building fund and place in a savings fund at 3% interest.

December 12, 1954: Recommendation accepted to buy a typewriter, stencil machine and pulpit Bible.

April 10, 1955: In church conference, plans were recommended to the church for the new Educational Building - church accepted. Also, permission was secured from some families to move necessary graves at the expense of the church.

February 10, 1957: Church voted to build the present educational building at the back of the church (\$35,215).

July 13, 1957: Accepted recommendation to purchase carpet at a price of \$850.00 and refinish floor under pews.

August 10, 1957: Voted to accept windows in auditorium as a memorial from donors. Also accepted Baptismal picture from a donor.

\*September 29, 1957: A dedication for the Educational Building was held behind the church.

May 10, 1959: Repairs to parsonage were approved.

October, 1959: Church began using the unified budget. Rev. Dwight Bragg was Pastor.

October 4, 1959: Accepted recommendation to purchase an adding machine to be used by the recording secretary, and others as necessary.

August 14, 1960: Rev. and Mrs. M. A. Baskins and family donated land upon which a well was to be drilled.

May 7, 1961: Voted to begin giving each high school graduate a Bible at the time of their graduation.

November 12, 1961: The 1962 Total Church Budget of \$25,709.53 was approved.

February 11, 1962: Church voted to elect a committee to beautify the cemetery.

April 29, 1962: Church voted to construct a steeple, build a porch on the front of building and a vestibule. Olin Small was the lowest bidder at \$8,971.

June 3, 1962: Church voted on the contract with W. C. Culp to install air conditioning. First National Bank loaned church \$25,000 at the rate of 5% interest to pay for the air conditioner and other improvements.

July 15, 1962: Church voted to buy an organ for \$2,463.

December 1962: Agreed to purchase and install an organ at an estimated cost of \$3,000.

December 8, 1963: Church accepted budget for 1964 (\$27,280.78).

December 21, 1964: Church accepted budget for 1965 (\$26,879.80).

December 12, 1965: Church accepted budget for 1966 (\$28,157.00).

December 18, 1966: Church accepted budget for 1967 (\$28,615.40).

December 24, 1967: Church accepted budget for 1968 (\$24, 789.30).

December 29, 1967: Church voted to buy a marker for the grave of John J. Blackmon who gave the land on which the church is built.

May 12, 1970: Remodeled parsonage. (The first remodeling)

June 2, 1974: Church voted to buy new pews and arrange to have a center aisle. The pews would also be padded. Voted to carpet the auditorium.

February 11, 1976: Recommended to buy new set of communion trays and disposable cups. The Church accepted the recommendation.

June 16, 1976: Recommendation from the deacons that the church install a Memorial Marker in the cemetery in memory of all those who do not have a marker. This will be paid for with funds from the Cemetery Fund and the balance from the general church treasury. The Cemetery Fund will be closed and all cemetery fund money transferred to the general treasury.

October 7, 1976: The church placed the Memorial Marker in the cemetery.

\*August 14, 1977: A Homecoming was held on Sunday, August 14, 1977. A history sketch was given. (A dedication ceremony was held.)

April 11, 1979: It was discussed and approved that any member of Fork Hill Baptist Church can be buried free of charge in the cemetery. All children of members living in the household will be buried free of charge. Any past member who wishes a burial plot at Fork Hill will be charged a fee of \$100. Any other non-members who wish a burial plot at Fork Hill will be charged a fee of \$400.

October 13, 1982: Church approved recommendation to buy a bus for \$800 which needed repairs.

February 15, 1984: Deacons recommended that any pastor or former pastor of Fork Hill Baptist Church and family living at home, or any member that goes into full-time Christian work and their families living at home, be allowed to be buried in the church cemetery without any charge. This was approved by the church.

\*May 25, 1986: The groundbreaking for the Family Life Center was held.

January 17, 1990: Deacons recommended that the church buy a 15 year old Studio Piano for \$2,695. Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Starnes will pay one-half of this amount as a memorial to their son, Michael Starnes.

May 16, 1990: Plans were presented to make the present fellowship hall in the basement into three additional classrooms. Approved by the church.

September 8, 1991: The Constitution and By-Laws Committee presented a recommendation that the church adopt a new constitution for the church. The constitution was presented and approved.

April 12, 1992: Deacons presented a recommendation to buy a sound system. Church voted unanimously. The total cost would be \$4,350 installed.



January 9, 1994: Deacons presented a request from the Kay Mackey family that a playground be constructed behind the Family Life Center. The playground would be given in memory of Mr. Kay Mackey by his family. A marker with Kay Mackey's name will be placed near the fence.

February 9, 1995: The church voted to have R. C. Builders of Lancaster install a walkway cover to the Family Life Center at a cost of \$8,872. This walkway cover will be given in memory of Marvin Adams by family and friends.

\*May, 1995: A transportation fund was reestablished.

May 8, 1995: Certificate of Incorporation papers were recommended for incorporation of the church. The recommendation was approved.

June 19, 1995: It is reported that the balance on the Family Life Center is \$29,112.84. The church voted to become debt-free by December 31, 1995. A chart was prepared to show weekly progress of money received. The sale of the land from the A. J. Baskins estate was \$6,500. The church voted to use this money and take the balance from the treasury to pay the Family Life Center debt. On March 3, 1996, the mortgage to the Family Life Center was burned during the Sunday morning worship service. (Rev. Ken Pruitt was pastor.)

November 6, 1995: The deacons recommend that the church buy a new computer and color printer.

\*June - August, 1996: A children's Summer Day Camp was held.

May 19, 1997: The Deacons voted to call Reverend Bruce Davenport to serve as Interim Pastor. Reverend Davenport served until May 31, 1999. To date, he has served the longest tenure as interim pastor in the history of the church.

\*July, 1997: A children's Summer Day Camp was held.

\*January - May 1999: Completely renovated the parsonage with landscaping of the grounds also.

April 11, 1999: By secret ballot, which ended a long tradition of standing vote, the church voted to call Reverend Paul Benjamin Simmons as the pastor, beginning on June 13, 1999.

September 22, 1999: The church approved the purchase of a storage building at a cost of \$2,300 to be used by the Pastor.

The deacons recommend that the church buy a digital piano. It would be purchased through money given in memory of Ralph Payne and the remaining money in the Organ Fund. The deacons also recommend to upgrade the sound system.

October 27, 1999: Church voted for the need of a mini-bus instead of a van.

December 14, 1999: The deacons recommend the church install speakers in the nurseries in the Family Life Center - given by Margaret Starnes' family in her memory.

January 19, 2000: Plans were presented for remodeling of the Sanctuary. This is to be done in Phase I and Phase II - included the painting of walls, ceiling, baptistry walls, trim, new doors, new light panels, refinishing of the two front doors, recarpeting and reupholstering of the pews, and the framing of the baptistry window. In Phase I, some of the materials were donated and much of the labor was done by church members. The existing carpet fund is to be used to pay for the carpet.

A Homecoming Committee was elected to plan events for homecoming, September 24, 2000.

\*January 23 and 30, 2000: No services were held due to a severe snowstorm.

March 15, 2000: The church voted to open the Family Life Center for families to use in the event of a power outage. Approved and accepted carpet samples and pew cover samples for the sanctuary in the color of Cherry Seed.

\*May 8, 2000: The Moriah Baptist Association Senior Adult Revival was held at Fork Hill Church. There were more than 100 in attendance and many churches were represented. Rev. Benjy Simmons delivered the message.

\*June 16 - 18, 2000: Seven youth and four adults of the church traveled to Springmaid Mountain for a Youth Retreat. They enjoyed a daily devotional time and recreational activities including fishing, tubing and horseback riding.

\*June - August, 2000: The restroom facilities on the ground floor of the Educational Building and in the Family Life Center were renovated. With the cooperation of numerous persons, this project was successfully completed.

\*September 2000: The new carpet and pew coverings were installed which completed the sanctuary renovations.

\*Dates of events not necessarily recorded in minutes.

## **BAPTISMAL POOLS**

According to the church history, shortly after its organization, there was a great need for a baptismal pool. A creek crossed the road south of the church on land owned at that time by R. L. Baskins. Below the road going east, the people used logs to build a dam across the creek. This was their pool where a large number of converts were baptized for many years. Sheets were hung around trees for use as changing areas.

The second pool was located in the woods east and in back of the church. This land was owned by R. L. Baskins. There was a spring of water on this land, and the pool was built so the water would fill the pool. The sides of the pool had boards on the walls and each time before the baptismal service, the men would clean it to have fresh, clean water inside. The men built a large building for changing. The building had a partition - one section for men and one for women. On the front of this building was a porch where the song leader and choir stood to sing and the minister read scripture and had prayer. Mrs. B. R. Hinson always brought baskets of flowers to place around the pool because the pastors called the pool a "watery grave."

The third pool was built in 1948. It was inside the church and under the floor on the right side of the sanctuary commonly called the "Amen Corner." The men pushed a seat or two back toward the wall and raised up two doors. The tank of water was underneath. Two Sunday School rooms were used for changing.

In 1955, when extensive renovations were being done to the church, a baptistry, along with two changing rooms, was built. These were located behind the pulpit just as they are today. The baptistry was used for the first time in 1956. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Sims donated a beautiful mural for the back of the baptistry in 1957.

## **PARSONAGE**

The church parsonage was built in 1950. Fork Hill's first full-time pastor was Reverend W. Lawrence Blanton. He and his wife had two children. They served from 1951 until 1955. A dedication and mortgage burning was held on January 18, 1953.

Each time a new pastor was called, a committee was appointed to assess the changes and additions needed. On May 10, 1959, the church voted to do needed repairs to the parsonage. Then on May 12, 1970, the church voted to remodel. This was the first renovation of the parsonage.

The most recent changes were made before the present pastor, Benjy Simmons, and his wife, Renee, and their three children, began their service on June 13, 1999. From January through May 1999, the parsonage was completely renovated much to efforts of the men of the church, and the grounds beautifully landscaped by the youth of the church.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

In the spring of 1934, Fork Hill Church held its first Vacation Bible School. The boys and girls from High Point Church walked to Fork Hill and joined the youth here for Bible School. Reverend John T. Dabney was the pastor.

The second Vacation Bible School was held in 1944. There is a picture of this Bible School in the church files. Reverend Roy Neal had just begun his ministry at Fork Hill.

From 1944 until now, Fork Hill has continued to offer Vacation Bible School to children in the community - an opportunity for them to learn of Jesus and His love for each of them.

## GREAT REVIVALS

Fork Hill Baptist Church has had many great revivals through the years. Beginning on August 15, 1839 and continuing until October 19, 1839, as many as 159 persons joined the church and a number of others were restored to membership. An article about this revival appeared in the Lancaster News listing the many names of those baptized and added to the church's membership.

The church minutes record the following: On September 17, 1886, Reverend John S. Croxton baptized sixty-four people upon a profession of their faith in Christ during revival meetings. Fifteen others were restored to the church, and at the close of the meeting, two others were restored and six more received for baptism. On October 9, 1886, one person came by letter, two were restored to membership, and ten came for baptism.

May 8, 1897, money was collected to be turned over to Reverend John S. Croxton for the purchase of an organ.

From August 7 through August 13, 1897, Reverend A. M. Croxton preached a series of sermons at Fork Hill. He preached with great power and demonstration. The Spirit was so apparent that none could doubt. There were forty-six souls added to the church. Of those, forty presented themselves as a candidate for baptism. Rev. A. M. Croxton was the son of Rev. John S. Croxton.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION

The modern missionary movement began around 1800. The purpose was to pray for and collect money for missions. William Carey was a missionary who received their aid.

Luther Rice, a missionary to India, returned to gather funds for his work on the mission field. His first contribution came from Lydia Turner of South Carolina.

\*The first Women's Missionary Society of the Moriah Association was organized at Fork Hill Baptist Church in 1877. Fork Hill Church records show that as early as 1881, they were contributing money to State, Home and Foreign Missions. It is reported that no more than twelve percent of all Southern Baptist Churches had missions organizations in 1888.

Due to a need for organization, the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention was organized on May 15, 1888. In May of 1988, the Southern Baptist Convention celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WMU.

In 1970, W.M.U. began to be known as the Baptist Women. In 1999, the name changed again to Women on Missions. The name of the material used by the women's groups also changed from "Royal Service" to "Missions Mosaic."

The main purpose of the Woman's Missionary Union, which is missions, has never changed. Fork Hill Church has been a part of this endeavor for more than one hundred years and continues to support this great missions effort.

\*According to page 29 of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary minutes of the Moriah Association (1815-1965), the first Woman's Missionary Society was organized at Fork Hill Church in 1877. Mrs. Martha Ann Adams served as its president for 33 years.

### Sunbeam

The mothers who were attending the Women's Missionary Society had to bring their children with them. The Sunbeams were organized so the children would also have missions learning opportunities. This included both boys and girls.

The first Sunbeam group was organized in 1886 by a minister in Virginia. The main work of Sunbeams was to raise money for missions. The Sunbeam movement was growing at too rapid a pace for one man to handle so the Foreign Mission Board consented for Sunbeams to become the task of the WMU in 1896. The first Sunbeams group at Fork Hill was formed in 1928. Raising money for missions was stressed until 1942 when the preschool Sunbeams were separated from school aged children. In the late 1950's, the name Sunbeam was changed to World Friends.

In 1970, it was changed to Mission Friends as it is called today. The WMU stresses that even infants may gain a foundation in missions if cared for in the proper environment. Missions Friends often provides child care for the convenience of adults involved in WMU activities. Older preschoolers have regular meetings of their own. The Missions Friends group at Fork Hill Church was organized in 1970 and is currently active.

### YWA

Because there were women's societies and children's groups, but there was nothing for younger women, the Women's Missionary Union, WM.U, organized a Young Woman's Auxiliary, YWA, in 1904. The WMU supplied the YWA with literature and suggested projects. The identity of YWA was left to the individual group. In 1907, the WMU revitalized this organization by selecting a watchword, Daniel 12:3 - "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the

firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." This group was for the ages between what is today the Acteens and Women on Missions. When a young lady married, she was promoted to the WMU.

The earliest known date for Fork Hill's YWA is 1937. The name was changed from the YWA to the BYW, Baptist Young Women, in 1977. Today, the BYW is officially referred to as the Working Women on Missions. This organization and the Women on Missions use the same magazine, "Missions Mosaic," as a study guide.

#### RA's

In 1908, the order of Royal Ambassadors, RA's, became the official name for the missionary group for boys. In 1913, the WMU recommended that RA's be graded, Junior and Intermediate. The magazine used for study, "Ambassador Life", was first published in 1946. The current magazine is titled "Crusader". The WMU, in 1954, voted to transfer the RA work to the Brotherhood Department of the Southern Baptist Convention by 1957.

There is no record of when RA's was organized at Fork Hill. However, in 1934, there was an RA group at Fork Hill. Mrs. B. R. Hinson was the leader. Then in 1951, when Rev. W. Lawrence Blanton was pastor, he became the leader of Fork Hill's RA's. Each year, he carried the boys to Camp Rawls where many of them accepted Christ.

#### Girl's Auxiliary

The Woman's Missionary Union realized the need to organize preteens and young teenage girls in 1909. The new name, Girl's Auxiliary, was not given until 1914.

Forward Steps was developed for the girls who memorized assigned scripture passages and completed other requirements. Recognition services were held to honor them.

Girl's Auxiliary (GA's) at Fork Hill Church was organized in the early 1950's. The GA girls were divided into two groups, Junior and Intermediate. The young teenage girls at Fork Hill worked hard on their Forward Steps. They were recognized in an impressive service. One young girl reached the top and was crowned in a beautiful coronation service. A record of this service is kept in the WMU picture album located in the Family Life Center.

#### Girls in Action

The Girls in Action was organized about 1970. It consists of girls in grades one through six. Their individual achievement plan is called Missions Adventures involving a progression through six levels of activity.

The Girls in Action at Fork Hill Church was organized when the Woman's Missionary Union suggested the program in 1970.

#### Acteens

Acteens was launched in 1970 as the organization for girls in grades 7-12. Studiact was the individual achievement plan through which Acteens studied and worked directly with missions projects. For their efforts, they were recognized in five levels of achievement including, Queen, Queen with a Scepter, Queen Regent in Service, and Service Aide. Fork Hill's first Acteens group was formed in the early 1970's. Today, the Acteens literature emphasis is Mission Quest.

In the summer of 1989, the Acteens from Fork Hill went to the National Acteen Convention in San Antonio, Texas. Six Acteens, three adults, and one Mission Friend joined others from Lancaster for the bus trip.

## **BROTHERHOOD**

The Baptist Brotherhood was organized at Fork Hill Church in 1951 under the leadership of the pastor, Rev. W. L. Blanton. At this time, the Royal Ambassadors were transferred under the watch care of the Brotherhood.

Rev. Blanton and elected RA leaders began working with the boys on their "ranking system" which included the plan of salvation, their motto and other requirements. Currently, the Brotherhood continues their interest in young boys. They plan camping trips to Camp Clyburn and other activities.

The Brotherhood's study material has changed from a journal with information about missionaries to "Missions in Motion." The Brotherhood currently meets on the first Wednesday of every month along with all of the other missions organizations.

## **SENIOR ADULTS**

The Senior Adult Group at Fork Hill Church was organized in 1983. Approximately twelve men and women were present. The pastor, Rev. Vello Forrester, led in the organization of officers. Mrs. Effie Baskin was elected President. A short program, fellowship and lunch was enjoyed.

Rev. James Adams served as pastor of Fork Hill from 1984 - 1994. The Senior Adults selected "Joy Group" as their name. Some of the trips enjoyed were to Rock Hill Gardens, the State Senior Adult Convention at Myrtle Beach and at Ashley River Church in Charleston.

While Rev. Kenneth Pruitt was pastor of Fork Hill from 1995 - 1997, Mrs. Peggy Flynn was elected as Director of the Senior Adults. The name was changed to the "Golden Age Group."

The Senior Adults' first trip on a rented van was to Chimney Rock. They enjoyed picking apples from the trees and cutting cabbage from the fields. The first chartered Lancaster Tours Bus trip was to McAdenville to see the Christmas lights.

When Rev. Bruce Davenport was Interim Pastor of Fork Hill from 1997 - 1999, Philippians 4:19 was the group's favorite scripture. In September, a group of senior adults visited Plains, Georgia to hear former President Jimmy Carter teach. Trips were also taken to Charleston, Shatley Springs, West Jefferson, and Old Salem.

Rev. Benjy Simmons began as pastor of Fork Hill Church on June 13, 1999. The Golden Age Group traveled to Boone, NC in September of that year. Later, the group journeyed to Myrtle Beach to the Carolina Opry Christmas Show. The first trip of 2000 was a mystery trip. The trip committee planned the visit to the State Museum and State Capitol in Columbia. The senior adults met and had a picture taken with Governor Jim Hodges.

The Golden Age Group of Fork Hill Baptist Church continues to grow in number while seeking God's leadership by serving Him.

## **THIRD WORLD MISSION ADVENTURES 1985 - 2000**

Fork Hill Baptist Church entered a new phase of missions early in 1985. Several Fork Hill members traveled to the country of Haiti to build a chapel and later returned to help build a school for Haitian children. Teams continued to help build in Haiti through 1989. In 1986, a team went to Mexico to help build a boy's dorm at a church camp. Two Fork Hill members traveled to England in 1987 on an evangelistic team. Pastor Jim Adams and several church members helped build a dorm and Christian school for young, blind people in Togo, Africa in 1988. In 1990, Fork Hill members went to Venezuela to help with a mission home. Between 1991 and 2000, teams have gone to Brazil each year to build a school for missionary children, a Christian rehabilitation dorm and several chapels. Fork Hill raised the money for the materials and sent the team to build one of the chapels. Two other Fork Hill pastors, Ken Pruitt and Bruce Davenport, were involved with the building and evangelistic efforts of these mission teams. Fork Hill Church members have been very much a part of the work on the foreign mission field through their prayers and contributions. To date, over 200 chapels have been built and many have come to know Christ as their Savior as a result of the mission vision of Fork Hill Baptist Church.

## **WORLD EVENTS AS THEY AFFECTED FORK HILL**

The first major event was the great earthquake in 1839. The fault line began in Charleston and continued through Camden, Kershaw, and Lancaster County. Many older church members discussed the great earthquake and how frightened they were. It is believed that it became one of the contributing factors to the Great Revival in 1839 when 159 people made a profession of faith and were baptized. This is commonly referred to as the Great Spiritual Awakening at Fork Hill.

The next major event was the Civil War from 1861 to 1865. Lancaster suffered much damage as Sherman and his troops marched through this area. A large number of men from this area lost their lives, and property was destroyed.

In 1914 came World War I. It lasted until 1918. Several young men who were called from Fork Hill, and a few from adjoining areas, lost their lives.

The U.S. involvement in World War II took place from December 1941 through August 1945. Fork Hill has a plaque with 54 names of young men from the church who were drafted and five who lost their lives. Stars appear by the names of those who lost their lives in battle. This was a sad time in the history of the church.

The Great Depression occurred between the World Wars. The banks closed and people were financially devastated. This is the reason pastors were paid \$150 to \$200 per year and the missions offerings were such small amounts. People had very little money.



## MEN ORDAINED TO MINISTRY FROM FORK HILL

A. Marion Croxton - Ordained March 10, 1888

Jeter F. Hammond and Prince E. Blackmon - Ordained June 9, 1907

Minton A. Baskins - Ordained May 8, 1921

Billy F. Mackey - Ordained August 14, 1966

## PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED FORK HILL BAPTIST

(Older dates taken from old minutes)

Before the dates beginning from 1813 -1826	Unknown
Rev. Jacob Helms	1826
Rev. Staunton S. Burdett	1834-1836
Rev. Joseph T. Copeland	1836
Rev. W. F. (Billie) Brasington	1840
Rev. Joseph T. Copeland	1853
Rev. John S. Croxton	1869-1899
Rev. R. Judson Blackmon	1899-1907
Rev. Thomas A. Dabney	1907-1925
Rev. C. L. Norman	1925-1927
Rev. J. Hawley Byrd	1927-1929
Rev. Minton A. Baskins	1929-1930
Rev. John T. Dabney	1931-1934
Rev. B. H. Laughridge	1934-1942
Rev. Matthew M. Rabon	1942-1943
Rev. Claud R. Griffin	1943-1944
Rev. LeRoy T. Neal	1944-1951
Rev. W. Lawrence Blanton	1951-1955
Rev. John B. McCaskill	1955-1959
Rev. Dwight L. Bragg	1959-1965
Rev. W. Marion Adams	1965-1970
Rev. J. Perry Bowers (Served as Interim)	1970-1971
Rev. V. M. Forrester	1971-1984
Rev. James F. Adams	1984-1994
Rev. Kenneth R. Pruitt	1995-1997
Rev. H. Bruce Davenport (Served as Interim)	1997-1999
Rev. Paul Benjamin Simmons	1999-Present

**FIRST RECORDED "ITEMIZED" CHURCH BUDGET  
(1944)**

Pastor's Salary	\$ 650.00
Missions	600.00
Ministerial	75.00
Sexton	50.00
S. S. Literature	150.00
Insurance	23.00
Lights	18.00
Orphanage	100.00
Ministerial Retirement	19.50
Miscellaneous	50.00
*Courier	50.00
Special Offering	<u>65.00</u>
	<b>\$1,850.50</b>
Monthly	<b>154.21</b>
Weekly	<b>29.65</b>

\*This is the first time the church voted for each member to receive The Baptist Courier.

## HISTORY OF W.M.U. LEADERS

1885 - 1895	No Record
1896 - 1907	Mrs. Bynum A. Adams (Martha)
1908 - 1910	Mrs. D. S. Small (Emma)
1911	Mrs. George Ellis (Lou L.)
1912	Mrs. W. Jack Sims (Eula)
1913	No Record
1914	Mrs. W. Jack Sims (Eula)
1915	Mrs. James E. Bowers (Doscia)
1916 - 1918	Mrs. Dock W. Catoe (Allie)
1919	Mrs. W. Jack Sims (Eula)
1920	Mrs. James R. Blackmon (Latisha)
1921 - 1923	Mrs. Joe E. Faulkenberry (Etta)
1924	No Record
1925	Mrs. Tom A. Dabney (Julia)
1926	No Record
1927	Mrs. Dock W. Catoe (Allie)
1928	Mrs. J. Hawley Byrd (Estelle)
1929 - 1930	Mrs. Jeff T. Couch (Mattie)
1931 - 1932	Mrs. Tom A. Dabney (Julia)
1933 - 1934	Mrs. Minton A. Baskins (Effie)
1935	Mrs. Coy Williams (Ella)
1936 - 1937	Mrs. Minton A. Baskins (Effie)
1938 - 1940	Mrs. Ernest R. Hegler (Maude)
1941	Mrs. Minton A Baskins (Effie)
1942	Mrs. Charles Baker (Lottie)
1943 - 1944	Mrs. Minton A. Baskins (Effie)
1945 - 1946	Mrs. Ganson Couch (Mary)
1947	No Record
1948	Mrs. Prince E. Faulkenberry (Permelia)
1949	Mrs. Bennie Blackmon (Lena Mae)
1950	Mrs. Clarence Couch (Connie)
1951	Mrs. Robert L. Mackey (Evelyn)
1952	Mrs. Ernest R. Hegler (Maude)
1953 - 1954	Mrs. Robert L. Mackey (Evelyn)
1954 - 1956	Mrs. Ernest R. Hegler (Maude)
1957 - 1958	Mrs. Prince E. Faulkenberry (Permelia)
1959 - 1962	Mrs. Leroy Sims (Wilma Lee)
1963 - 1965	Mrs. D. J. Sims (Etrulia)
1966 - 1989	Mrs. Clyde J. Sims (Frances)
1990 - 1995	Mrs. D.J. Sims (Etrulia)
1996 - 1997	Mrs. Leonard Sims (Peggy)
1998 - Present	Mrs. Nathan Sims (Lynne)

## COMMENTARY

Fork Hill, what a great legacy has been given to us! The faith of our forefathers helped lay a solid foundation on which to establish this church and has led us through 187 years of ministry.

To date, twenty-four pastors and two long-term interims have served and shared in the ministry of the church. I believe that they were men called by God to lead His people.

Currently, there are 252 resident members and 26 non-resident members, for a total church membership of 278.

For the first 125 years of the church's history, people who strayed in their behavior were reprimanded resulting in exclusion from the church's membership. After repentance, they were reinstated.

Through the years this church has remained a part of the Southern Baptist Convention, always accepting the suggested programs. We have given to missions, to the Cooperative Program, etc.

According to some, in the 1920's and early 1930's, during the Great Depression, a man who wore a wide-brim, black hat would take his hat and pass it around to the men begging for money to pay the minister's salary.

The first recorded Itemized Budget was presented in 1944. The total was \$1,850.50. The 2000 Budget's grand total is \$118,011.32. Not included in the budget are three mission offerings goals: Home Missions - \$800; State Missions - \$600; and Foreign Missions - \$2,500. The offering totals have exceeded the suggested amount each time collected. From the very beginning, "Missions" has been a vital part of our church ministry. Praise the Lord!

These years of service and giving are great, but "the fields are still white unto harvest." In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus gave Fork Hill His mandate when He said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

As a new century has begun, let us continue to "hold high the torch."

Hold High the Torch  
You did not light its glow-  
Twas given you by other hands, you know.  
I think it started down its pathway bright,  
The day the Maker said: "Let there be light."  
And He once said, who hung on Calvary's tree-  
"Ye are the light of the world — Go!  
Shine — for Me!"  
-Nelle D. Bradley

By Frances Sims

## IN APPRECIATION

Those who so diligently served as the Homecoming Committee were the following:

Dot Sims	Benjy Simmons
Lindy Sims	Stoney McManus
Michele Hudson	Ernest Starnes
Howard Faulkenberry	Peggy Flynn
Marcene Hall	Son Catoe
Frances Sims	David Baskin

To each, we thank you for your hard work and countless hours of meeting and planning for all of the events of this great day.

A special thank you goes to Frances Sims for all the valuable information, commentary, and research that she provided regarding the church history. Thank you to Marcene Hall for her help with the organizing and gathering of the church history information, as well.

Also, we would like to thank our pastor, Benjy Simmons, for his initiative, valuable guidance and willingness to plan toward this historical day.

A thank you to the church secretary, Pam Mullis, for all her help and typing of the church history booklet.

If for any reason a name or occasion is left out, it surely was not the intention of the committee. The history came primarily from the church minutes, through the information of others and from the Moriah Baptist Association minutes.

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of such information. If for some reason any information or detail is misrepresented, please accept from the onset our deepest apologies. We hope you have enjoyed your reading.

The Homecoming 2000 Committee