

Mooreland Baptist Church

*100 Years
1904-2004*



A History of Mooreland Baptist Church

August 15, 2004

This record of Mooreland Baptist Church is necessarily incomplete and in some instances may be inaccurate. As many of you know, in the fire that destroyed the home of Brother Jack Page some years ago, the church book, containing all records to that date, was lost in the fire. Consequently, the data herein contained is largely a matter of memory and results of inquiries and is subject to error.

Often, as history records, good things come into being because of bad ones. So, the bad roads of the turn of the twentieth century had a large place in the establishment of Mooreland.

In the year of 1902, a few Baptists in the Red Hill Community got together to discuss the feasibility of establishing a church. Hardware was about four miles away, with roads so bad that it required about an hour and a half of travel, and Mount Ed was even farther away over equally bad roads. Travel was by horse drawn vehicles, and in bad weather horseback was frequently the only practical means of transportation. In winter months, this meant that the children and many older people were unable to attend Sunday School with any degree of regularity. These conditions prompted the meeting referred to above, and the outcome of this meeting was a decision to organize a Baptist Church in the community.

The charter members, as I remember, were Mr. and Mrs. John K. Forrer, Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Page, Nicholas M. Page, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Phillips, Miss Berne Phillips, Miss Pearl Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sutherland, Mr. B. B. Payne, Mr. and Mrs. James B. Payne, Mr. and Mrs. John N. Faris, Liza, Ella, Julia, John and Edge Faris, Miss Turie Smith, Mrs. Joe Sutherland, Mr. M. Y. Sutherland, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Gibson, and Mr. A. W. Rothwell.

These charter members held their first meetings in the old one room public school building known as "Lochiel", on the property now [called "Blanddemar Farm"]. In those early days, Mr. S. M. Page was the Sunday School Superintendent and Mr. J. N. Faris was the teacher of the Bible Class. Mr. J. K. Forrer taught the young adults and Mrs. Henry Sutherland, the boys,

and Mrs. S. M. Page, the younger children. Miss Berne Phillips was secretary and treasurer. The only organ available was a tuning fork, but the surrounding woods rang with the melody of the old Gospel hymns.

Later in the year, the group decided to undertake the building of a house of worship. Mr. J. N. Faris gave an acre of land adjoining his orchard as a site for the new church. Plans were made to raise the funds to start the construction. The first project was a lawn party held in the woods adjoining the church grounds, which was the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Kidd. This event was well patronized, people from miles around came, and the whole neighborhood helped with donations and labor. The undertaking was a big success financially, about \$400.00 being cleared. Another result was the uniting of the community behind the building program and the development of a spirit of Christian fellowship.

With this \$400.00 in cash and small contributions from the members and with great faith that God would bring success, the actual work on the building was begun in the fall of 1902. The superintendent of construction was Mr. J. W. Payne, and much of the labor, materials, and the members contributed hauling. By the summer of 1903 the framework, roof, and weatherboarding were in place; so, with rough board seats available, Sunday School was held in the building. During that summer, another lawn party was held on the church grounds. This was a wonderful success, exceeding the first one and netting \$500.00. This was realized from the sales of food at twenty-five cents per plate.

Gifts to the early church included a chandelier by Mrs. Betty Jo Sutherland, communion service and cloth by Mrs. J. K. Forrer, and pulpit chairs, table and rug by Mrs. S. M. Page in memory of her son, Samuel.

Mrs. H. C. Phillips in the very beginning of the church organized the Women's Missionary Society. She served as its faithful president all through the years until her move from the community in 1917. This Society has kept the missionary fires burning in Mooreland during the entire life of the church.

About this time, the matter of forming a field of churches, including Hardware, Covesville, the newly constructed Alberene Church, and this yet unnamed church, was discussed and approved, making possible the securing of a pastor for the four churches.

It was not until the fifth Sunday in May that the church was given the name of Mooreland and dedicated. Dr. W. E. Hatcher preached the dedicatory sermon. He was not only a dynamic speaker but also a genius in money raising. At the close of the service, cash and pledges were sufficient to liquidate the entire indebtedness of the church. This was a glorious day in the church's life.

The Field was now sufficiently well organized to begin a search for a suitable minister. In August of 1904 a call was extended to Rev. Mr. R. H. Bowden, who at the time, was serving the church at Princeton, West Virginia. He accepted the call and came to begin his work in October of that year. No parsonage being available, the Field rented the home near Covesville, know as the Cosby place, where Mr. and Mrs. Bowden and their two children lived until the present parsonage was completed in 1906.

The choice of Mr. Bowden proved a happy one, as the church grew in usefulness and numbers. The first summer of his ministry he held a revival at which time many boys and girls were baptized who later became pillars of the church. When Mr. Bowden resigned in 1909 to accept a call to the Barton Heights Chapel in Richmond, Rev. Mr. E. E. Lamb succeeded him. He and Mrs. Lamb were faithful ministers, loved by all. After serving five years, Mr. Lamb was succeeded by Rev. Mr. M. L. Bannister He and Mrs. Bannister were young and enthusiastic, and it was during his ministry that the original Sunday School rooms and baptistery were added.

Salaries in these earlier years were indeed small. The Field paid about \$720.00 per year.

Rev. Mr. G. C. Duncan who served faithfully until 1919 followed Mr. Bannister. He possessed the spirit of missionary zeal and he and his wife and family added much to the church and community.

Rev. Mr. Robert E. L. Aylor became our pastor in 1920. He was a man of strong convictions, an unusual scholar, and will always be remembered by his beautiful prayers. Mrs. Aylor was a model preacher's wife and her life among us was a benediction. Their large family of young people was valuable additions to the neighborhood.

Our next pastor was Rev. Mr. H. B. Stoneham. While his stay was short, his sermons were masterly. His wife and children endeared themselves to the whole community.

In 1929, Rev. Mr. R. J. Mann came to us from his post as Assistant to the Pastor of the University Church. This was his first pastorate and he proceeded to win the hearts of all the residents of the community, regardless of denominational ties. Under his direction and example of hard work, the cemetery was started on its modernization program that has brought it to its present state of beauty. A perpetual care endowment now guarantees the future upkeep of this cemetery.

In 1931 Mr. Mann brought his bride to the parsonage and she proved to be all that a preacher could want in a wife, helping in all the problems of the churches. His was the longest tenure of any of our pastors to this point, extending over a period of eleven years.

Dr. Roy A. Helton succeeded Mr. Mann. This was his first pastorate, also. He also brought his bride within his first year. Dr. Helton was a real scholar and a teacher of unusual talent and a man of boundless energy. His stay was short, but his ministry was fruitful.

Next, the church had a series of supply pastors for a number of years. For one year, Rev. Mr. J. E. Sandridge, III served the Field. And following him, Dr. John W. Reams, an elderly saint and eloquent preacher, rendered a most effective service.

When Brother Sandridge finished his Seminary course, he returned to us as the pastor of the Field. He proceeded to work with the young people and succeeded in securing organizations of these young people in all the churches. His fine sermons and engaging personality won the hearts of all the people. After a year and half, he left to accept a call to a larger field of service.

Mr. C. B. Blevins was here two years. Dr. Wesley Laing served as interim pastor for a period of one year. His friendly attitude and excellent sermons resulted in added interest and increased activity of the members.

By Ella N. Bowden, Historian

In 1952, Rev. A. M. Senter came to serve the Field. During his tenure, all four of the churches added Sunday School rooms including Mooreland's in 1955. Mrs. Senter improved the music of the church along with her other talents. She also began many mission organizations in the church. The church prospered with 17 new additions during one revival. Mr and Mrs. Senter and

their six children stayed the longest, 16 years, and have always been spoken of fondly.

Dr. Clyde Helms was interim pastor for a year until Rev. Edgar W. Mitchell arrived. Mr. Mitchell was instrumental in separating the Field of churches. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell and their five children were enjoyed by one and all. Rev. Dennis Hamm served as interim pastor. All loved his friendly personality.

Rev. Michael Fowler and his family came in 1976. Mrs. Fowler was loveable and wonderful with her weekday Bible study. Mr. and Mrs. Fowler and their 4 children, Jeff, Scott, Jason, and Amy, left to accept a call from Vesuvius Baptist Church. They were the last pastor's family to live in the parsonage.

In December of 1978, Rev. Israel W. (Jake) Stewart became pastor of Mooreland. He was a wonderful pastor and will be remembered for his dedicated visiting. The church thrived during his stay with many new members. Mrs. Stewart played the piano beautifully and added to the church in her own way. He accepted a call from Free Union Baptist Church in September of 1981. Jake was loved and we hated to see him go.

By Virginia A. Page

Rev. R. Wertenbaker (Wertie) Turner, Jr. and his family arrived December 1, 1981. During his tenure, Mooreland joined with Trinity United Methodist in setting up a Food/Wood Bank in the area. Also, ceiling fans were installed in the sanctuary and the Deacon Family Ministry plan was implemented. Wertie is now serving in Madison County.

Mr. James A. Sprouse left all his worldly possessions to the church and cemetery on July 26, 1982.

On August 1, 1986, Rev. Israel W. (Jake) Stewart returned to Mooreland. A cassette tape ministry was added in 1987. To aid in the prayer life of the church, a prayer chain has been formed. Many memorials in memory of church members and their families have added to the physical look of the church building. New hymnals, pew Bibles, loose pew cushions, new sanctuary lights, and a cross over the altar have been added in the sanctuary. A new organ and piano were added to the music program, along with choir robes given by

another church. The parsonage was sold so that the old education wing could be renovated and a new fellowship hall could be added in 1992. Air conditioning has been put into the entire church.

A time capsule was buried on the church grounds on October 2, 1988 to be dug up in fifty years. It is to be removed in the year 2038. The capsule has many items of historical and spiritual interest.

The Women's Missionary Union has continued to thrive. Groups for women (Baptist Women), girls (Girls in Action and Acteens), and children (Mission Friends) are available. Also, a boy's group (Royal Ambassadors) has been added.

Members of Mooreland who have been appointed missionaries are George Senter --- Home and Foreign Mission Boards, and the Acteens Activator team was appointed from the Home Mission Board in 1992.

Mooreland joins Trinity United Methodist in many activities. Each year Easter services, Vacation Bible School, Thanksgiving services, and Christmas services are shared, along with the continued work of the Food Bank.

By Jamie Chapman

Rev. Clarke Hawkins and his wife, Trish, came to Mooreland in October 1998. They have two children. Joshua was born on May 25, 1999, and Campbell arrived on April 25, 2003. Under his leadership, Mooreland has:

- A refurbished baptistry
- New pews
- New members
- Vibrant and active youth programs:
 1. Older youth have: attended mission oriented camps, are learning American Sign Language, have fund raisers for their activities, and are growing in their Christian lives
 2. Younger youth (Team Kids) have: Bible based activities and are learning about the Christian faith

3. Preschoolers (Mission Friends) are: learning about missions and are learning about the love of Christ

- Community and Association sponsored ministries
- Older membership is included in the many activities of Mooreland and has a key role in encouragement and support of the youth and children ranging from prayer to simple supportive spoken words.
- Continued giving to state, home and foreign missions

Also, during his tenure, on May 29, 2004 Clarke has received his Doctor of Ministry degree from the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond

The ministries of Mooreland are the result of God's blessings and the support, prayer, and encouragement of the membership.

By Ann Faris

It is the hope and prayer that Mooreland Baptist will continue to be mission minded and to draw more people to a closer walk with God. The mission of any church should be to bring more people to accept Christ as their Savior and then nurture them in their growth with God, sharing Christ's love.

By Jamie Chapman.

Ministers of Mooreland Baptist Church

1.	Rev. Mr. R. H. Bowden	1904	1909
2.	Rev. Mr. E. E. Lamb	1909	1914
3.	Rev. Mr. M. L. Bannister	1914	
4.	Rev. Mr. G. C. Duncan		1919
5.	Rev. Mr. R. E. L. Aylor	1920	
6.	Rev. Mr. H. B. Stoneham		
7.	Rev. Mr. R. J. Mann	1929	1941
8.	Dr. Roy A. Helton		1943
9.	Rev. J. E. Sandridge, III		
10.	John W. Reams		
11.	Rev. J. E. Sandridge, III	1947	1948
12.	Mr. C. B. Blevins	1948	1951
13.	Dr. Wesley Laing	1951	1952
14.	Rev. A. M. Senter	1952	1968
15.	Dr. Clyde Helms	1968	1969
16.	Rev. Edgar W. Mitchell	1969	1973
17.	Rev. Dennis Hamm	1974	
18.	Rev. Michael Fowler	1976	1978
19.	Rev. Israel W. (Jake) Stewart	1978	1981

20.	Rev. R. Wertenbaker (Wertie) Turner, Jr.	1981	1986
21.	Rev. Israel W. (Jake) Stewart	1986	1998
22.	Dr. Clarke Hawkins	1998	Present