



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
M O R R I S T O W N

EST. 1803



The year was 1800 and a new century brought great changes to our young nation. The capital of the United States was moved from Philadelphia to Washington DC. In 1801, Thomas Jefferson became our 3rd President with Aaron Burr as our 3rd Vice-President. In the year of 1803, three momentous events occurred. Lewis and Clark began their expedition into the West Territory that paved the way for the great westward movement. President Jefferson sent James Monroe to Paris to buy the city of New Orleans; he returned with the purchase of not only New Orleans but also land west of the Mississippi known as Native Lands. In one purchase the size of the United States land area was doubled. The third event was just as momentous though not as widely known: a new church was organized in what was then part of Grainger County, TN.

On Saturday, June 4, 1803, Bent Creek Baptist Church (organized in 1786 and now known as Whitesburg Baptist Church) “dismissed and constituted” several of its members for the purpose of organizing a new church that was called **Bethel, South of the Holston**. The charter members of the new church were John and Nancy Brooks, Reuben Riggs, James Ellis, Edward Riggs, Samuel Hiberd, Ann Evins, Rebeccah Austin, Rhonda Cure, John Neace, and Elizabeth Goin. Also listed were “Phillip and Phanne, Negroes”. One week later, Rev. Issac Barton was granted a dismissal to join the new body of believers as the pastor. It is believed that Rev. Barton and Rev. Caleb Witt organized the new church.

When Bethel Church was organized in 1803, near the locality of a former church called South on the Holston, the clerk recording the proceedings wrote the name “Bethel, South of the Holston”, and later shortened it to Bethel South. At the second annual session of the Tennessee Baptist Association in 1803, Bethel South Church - now First Baptist of Morristown - was admitted as a newly constituted church with Reuben Riggs and James Ellis designated messengers. At this meeting, the church was reported having eighteen members; the four additional members were Elizabeth Dyer, Jesse and Mary Hopkins and Isabel Bacon.

REV. ISAAC BARTON was the first pastor of Bethel South and continued as pastor until his death November 10, 1831, at the age of 86. He was born in Maryland, near Fredericktown in 1746. In 1754, the family moved to North Carolina. In October 1772, Isaac Barton was married to Keziah Murphy, a daughter of William Murphy, a Baptist pioneer preacher of Virginia. This union was blessed with 12 “living children”.

Soon after his marriage, Isaac Barton joined a Baptist Church. In a short while, he was called from above and encouraged by his church to preach the gospel, “the which I understood to do,” says the record, “with much fear and trembling”. He was a circuit rider who organized and served as pastor of several other churches while he pastored Bethel South.

The first house of worship of Bethel South was a small hewn-log cabin erected on a lot, donated by Benjamin Cox. This first church building was located on what is now the west side of North Cumberland Street near Cherokee Drive. It was on a hill just above Bethel Spring now covered with a concrete slab, but which at the beginning of the Morristown Water System, was the only source of water supply. Here the early citizens came to worship God in strict accordance with the Baptist doctrine of "One Faith, one Lord and one Baptism".

The entire area from the corner of Cumberland and East Sixth North Street to the old church, was the property of Bethel South and the major portion of it was the graveyard. At first, only white people were buried there, but later there was a plot for the African American dead and, during the War Between the States, soldiers from both Confederate and Union troops were interred. In those days there were no baptismal pools and Holston River, or other nearby streams were used for immersing.

In 1814, Bethel South was granted a letter of dismissal from the Tennessee Association. The membership was 30, though it had been as high as 50 in 1811.

In 1815, Bethel South appeared in the list of churches belonging to the Holston Association in session that year at Lick Creek meeting House with Rev. Isaac Barton and Hugh Larimore as messengers. Luther Rice, Agent of the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions, attended this meeting and was unanimously received. Agreeable to a request of Luther Rice, the association advised the churches to report annually, the names of their ministers ordained and licensed. In consequence of a petition from Poplar Creek and Hickory Creek, the association appointed Rev. Isaac Barton and Reece Bayless from the Holston Association as a committee in conjunction with Luther Rice to concert measures for the constitution of a missionary society.

The first large increase in membership as shown in reports to the association was in 1818. Friendship Church in 1819 and Blackwells Branch in 1825. This may explain why two of her daughters, Blackwells Branch and Head of Richland Churches were selected to represent petitions to deprive their mother, Bethel South, of the honor of having the Baptist Encampment for East Tennessee Association located at Morristown.

During Rev. Isaac Barton's pastorate in 1820, there occurred an incident that seriously affected the fellowship of two sister churches, Bethel and French Broad Baptist Church at Dandridge. A member of Bethel had courted the daughter of a member of the French Broad Church and led the girl and her family to believe he intended marriage. The courtship ran smoothly for some time and then ceased. The father took his troubles to his church, and, in turn, the matter was taken up with Bethel Church. A committee of three was appointed from both churches to try the accused for breach of promise. He was found guilty of the charge and dropped from the membership of the church and the father of the girl was reprovved for not dealing with the accused according to the plan laid down in the Bible - Matthew 18: 15-18.

The churches of Pioneer days were very strict and many of the members were excluded for such offenses as violation of marriage promise, nonpayment of debts, gaming (such as shooting matches), giving "frolicks", drinking too much liquor, and the sisters for tatting and speaking disrespectfully of a member.

In 1831, a query was sent to the association from County Line Church. "What ought to be done with a member that sells his colored brother to merchandise of him?". Answer: "We advise all churches who have grievances to act agreeable to the Gospel". This incident, some thirty years prior to the Civil War, points toward the ensuing conflict between brothers, family members, neighbors and fellow church members over the question of slavery.

REV. HUGH OWEN TAYLOR served as pastor of Bethel South after the death of Isaac Barton in 1831 until 1836 shortly before his death on March 10, 1837. He was born October 19, 1778, in Virginia. The family later moved to Grainger County, Tennessee. August 28, 1800, he was married to Elizabeth Kennon of Jefferson County, a daughter of Thomas and Rachel (Walker) Kennon. To this union were born eleven children, three of them - Woodson, Grant and Erika - becoming Baptist preachers of note and ability.

There are no preserved records of the date, place and circumstances of the conversion and baptism of Hughes O. Taylor. From the minutes of the Holston and Nolachucky Associations he is shown to have been a member of Bethel South from 1820-1837. Family members stated in early documents that his Hughes O. Taylor became a member of Bethel South in 1803; that he was baptized by Isaac Barton, the pastor; that he was also a co-laborer with him in the ministry for many years; that he was licensed to preach by the Bethel South Church and was afterward ordained to the full work of the ministry on September 18, 1825.

Rev. Taylor began his active ministry rather late in life, but he was well posted in the Scriptures and on the theological issues of his day. He believed in the depravity of the human mind, free will, free grace, general atonement and the obligation of the churches to give the gospel to every creature. Rev. Taylor was a peacemaker in his neighborhood and church and was frequently called on to help settle church difficulties.

During the time of H.O. Taylor's pastorate, the first church building, was also used for schools and public gatherings. The first teacher of whom there is any account in Morristown was a Mr. Huddle, followed by a Miss Hill and then John Ward, all three prior to 1834. In 1834, there was a Miss Lousiesna Wells; in 1837, Miss Mary Jones; next were Drew Morris, Shadrock Miles and Miss Pennington. Then came Rev. William Rogers, a Baptist minister, who was the last teacher in the log church. He was elected the first president of Mossy Creek College, which later became Carson-Newman College.

REV. H. W. TAYLOR, the son of H.O. Taylor followed his father as pastor of Bethel South, serving from 1836-1870. Rev. Woodson Taylor was born in Grainger County, Tennessee, September 22, 1803, the year our church was organized. He was converted in the fall of 1822, while teaching school at Macedonia, near Morristown, but did not join the church until some years afterwards. On February 2, 1823, he was married to Miss Alis G. Grantham. The union was blessed with seven children.

Like most preachers of his day, Rev. H.W. Taylor had a limited education. This he improved greatly, from the beginning of his ministry, by close application to study. With Rev. Isaac and Rev. H.O. Taylor pioneered the way for Baptists at Morristown. He was the first pastor that received a salary on that field - \$50 for the year. More than any one man, he guided the church over the difficulties incident to the doctrinal and party strife of the

1830's and 1840's. Rev. H.W. Taylor served as assistant clerk of the Nolachucky Association one year, clerk for six years and moderator for twenty-three years.

Some idea of his labors may be gained from one of his reports while he served as Associational Missionary in 1849, in which he said, "I have labored 112 days, passed 36 days of my time in destitute places, witnessed 160 conversions, baptized 76 persons, aided in the constitution of one church, ordination of a minister, preached about 100 sermons and attended 10 protracted meetings". Missionaries in those days furnished their own horse and outfit and were paid fifty cents per day for their services.

Upon Rev. Taylor's death in June of 1888, the tombstone erected on his grave published the fact that during his ministry he baptized 1406 professed believers into the fellowship of Baptist churches.

REV. ELIHU MILLICAN became the co-pastor with Rev. H. Woodson Taylor of Bethel South in 1836 and served until 1858. During this time, he also served as pastor of several other churches and organized the Baptist Church at Mossy Creek in Jefferson County. Rev. Millican and Rev. Taylor each preached two Sundays a month at Bethel South.

There is no account of Rev. Millican's religious life until he appears before the public as a minister of the gospel. It is known that his father was a Quaker and his mother a Baptist, and that when he was converted, he searched the Scriptures for himself and became a Baptist. It is presumed that living in the neighborhood of Bethel South, he united with that church and was baptized by Isaac Barton, the pastor. This church licensed him and Hughes O. Taylor, at the same meeting, to exercise a "public gift," and by the authority of the same church, they were ordained together on September 18, 1825. The following facts were taken from the Nolachucky Associational minutes: in 1846 all the churches of the association were asked to organize Sunday Schools and make a report at the next associational meeting.

In 1851, the association considered the rules of decorum and decided that: no person has a right to a vote except only the delegates from the churches of this association. On March 4, 1852, the church agreed to contribute and appointed a committee to receive such donations.

Bethel South occupied its original log structure from 1803 to 1853. Then in 1853, the second church building, a new frame building, was erected during the pastorate of Rev. H. Woodson Taylor and Rev. Elihu Millican. This second church building was located on the east side of North Cumberland Street across from the location of the original log church.

In 1855, the city of Morristown was formed with Bethel South being within its boundaries.

On April 25, 1855, it was reported that Grandison Tealpin had mistreated his wife, and he was cited to answer the charge at the next meeting of the church. On May 26, 1855, Tealpin was excluded from the church on the evidence presented to the church.

On December 22, 1855, a resolution was adopted that this church will pay our pastor, Rev. Hughes W. Taylor, for 1855 whatever amount can be made up by voluntary contributions and will hereafter pay him yearly for his pastoral services, until otherwise determined, the sum of fifty dollars to be made up by voluntary contributions.

REV. MATTHEW HILLSMAN, on September 26, 1858, was called to be pastor of Bethel South for 12 months at a salary of \$100 for the period. Since this action was the

wish and earnest recommendation of the present pastor, Rev. H. W. Taylor, the \$100 salary was immediately subscribed.

Rev. Matthew Hillsman was born near Knoxville, Tennessee, August 7, 1814. He was one of a family of eleven children. According to his sister, "Brother Matthew was pretty nigh a self-made man. His father paid his way one session in Knoxville (at the East Tennessee College, which later became the University of Tennessee); he got the rest of himself". He was a life-long painstaking student, lived a good deal in the atmosphere of schools as well as of books and became a classical scholar.

In the summer of 1832, in a meeting held at Third Creek in Knox County, Matthew Hillsman, at the age of nineteen, made a profession of faith and was baptized. In April of 1833, the Third Creek Church passed a motion that Brother M. Hillsman "exercise a public gift in preaching, prayer and exhortation in any of the sister churches". In 1835 he was ordained by Bethel Church in Anderson County.

On May 21, 1858, he was elected President of Mossy Creek College and professor of logic, rhetoric and moral science. He served as president one year, preaching meanwhile to the Knoxville, Morristown and New Market churches. He was the most scholarly of the antebellum pastors.

Shortly after Rev. Hillsman became pastor, the name of the church was changed from Bethel South to Morristown Baptist Church on November 27, 1858. The First Baptist Church of Morristown appears on the Nolachucky Association minutes for the first time in 1859 with Rev. H. W. Taylor and T. B. Jarnagin as messengers. On March 23, 1861, the church resolved that each member shall pay, in proportion to his or her taxable property, for the disbursement of all the expenses of the church.

REV. T. J. LANE was the pastor of the church from 1859 to 1862. Rev. Lane was born in Jefferson (now Hamblen) County, Tennessee near Whitesburg, October 9, 1804, being the youngest of twelve children. He was a grandson of Rev. Tidence Lane, the first pastor of Bent Creek (now Whitesburg) Church that was the third oldest Baptist Church in the state with continuous existence and the mother church of Morristown Baptist Church.

During the War Between the States, Morristown was a village of sharply divided loyalties: battles were fought in which neighbors and even members of families were on opposing sides. The population of 718 recorded in 1860 dwindled. For these reasons, from September 1863 to the fall of 1865, during the Civil War, the church met quite irregularly, and very little business was transacted. There were no known records kept of this period. However, it is known that at some point during this era, the black church members established their own church retaining the name Bethel.

At the close of the Civil War, Rev. Lane refused to be pastor of his home church, but gladly consented to serve as clerk, as in his earlier days, and to hunt up the scattered members of the flock for re-enrollment. Not the least of his self-denying and useful labors, during a long life, was his pastoral oversight of his home and guide in the stormy days of war. He died on July 3, 1888.

From 1853-1868, the church held services in the frame building except during certain Civil War years, when it was converted into a hospital for the use of both armies. In 1867, Professor Wilson started the Reagan High School in this building and was later assisted by Mr. James A. Carrier. This was one of the best educational institutions in the State of

Tennessee. In 1881, the property was sold to Morristown College. At this time, many of those buried in the old graveyard were removed to other nearby cemeteries. There is a semicircular plot of ground in Jarnagin Cemetery, immediately south of the circle, that contains the tall monument at the original Jarnagin family plot that contains the bodies of forty-six Confederate soldiers who were originally in Bethel South graveyard. The local United Daughters of the Confederacy was responsible for the removal of these honored dead.

With the close of hostilities, the Christian people of the community, displaying a brotherly love and a spirit of cooperation, which could set a pattern for any age to copy, set out on the difficult task of rebuilding. The Methodist Church, partially completed before the start of hostilities, was finished under the guidance of Rev. Rufus M. Hickey, who not only provided leadership, but also pitched in and did manual labor. The Methodists, the Baptists and the Presbyterians all used the completed building in 1871, the three denominations had one Sunday School.

From 1868 to 1871, the Baptists worshiped once a month in the Southern Methodist Church that is the present First United Methodist at the same location of the present structure. During this time Morristown Baptist Church had purchased the present West Main Street property, and the red brick building was being erected. In 1869, the African American Bethel Church petitioned for admission to the association but was advised to join one of the African American Associations in East Tennessee.

REV. M. V. NOFFSINGER became pastor in 1870 and served until 1872. Rev. Noffsinger was born in Virginia and educated at Union University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He professed faith at the age of sixteen and was ordained in 1862, serving as pastor at Marion, Virginia and Greeneville and Jonesboro, Tennessee.

When Rev. Noffsinger came to Morristown, the Baptists had no building but were holding services in the Methodist Church. Under his leadership, the church resolved "to build a new house for the Lord".

On February 4, 1870, the church agreed that the deacons be requested to assess each member the amount to be paid annually for the support of the church.

In 1870, I.P. Haun and Mark M. Murrell, with an unknown third gentleman, were sitting under a tree located on the property of today's First Baptist Church when they created Hamblen County.

The third church building, a red brick, was completed in 1871. Drury Morris and Curtis Eames, two of the leading citizens of Morristown, were the prime movers in its construction. The church was dedicated by a sermon preached by Dr. J. R. Graves of Memphis, an eminent Baptist minister and editor of the church paper, The Baptist and one of the leading preachers of the denomination in the South. The cost of the building was about \$10,000. Such a sum would be ridiculed today, but in 1871, it represented a considerable amount of money. The new Morristown Baptist Church Building was considered one of the finest in East Tennessee. Only men of great faith would undertake its construction, when this section of the South was just beginning to emerge from the devastation of the Civil War.

In 1871, the pastor's salary was increased to \$200 per year for holding services twice a month. The church had a good Sunday School and prayer meeting with \$2,158.55 contributed for various purposes. In 1872, the salary was made \$400 for half time to the

call of Rev. J. A. Mundy as pastor at \$800: the record fails to show the fact. This call and salary were for all his time.

REV. J. A. MUNDY was called to serve as the church's pastor in 1872 at a salary of \$800 per year. He served until 1874 at which time he resigned due to ill health to go to a warmer climate. Rev. J. A. Mundy was born in Virginia about 1836, graduated at Richmond College in 1858, and was pastor of several churches in Virginia and later in South Carolina. The associational records in these early days show that constant efforts were made to reclaim disorderly members and when they came forward and acknowledged their misconduct, with a promise not to repeat the offense, they were forgiven by the church and restored to its fellowship. Instead of prosecuting offenders in the courts, the church cited them to appear and answer the charge at the next or some future meetings of the church. The intention was to instill respect and reverence for the House of God and the religion of the forefathers. In 1873, this church adopted the following: "Resolved that in our opinion the interests of the church would be promoted by the selection of a prosecuting committee to consist of three members, to be selected by private ballot, and when so selected, it shall be their duty to serve for twelve months, and to hear all complaints made by a member of the church, and to report same for church action".

REV. JESSE M. L. BURNETT served as pastor of First Baptist Church during 1874 and 1875. Rev. Jesse Burnett was born on September 14, 1829. In 1835, the family left the old homestead, having been given land grants by the government for many miles on both sides of the French Broad River near Del Rio in Cocke County, Tennessee. At the age of thirteen, he was converted.

In 1861, Rev. Burnett was ordained pastor of the Fort Gaines Church in Georgia. He served this church and other churches in Georgia and Alabama for the next six years.

In 1867, with impaired health and a change of life plans, he returned to his East Tennessee Country home, Del Rio in Cock County, where he lived the independent, quiet life of a farmer-preacher the rest of his life. It was during this time that he served as pastor at Morristown Baptist Church and several other churches in the area. Two of his daughters were members of our church: Mrs. J. W. Jarnagin and Mrs. Charles S. Stephens.

REV. OWEN CLINTON POPE became pastor in 1875 and served until 1878. Rev. Pope was born in Georgia in February of 1842. He graduated from Mercer University and served as a volunteer in the Confederate army. While serving as pastor at Morristown, Rev. Pope edited the Baptist Reflector for two years. After Rev. Pope's tenure as editor of the Baptist Reflector, there were many publishers and owners. In 1921, the Executive Board of the State Convention purchased it and made it the official newspaper of Tennessee Baptists. After leaving Morristown, he was instrumental in interesting James. B. Simmons in the establishment of Simmons College (now known as Hardin-Simmons University) in Texas and became president of the college in 1898, serving until June 1901, when he retired as president emeritus and died in November of that year.

REV. CROCKET CARTER BROWN served as pastor from 1878 until 1882. Rev. Brown was born January 29, 1841, near Warrensburg, Tennessee. He was brought up on a farm and had to work hard to help support the large family. Having a thirst for knowledge, he would often take his book with him to the field that he might study during the rest moments. At the age of fifteen he spent one term at Morristown High School. This was

followed by a period of farm work and home study: then came the Civil War, with its demoralizing influences.

After serving as pastor at First Baptist Church, he was Secretary of State Missions for three years. For some time, he had been looking wistfully toward the West where he had some attractive calls. He mentioned this, confidentially, to a member of the State Board, while entertaining the board's proposition to become its secretary. "Yes", said the member, "that would be pleasant, and would mean more money., but you can do more good in Tennessee. Build your monument here". A few days later, the two met again when he said, "You are right. I have settled the matter. My lifework shall be in Tennessee and in her bosom my bones shall rest".

REV. W. A. MONTGOMERY served as pastor during 1882 and 1883. Rev. Montgomery was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee on November 16, 1829. He was the great-grandson of Isaac Barton. At the age of fourteen he professed faith in Christ and was baptized. In 1845, at the age of sixteen he entered the University of Tennessee, graduating in his twenty-first year with the first honors of his class.

Rev. Montgomery served as pastor of several area churches and as Secretary of State Missions. During this time, he did a most valuable work in unifying the Baptists of the State. He served as President of Carson College and then of Carson Newman College. It was during his administration that the marriage of Carson and Newman took place, and co-education became the order of the day for East Tennessee Baptists.

REV. SHELBY JONES was pastor from 1883 to 1885. Rev. Jones was born in Scott County, Virginia. He received his Bachelor of Art degree from Carson-Newman College in 1876. He was ordained in 1878 at Sneedville Church. He was professor of Natural Science and Mathematics at Carson-Newman College.

In 1883, a major event during the ministry of Rev. Jones was the organization of the Foreign Missionary Society in the First Baptist Church. About a dozen women met in the church building, and with the help of Rev. Jones, perfected the organization. Mrs. J. N. Hill president, Miss Vesta Hodges, secretary and Miss Mary Willing, treasurer.

It was five years after the local group organization before Southern Baptists, realizing the tremendous task and need to be met, called together these little bands of women throughout the Southland to form the Woman's Missionary Union in 1888 in Richmond, Virginia.

REV. S. H. FLEMMING served as pastor of First Baptist Church in 1885-1886. He was born on January 5, 1849. He died July 13, 1887, and was buried in the Oak Grove Cemetery in Marion, North Carolina. There are no other biographical records of Rev. Flemming.

REV. ELIJAH ALLISON served as pastor from 1887 until 1889. Rev. Allison joined Little River Church, near Brevard, North Carolina at the age of twelve and at seventeen was an ordained minister. Then for the long years, until he died at eighty-three, he went about his Master's business, his work finally ending at the same little church which he had joined as a boy.

In the course of that ministry, he baptized 5,523 persons. One of the last persons he baptized was a grandchild. "It always did him good to see one of his decide to do what is right", is the way his son, S.F. Allison, of Brevard, expressed it.

REV. JAMES C. ROCKWELL became the pastor of the church in 1889 and served until 1891. Rev. Rockwell was born January 21, 1868, at Whiteville, North Carolina.

Wherever he went, Rev. James Rockwell always tried to improve the minds of his fellow men and improve their living conditions. His private library was good and extensive. He published a sprightly little paper, The Pastoral Visitor, at Morristown.

DR. OSCAR HAYWOOD served as pastor from 1891 to 1893. Dr. Haywood was born near Mount Gilead, North Carolina on January 6, 1868. He attended the county schools, Mount Gilead Academy, Wake Forest College and received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Southwestern Baptist University in 1906. He wrote Practical Christianity in 1894 and Jean Val Jean in 1901.

DR. W. C. HALE became pastor in 1893 and served until 1895. Dr. Hale was born in Arkansas, where his parents had moved from Washington County, Tennessee on January 8, 1863. While still a child, he returned to Washington County where his early childhood was spent. In his early teens, after the death of his parents, he moved to Talbott, Tennessee where he lived with his uncle, Dr. E. B. Hale. He was married to Blanch Barton Dick in December of 1893. They had two sons, W. C. Hale, Jr. and the late E. B. Hale.

He graduated from Carson-Newman college in 1888. In 1890, he was ordained to the ministry by the Mossy Creek Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He attended Newton Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts and received his Master of Theology degree in 1891. He received his Doctor of Divinity degree in 1924 from the Peoples National University in Atlanta, Georgia.

While attending Newton Theological Seminary, Dr. Hale did home mission work at Missoula, Montana. He was pastor for a period at the First Baptist Church, Morristown, Tennessee and later was pastor of several smaller churches in Hamblen and adjoining counties, some of which he helped to organize. He was pastor of the Warrensburg Church for twenty-five years and of the Beulah Church for eleven years, which he helped to organize. His last pastorate was in Morehead, Kentucky and after resigning his pastorate there, he returned to Morristown, a place dear to him, where he resided until his death.

Dr. Hale was moderator of the Nolachucky Association several times. He was a member of the building committee when our 1913 building was erected and, up until a short time before his death, was a teacher in our Sunday School. Dr. Hale died February 14, 1937.

REV. W. M. VINES was pastor of First Baptist Church from 1895 until 1897. He was born in Jonesboro, Tennessee. He studied at the University of Chicago. He was ordained to preach on August 30, 1891.

In 1896, the Sunday School had a total enrollment of over 200 pupils with a total church membership of 205. The value of the church property was about \$12,000.

REV. W. H. STRICKLAND served as pastor during 1898 and 1899. Rev. Strickland was born in Gwinnett County, Georgia. In early life he joined the Presbyterian Church, but four years later he united with the Baptists. He was pastor of several churches in Georgia. In 1871-1872, he was chaplain of The House of Representatives of the Georgia Legislature. His power in the pulpit was very great, and he was much beloved by his people wherever he was pastor.

REV. M. D. EARLY was called as pastor of First Baptist Church in August of 1899 at a salary of \$800. He served until 1904.

Rev. Early took an interest in promoting the women's organizations. He said, "The women have as much right as men to organize; we can keep trust in them to keep in bounds of propriety."

Mr. M.P. Jarnigan conveyed the Jarnagin Cemetery property to the trustees of First Baptist Church on February 3, 1902. The deed is on record in the office of the register of Hamblen County, Tennessee.

DR. J. HARVEY DEERE first served as pastor during 1904 and 1905. Dr. Deere was born August 31, 1871, in Waveland, Indiana. He was educated at Franklin College in Indiana and the Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He was ordained to the ministry on November 4, 1900, at the First Baptist Church in Lima, Ohio which was his first pastorate. He held other pastorates in Tennessee, Arizona, Indiana and California. He retired in 1948 after forty-eight years in the ministry. He died in Alhambra, California on December 22, 1956.

REV. J. M. HAYMORE served as pastor during 1905 and 1906. Rev. Haymore was pastor of the following churches: First Baptist Maysville, Kentucky; First Baptist Moultrie, Georgia; First Baptist Waycross, Georgia; First Baptist Gainesville, Georgia; First Baptist Decatur, Georgia and First Baptist Gainesville, Georgia. He died September 3, 1941. There were many additions to the church while Rev. Haymore was pastor in Morristown as he had the rare combination of being both evangelistic and doctrinal and the Lord reaped a large harvest from his preaching. As a token of appreciation, an ebony walking cane with a gold top with the inscription, "From members of the First Baptist Church, May 5, 1906" was presented to him.

In 1906, the name of the Foreign Missionary Society was changed to Ladies Aid and Missionary Society because the society gave as much for the cause of Home Missions and for church aid as for Foreign Missions.

REV. W. J. ROBINSON served as pastor from 1906 to 1910. The only information known about Rev. Robinson is from his nephew, Richard Robinson: "He was raised on a farm in Bedford County, Tennessee. He taught school for three years then he took up ministerial work and was pastor of different churches In Tennessee for several years and at Fort Smith, Arkansas. He was a man that never talked much about his work" He died in Kansas City, Missouri on September 11, 1957.

DR. SPENCER TUNNELL served as pastor of First Baptist Church from 1910 until 1919. Dr. Tunnell was born near Jonesboro, Tennessee, February 27, 1865. He graduated from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee and New Theological Seminary, Boston, Massachusetts. He served as pastor of churches in Mansfield, Massachusetts; Jonesboro, Harriman, and Columbia, Tennessee; Florence, Alabama; LaGrange, Georgia; and Louisville, Kentucky.

When Dr. Tunnell came to Morristown, he was an active, effectual preacher delivering sermons that were forceful and spiritual, as evidenced by the increase in the church's membership and attendance. In appreciation for his efforts, on February 5, 1912, the deacons ordered the church treasurer to increase the pastor's salary from \$150 to \$175

per month until further order. Later that year, the church built a pastor's home at a cost of nearly \$7,000.

Dr. Tunnell baptized 97 newly made converts in Holston River in 65 minutes in the presence of 5,000 witnesses gathered on the banks of the river on May 11, 1913. While he was pastor, the membership of the church grew from 165 to nearly 800, the Sunday School from a total enrollment of 325 to more than 1,000 for the last five years. When he became the pastor, the church owned an old rectangular brick building. After building the new church they owned property aggregating \$65,000. In each of Dr Tunnell's other pastorates he had attained signal success.

Other indications of the success of Dr. Tunnell's ministry were that \$500 was collected for Foreign and Home Missions for the year ending May 1, 1912, and that a three-week revival with more than a hundred converts and fifty additions to the church was held beginning May 19, 1912. Contributions from the church to this work were \$225.00 that was credited for the year to the Home Missions Department.

Membership increased rapidly over these years. A building committee was appointed to provide accommodations for the Sunday School. Their report stated: "We have gone carefully over the matter of repairing or building additions to the present building and with that in view, had an architect to come and study the situation making some drawings of the proposed additions and after two or three meetings of the committee studying the situation decided that in their judgment, it would not be wise to repair but build an entirely new church plant, tearing away from the present building early in the spring and begin the new building on the first day of May 1913."

At a meeting of the church building committee on Sunday, February 8, 1913, Colonel T.H. Reeves recommended that the church secure, at a cost of \$4,500, the corner lot owned by C. K. Murphy that was situated on the southeast corner of Main and Jackson Streets adjacent to the church building at that time.

In 1913, one hundred and ten years after its organization, the church decided to tear down the old red brick building and erect, at a cost of some \$45,000, a yellow brick building in the Greek style with columns in front and with just a suggestion of a bell tower that is the 1913 building. The cornerstone of the new First Baptist Church building was formally placed in position on Wednesday afternoon, July 16, 1913, with exercises appropriate to the occasion. Colonel T.H. Reeves presided. During the construction of this building, the congregation met in the tabernacle built by John Loop on West First North Street where the SunTrust Bank is now located.

In 1913, the Ladies Aid and Missionary Society gave \$35 to missions and deposited \$1.40 in the bank as a nucleus toward purchasing the new church pews. Uplift of China was the first mission study book. Other outstanding activities included the placing of gospel tracts at the railway station, helping with a scholarship at Tennessee College, flower shows, dollar days, Easter markets, pipe organ funds, and shopping for an organ.

The M.P. Moller Pipe-organ was installed in the First Baptist Church at a cost of \$6500. It was, at that time, one of the largest and best church pipe organs in the South. This Moller organ is a three-manual, English- design console, with a vox humana stop combined with the echo, making the most perfect representation of the human voice that it is possible to get with a pipe organ. There is a separate organ chamber just above the

main organ loft which contains the harp and chimes, two of the most beautiful stops to be had for a church organ.

Some of those to whom special credit is due for the building of the handsome edifice are the following: Dr. Spencer Tunnell, pastor; MA. Goodson, for the initial motion to build a new church; W. H. Mullins, for securing supplies and superintending construction; John C. Mathes for the fine pipe organ, and many others for contributions and cooperation

Beginning February 1, 1914, the salary of the pastor, Dr. Spencer Tunnell was \$2500 per year. The church pledged him personal and earnest cooperation in helping him to make the church the best in the state. He was commended for his earnestness, his sincerity and his loyalty to the principles of the church, and for his wise counsel and guidance in the erection of the new house of worship. He again was assured that the church stood for every principle he had advocated since he had been the pastor.

At prayer meeting on February 3, 1915, letters of dismissal were granted to Mrs. Walter Fellows and Orien Fellows to unite with the Baptist Church in Anniston, Alabama. Walter Fellows was refused his letter on grounds that he had not been living a righteous life. In 1915 the Woman's Missionary Society began to use the group, or circle plan, that is still used today. The Tennessee Baptist State Convention was held in the church building November 14-17, 1916.

On Sunday morning, November 24, 1918, the church building was dedicated. Dr. EY Mullins of Louisville, Kentucky preached the dedicatory sermon. The building was conceded to be one of the best church and Sunday School buildings in the state at the time of its completion. During the months of October and November in 1918, by order of the mayor, all church services in Morristown were suspended on account of an epidemic of influenza.

The trying days of 1917 and 1918 (World War I) may be recalled as days of service to God and country in making bandages, giving Testaments and having prayer leagues. On April 19, 1919, at a called meeting of the church in conference, it was decided to allow the sexton only half pay for this week's work on account of negligence of duty upon his part.

Dr. Tunnell retired from the active ministry in 1926, making his home near his son, the late Trenton Tunnell, in Atlanta, Georgia. At the time of his death, August 3, 1950, he was the guest of his daughter, Mrs. Dwight Anderson, in Louisville, Kentucky.

DR. E. F. WRIGHT served as pastor from 1920 until 1923. Dr. Wright was born June 11, 1868, in Talladega, Alabama. He was educated in the village school, Tallapoosa Seminary, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. After five years of retirement at Boone Tavern, Berea, Kentucky, he spent the last year and a half of his life at Olds Hall, Daytona Beach, Florida. He died in August of 1951 and was buried in Morristown. The church budget for 1922 was \$7,500.

One of the most notable events during Dr. Wright's ministry was when Rev. W. A. (Billy) Sunday held a citywide six-week revival in 1922 in the first tobacco warehouse built in Morristown located on South Cumberland Street. It was recorded that 139 people were baptized into the membership of First Baptist Church as a result of that crusade.

DR. J. HARVEY DEERE returned as pastor of First Baptist Church in 1924 and served until 1927. The budget for the year 1924 was \$12,000. At that time, it was the largest budget in the history of the church. Dr. Harvey Deere published the first issue of The Weekly Bulletin. One week after his arrival on January 13, 1924, he wrote: "Wednesday, to wait a whole week to see each other is too long. The period between Sundays is broken by the hour of praise and prayer. Come with us and we shall have a good time together in the Lord, practicing His Presence will be the subject for our thoughts, prayer and testimony".

On February 27, 1924, Mr. G W Holloway reported for the committee that had been appointed to investigate and to consider the enlargement of the choir loft. This committee recommended that this work be done and that the trustees, together with Mr. W. H Mullins, be instructed to look after this work. Upon a motion made and seconded, the church voted to adopt this recommendation. The Worker's Council, composed of the teachers and officers of the Sunday School, was organized and had monthly meetings on the first Monday in each month.

In May of 1924, the meeting of the East Tennessee Division of the Baptist Young People Union was held at the church. On August 31, 1926, the church sent \$1,000 to Carson-Newman College to help this institution secure the necessary endowment to entitle it to qualify as a standard college.

In 1927, Dr. J Harvey Deere resigned pastorate here to accept the call of the First Baptist Church of Lima, Ohio.

DR. ARTHUR FOX served as pastor from 1927 until 1933. Dr. Fox was born in Cocke County, April 13, 1880. He graduated from Carson-Newman College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1904, received a Master of Arts degree in 1905, and his Doctor of Divinity degree in 1924. In 1907, he married Miss Sarah Enfield Rogers of Blountville, Tennessee. They had four children: Mrs. C. Frank Davis (Ruth), Rev. Paul Fox, Mrs. H Leo Eddleman (Sarah), and Captain Arthur Fox.

During his long ministry, he preached 21,380 sermons. As a pastor and evangelist, he conducted campaigns from the Gulf to the Great Lakes and the Atlantic to the Pacific and in every state in the South. Dr. Perry Webb said, "He covers the South with the Gospel like the dew covers Dixie". Dr. Fox was also an author of note, having written in 1947 Holy Fires Unholy Days.

On Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock, October 4, 1927, the church met in the church auditorium for roll call of members. The meeting opened by all singing "Shall We Gather at the River?" and then "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder". The pastor, Dr. Arthur Fox read about Heaven from Revelation 21:15. Then he began the roll call beginning with the names of the girls and boys from the Junior and Senior High Schools. Each pupil standing as his name was called. Immediately after this, the students were excused. Then the roll call continued. The church secretary, at the direction of the pastor, wrote down the corrections that were made by those members present and also made a deferred list.

At the business meeting of May 7, 1930, Mr. C. Collins, chairman of deacons, brought to the attention of the body the matter of a note for \$1800 with interest two years now due. Then Mr. C. Hurst spoke of the need of raising at least \$1,000 for the furnace.

Mr. G. Holloway spoke of the entire indebtedness of the church enumerating certain notes, interest and repairs amounting to \$7,000. Some of these debts had been running since 1913. Mr. Helm spoke of a past-proposed transaction regarding church property saying that now there is an offer of \$7,000 by Mr. Q Horton for the parsonage, northwest corner of First North and Jackson Streets, making motion that this amount in cash be accepted by the trustees and be used to pay off the present indebtedness. Motion seconded by Mr. J Allison. After free and full discussion, both pro and con, the motion of Mr. Gus Helm to accept \$7,000 for the parsonage carried. It was put to a vote and carried with as many as three not voting. On September 7, 1930, the pastor suggested that since no provision had been made in the budget to take care of rent on the parsonage or funds for furnace repair, subscriptions of \$2900 be collected for those two items.

On December 21, 1931, Dr. Mordecai F. Ham preached in our church on "The Overflowing Life". Nineteen came on profession of faith and eight were received into the church by letter. The Ham-Ramsey Revival was held for six weeks during November and December on the vacant corner lot on First North Street and Jackson Street. During the spring of 1932, it was decided to put Celotex on the ceiling of the church auditorium. Dr. Fox retired from the ministry and returned to Morristown to live in 1959. He died October 26, 1959, at the age of 79 and is buried in Jarnagin cemetery, Morristown, TN.

Dr Oscar Fleming was converted at the age of sixteen, and two years later felt a definite call to the ministry. He delivered his first sermon while a student at Mercer University at the age of twenty-three. He was ordained at Macon, Georgia on May 8, 1908. In 1908, he married Miss Bertha Lovorn. To this union were born three daughters: Miss Sarah Fleming Sun City, Arizona, Mrs. Mack Davis (Mildred) Johnson City, Tennessee, Mrs. Robert Bales Jr. (Pat) Morristown Tennessee.

Dr. Oscar Fleming held pastorates at Dalton, Georgia, and at Chattanooga, Sweetwater, Etowah, and Morristown, Tennessee. His work as leader of young people in his churches has been outstanding, especially at Morristown and Sweetwater, where he served both churches twelve years each as pastor. Although failing health forced him to retire, he served on the staff of First Baptist Church in Knoxville as Visiting minister 1948-1952. He was also a member of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board and a trustee of Carson-Newman College. He died December 31, 1953, at the age of 70. In March 1934, the Regional Sunday School Convention met in our church. The following statement was in the Baptist and Reflector "The church did a most splendid job entertaining this convention, and we were glad that we were there."

In 1934, for the first time, it was noted that the church decided to pay the expenses of the pastor's car. On July 8, 1936, the church voted that the treasurer of the church execute a note to the trustees of the Jarnagin Cemetery for \$2750.00 to secure the indebtedness incurred in the purchase of the Berry home for a parsonage located on Jackson Street adjoining the church property. The Silver Anniversary of the 1913 building was observed June 7-12, 1938. Dr. Fleming welcomed former pastors, Dr. Spencer Tunnell, Dr. E. F. Wright, Dr. Harvey Deere, and Dr. Arthur Fox and other members of the congregation who have moved to other communities during the past twenty-five years.

On May 18, 1939, the contract for the re-building of the organ was signed by the Trustees and forwarded to the M. P. Moller Company. At a called meeting on Wednesday

evening, August 2, 1939, the deacons recommended that the pastor appoint three members as a committee to have charge of the work of repairing the organ loft, \$3,000 and moving the choir loft \$800 and baptistry \$450 and re-decorating the auditorium \$450 in accordance with plans of the architect. Mr. J. W. Massey, Mr. D. M. Wallace and Mr. R. MCarter were named on this committee. At that time, the organ and choir loft were in the area later occupied by the baptistry and the organ pipes in the 1913 auditorium. The annual report sent to the Nolachucky Association to be held August 1939, showed the total membership of the First Baptist Church to be 967. In March of 1940, the Woman's Missionary Union State Convention was held at First Baptist Church. On November 8, 1940, the church voted to cooperate with the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, in their plan for annuity insurance for the pastors.

In 1943, there was a present need and a prospect of greater need in the future for an enlargement of our church plant and therefore a need for a larger lot. The Trobaugh-Holmes' lot, which joined the church property on the north side, was bought for \$2,400. During the Second World War years, the church bell rang daily at noon to call people to prayer.

Miss Irene Kincannon was elected by the church to serve as church secretary in 1945 with a salary of \$135 per month. Dr. Oscar Fleming resigned from our church in 1945 to accept a call for the second time to the First Baptist Church in Sweetwater, where he served until, he retired.

During the summer of 1945, the auditorium was redecorated at the cost of \$1,000. Upon the recommendation from the Sunday School Council, a building committee was appointed by the church to begin immediately to solicit funds and make investigations concerning plans for the erection of an educational building with the condition that the new pastor, whoever he may be, serve on the committee.

Rev. Clyde Rayman Widick was called as pastor of First Baptist Church on July 18, 1945 with the following understanding: Our church would pay him a salary of \$4500 per annum, participate with him in the ministerial retirement plan, pay his necessary expenses in moving, provide a home, give him a vacation of two weeks each year, if he so desires, pay his annual expenses to the State and Southern Baptist Conventions and give him our wholehearted support as a pastor and leader

Rev. Widick was born at Springfield, Tennessee on April 21, 1897. Rev. Widick was converted at the age of eleven and was ordained to the ministry on August 15, 1920, at the Hopewell Baptist Church in Robertson County, Tennessee. He married Miss Ethel Jones, May 28, 1922. To this union were born four children. He graduated from the Springfield High School, attended Union University Jackson, Tennessee, graduated from Bethel College in Kentucky, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, 1928. In 1933, he received the Master of Theology degree from the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Rev. Widick served as pastor of many churches in Kentucky and Tennessee and held many positions in the Southern Baptist denomination.

On Sunday morning, December 28, 1947, Rev. Widick suffered a heart attack in the pulpit of the First Baptist Church of Morristown. He completed his sermon, gave the

invitation. received a new member, stepped from the pulpit and asked deacon Bill Ramsey to take charge and close the service. He later died on January 2, 1948.

In his twenty-eight years as pastor, he received into his churches 1.494 people; 928 by baptism and 566 by letter, with 406 of this number coming into the Morristown church during his twenty-seven months ministry.

Possibly, Rev Clyde Widick's most outstanding service as pastor of our church was his keen interest and untiring effort in every department of the church life. Each department felt his strong support. It is no wonder that he had the cooperation so necessary to promote a great building program. He visualized a great church in an enlarged church building with space enough to enlist, develop and train spiritually for its service to a greater Morristown.

In one of his last sermons to the church, he stated to his Sunday morning congregation that the possibilities and opportunities of this church were almost unimaginable, and that he knew of no other church in the State of Tennessee with a more promising outlook.

At the business meeting of February 6, 1946, on recommendation from the board of deacons, Mrs. Herman Miller was elected to serve as educational director in addition to the office of music director now held at a combined salary of \$150 per month.

A revival was held in April of 1947, with Dr. B. B. McKinney leading the music and the pastor, Rev. Clyde Widick preaching. Forty-nine members were received into the church, eighteen by letter and thirty-one for baptism. B.B. McKinney left Morristown to lead Music Week at Ridgecrest and was killed in an automobile wreck leaving Ridgecrest.

In 1947, the church voted to give \$200 from the church and \$100 from the Sunday School treasury to the Camp Carson campaign in Tennessee, The Woman's Missionary Union and to solicit free will offerings from individuals for the amount of \$100 or more, as they desire to give.

On Sunday morning, June 15, 1947, Mrs. Herman Miller was presented a sterling silver pitcher for 25 years of faithful service as church organist. During the fall of 1947, Mr. and Mrs. W E. Hodge gave money to buy the first visual aid equipment for the church. On October 1, 1947, the church unanimously voted to accept the offer of Pittman Construction Company to dig the basement for the new educational plant for the dirt.

REV. A H HICKS was called as pastor on June 18, 1948 and served until his retirement in 1968. The recommendation included that Rev Hicks be paid a salary of \$4800 per year, given a house to live in, and have his moving expenses paid. Rev. Hicks was born November 27, 1907, in Evergreen, Alabama. He moved to Troy, Alabama, at the age of six and was converted when nine years old. He attended elementary and high school in Troy and graduated from Howard College in Birmingham, Alabama in 1930. Rev Hicks was ordained to the ministry in 1933 prior to attending Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky where he received his Master of Theology in 1937. He served as pastor of several churches in Tennessee and on many denominational committees.

In 1948, Miss Lexie Hurley saw the need for a church library while attending Ridgecrest and through her efforts, a church library was established at First Baptist Church. After five years of service, the church accepted Miss Hurley's resignation on March 11, 1953, due to ill health.

On Sunday night, November 7, 1948, the church met in a business meeting to consider a recommendation from the deacons that our church sponsor the Buffalo Trail Baptist Mission and authorize the trustees of our church to receive the deed and sign two notes at \$725 each for a lot located on the south edge of US Highway 25E near the intersection of Bright's Ferry Road.

On March 9, 1949, the church made plans to build a cottage at Ridgecrest to accommodate the great number of church members desiring to attend conferences there. On June 5, 1949, the church met in a called business meeting at the beginning of the worship service for the purpose of voting to name the cottage Mamie Jackson in honor of Mrs. LT (Mamie) Jackson who had begun a drive to build a cottage at Ridgecrest in 1939.

On July 10, 1949, Camp Carson opened in Coker County. First Baptist was instrumental in soliciting funds and in making the plans for Camp Carson. It contains approximately 160 acres of land through the donations of Mr. and Mrs. Ben W Hooper and Mr. and Mrs. Charles T Rhyne, Sr. On October 20, 1949, the church met in a business meeting to vote on a recommendation from the deacons and finance committee that the church purchase three pieces of property immediately north of the church properties Nelson (\$6,750), Drinnon (\$12,000) and McGlothlin (\$6,250). The recommendation was approved. Plans were made to renovate the Nelson Building to provide space for the Young People's Department and the Drinnon Building for the Junior Department.

On April 19, 1950, the church met in a business meeting to vote on a floor plan showing the three units and chapel of the proposed educational building. Mrs. Estel T Harmon made a motion to begin building as soon as blueprints and specifications were completed. In preface to the motion, she stated that her grandfather, known as Uncle Milton Goodson, made the motion to build the 1913 building. The motion was seconded by Mr. R A. Hall and passed by unanimous vote. The groundbreaking service for the new educational plant was held on Sunday afternoon, July 9, 1950, on the corner of First North and Jackson Streets where the new chapel was to be located. On August 1, 1950, the church voted to accept the recommendation of the finance committee and borrow \$50,000 from its own church members to pay on the expenses of the building.

On November 29, 1950, the recommendation of a lot on the corner of West Second North Street and McFarland to build a new pastorium. The lot was purchased and Mr. Grover Archer, who donated his time, had charge of building the pastor's home.

Ceremonies for laying the cornerstone in the new educational building were held on July 8, 1951. The following items were placed in the cornerstone; a Bible, minutes of original meeting to appoint the building committee and names of the committee, minutes of groundbreaking service, minutes of first service in new building, memorial offering envelopes, list of men in service at the present time, register of people attending this service, invitation to cornerstone laying, Copy of Daily Gazette and Mail showing pictures

of our church buildings from 1803 to 1951, cornerstone offering envelopes, and a handful of first soil turned for building.

On Sunday morning, February 10, 1952, the church met in business session to hear a report from Mr. George Fielden, chairman of the building committee. The report states that the building was erected at a total cost of \$149,704.14 and that this modern plant was made possible through the foresight of our former pastor, Rev. Clyde Widick, who led the members to contribute \$65,000 to the building fund and by the wise buying of the purchasing committee, by the architect, who refunded \$464.62 of his fees, and by the cooperation of every individual who had a part in the erection of the building or in any way contributed to the building fund.

The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of First Baptist Church of Morristown was celebrated on Sunday, August 21, 1953. The church had 1693 members at this time. On Sunday afternoon, October 25, 1953, the Buffalo Trail Mission was organized into the Buffalo Trail Baptist Church. There were 147 members.

Sunday, January 31, 1954, was observed as Hillcrest Day in our church. The entire offering on that date was dedicated to the completion of the building for Hillcrest Baptist Mission in order that services might be held there in the near future. Representatives from several local churches met on August 9, 1954, at 3 o'clock to form a council for the purpose of organizing the Hillcrest Baptist Mission into a Missionary Baptist Church. At that time, there were 141 in Sunday School, 54 in Training Union, and 71 in church membership.

Miss Irene Kincannon served as church secretary during the years of the late 1940's and early 1950's. She was known for her loyalty and devotion to duty and by her love of the Master and her earnest desire to do His will. She demonstrated a compassionate interest for lost souls, as she worked with intermediate boys and girls who professed faith in Jesus Christ by her efforts. "Miss Irene" later went to West Jackson Baptist Church of Jackson, Tennessee, as Educational Director.

The staff and membership of the Church were proud to welcome Miss Katherine Yates (Fortner) as the new secretary who also added a spiritual asset to the church. The church voted on Wednesday, April 20, 1955, to accept a deed to a two-acre plot of land given by Mr. Ed Harrell to be used as a church park

On Sunday, July 24, 1955, the church voted to redecorate the auditorium at an estimated amount of fifteen hundred dollars. The money was taken from the Ridgecrest fund.

On January 18, 1956, the church accepted the offer of Mr. Ed Harrell to purchase another lot for \$1,000 that was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Medlin. On October 18, 1956, the church approved the expenditure of \$60,000 to purchase the four lots adjoining the church property on the west. Mr. and Mrs. J E Burke donated an additional lot on West Main Street. This addition made the church a U-shaped property with two frontages on West Main and the base of the U on West First North Street.

On June 9, 1956, the church paid \$18,500 for the property of Mr. and Mrs. Eli Maloy on West Main Street adjoining the church property.

Mrs. Mildred Oakes (Barringer) of Roanoke, Virginia, assumed her duties as Educational Director October 1, 1956. She later resigned to accept a position with the

Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The church converted a brick house on West First North into a youth center. The area connecting both West Main and West First North Streets was blacktopped for use as an additional parking area. Miss Joan Hatfield (Lehrer) began her work with our church, June 17, 1957, as educational secretary. Serving only one year, she resigned to continue her education at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. After attending the Woman's Missionary Union Conference at Ridgecrest in 1957, Mrs. Robert Harmon, president of Woman's Missionary Society suggested to our church that all mission offerings be church-wide.

On December 31, 1957, the church accepted an organ for the chapel given by Mrs. D M Wallace and a piano for the choir room by Mr. and Mrs. John Wallace and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bradley, dedicated to the Glory of God in memory of Mr. D M Wallace.

In the late 1950's, First Baptist Church began a radio ministry with borrowed radio equipment from Station WCRK. Miss Doris Ann Gibson (Mills) was elected to serve as educational secretary on August 24, 1958.

On Sunday, September 28, 1958, the church welcomed Rev Graves as associate pastor and youth director. Miss Beverly Hashe (Gante) was elected to serve as financial and pastor's secretary on December 15, 1958. On Sunday, February 14, 1959, the attendance was at an all-time low with only 95 presents at the eleven o'clock service because of two feet or more of snow that fell on Saturday night. The evening worship service was canceled. Mr. Gilbert Bailey assumed his duties as associate to the pastor on June 15, 1960. On September 20, 1960, seventeen citizens in the fast-growing Manley community met in the Manley School with the idea of establishing a Baptist Church. On November 6, 1960, a Sunday School was organized in Mrs. Homer's home with 42 present and given the name the Manley Mission. The Manley Mission was organized into an arm of the First Baptist Church on March 8, 1961. On Sunday afternoon, May 28, 1961, the cornerstone of the 1913 building was opened. Only a few were in attendance that had witnessed the original laying of the cornerstone. The cornerstone contained: a Bible, one page on the History of the First Hundred Years of the Church by Colonel Reeves, list of deacons, officers of the Sunday School, Ladies Aid Missionary Society and Baptist Young People Union; photographs of Sunday School, Virginia House, last day in old church and baptizing in Holston River, list of building committee, copies of Baptist and Reflector, Morristown Republican, Minutes of Nolachucky Association for 1912, a copy of the Commercial Club Booklet on Morristown, a \$5.00 Confederate bill, program of the centennial of the church and cornerstone laying, and a subscription list for building a new church.

On June 25, 1961, Pastors' Appreciation Day was held. For this occasion, Miss Juanita Loving undertook the task of compiling a list of the pastors of First Baptist Church and of obtaining biographies and pictures of as many possible. These pictures are now hanging in the hallway between the main foyer and the fellowship hall. It is because of her efforts that the church has a written history that serves as a basis for the church's earliest history.

On September 10, 1961, the church had the first opportunity to see a Coronation Service for Girl's Auxiliary. Judy Black (Estes), Darlene Stubblefield (Walters) and

Carolyn Williams were crowned Queens. Linda Blair (Caraway) was crowned Queen-in-Service, the first to be recognized in Tennessee.

A lot was purchased in Lynn Mar Hills for a new parsonage at the cost of \$6,000 on the recommendation of the finance committee and deacons. The trustees were authorized to execute the necessary trust deed and note to arrange a construction loan and permanent financing for a parsonage to be constructed on Darbee Drive, in the amount of \$30,000

During 1961 church membership increased with 66 new members by baptism and 39 by letter, for a total of 105 new members. The stewardship of our tithes and offerings had increased in both regular and special gifts. Many gifts were made to the Manley Baptist Mission. The church property was landscaped. The fellowship hall and kitchen were air-conditioned, and a new stove was added to the kitchen. The parking lot was enlarged, paved and marked off for convenience. A photo-static plate-making machine was added to our printing equipment. Six additional lots were purchased at a cost of \$1,800, adding 2% acres to Harrell Park.

On March 15-16, 1962, the Tennessee Baptist Sunday School Convention was held in our church. On June 6, 1962, the church voted to borrow \$65,000, issuing sixty-five \$1,000 notes at a rate of 5%, to finance the new heating and air conditioning systems to redecorate the church and to finance the parsonage. In 1963, the Day and Night Woman's Missionary Society observed the 75th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union with a variety of programs. The youth organizations also had several activities celebrating their 50th anniversary. On May 12, 1963, the new parsonage located at 1436 Darbee Drive was dedicated.

After the evening service on August 30, 1964, a reception was held in the Fellowship Hall for those who were leaving the church staff Mrs. Danny Starnes, organist and secretary and Mrs. Tim Bible, financial secretary. Also introduced were the new staff members, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Whiddon, educational director, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley McCoy, minister of music.

On October 25, 1964, following the Sunday evening service, a called business meeting was held to grant 201 letters of dismissal to constitute the Manley Baptist Mission as Manley Baptist Church.

The State Training Union Convention was held at First Baptist Church on February 25-26, 1965. To meet the need for a new organ for the auditorium, an organ fund was started on July 8, 1965, in honor of or as a memorial to individuals.

The first kindergarten program for First Baptist Church began September 26, 1966. On November 6, 1966, the church voted to purchase the John Bible and Russell Higgins property adjoining the church property for the price of \$32,000.

In 1967, the day Women's Missionary Society with Mrs. Horace Hale, president, honored the following as long-standing (45 years or more) members Mrs. WA Grigsby, 75 years, Mrs. W C Luttrell 73 years, Mrs. J W Paxton, 53 years, Mrs. Estel Harmon and Mrs. Austin Fanning 51 years, Mrs. Robert Bales, Sr. 50 years, Mrs. J H Loving and Mrs. R M Carter, 48 years, Mrs. Elgin Pope and Mrs. Urb Miller, 47 years. Mrs. Doyle Wallace and Mrs. T Thayer, 45 years. The Woman's Missionary Society presented, as a lasting tribute to their members of longest standing, a check for \$1,334.80 to Rev Glen Toomey

associational missionary to help erect an office and conference building for the Nolachucky Association. At the regular business session on Wednesday, July 10, 1968, following prayer meeting, copies of the June financial reports were given out and showed that the final \$1,000 note had been paid on the Bible property adjoining the church and that the church was free of debt.

On Sunday, February 16, 1969, there were no services due to snow. In 1969, the church voted to give \$3,000 (over the period of a year) to help pay for the new Nolachucky Baptist Association offices on Morris Boulevard.

DR. WILLIAM L. PALMER began his pastorate in May of 1969 and served until 1981. Dr. William L. Palmer was born August 17, 1921, near Hartman in Prowers County, Colorado. Dr. Palmer is a graduate of the following: Senior High School and Brown's Business College in La Junta, Colorado, Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, with a Bachelor of Arts (magna cum laude) Master of Arts and Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina where he continued studying until he earned the Doctor of Ministry which was conferred on him at the commencement exercises on Saturday morning, May 10, 1975.

At the monthly meeting on Wednesday evening, July 16, 1969, Mr. Tom Benning informed the church that the Television Cable Company had offered the use of the Public Service Channel 8 to our church at no cost except for the camera, modulator and other inside equipment that would cost about \$2,500. The first television program was broadcast in black and white on July 27, 1969. This program was aired on Channel 3, Cable TV during a revival. Charles Skaggs operated the stationary camera during this first broadcast.

During the regular business meeting on April 15, 1970, the church voted to buy an additional parcel of land adjoining Harrell Park at a cost of \$12,540. On Wednesday, December 2, 1970, the church called Rev. Tim Sumners of Memphis, Tennessee, to be assistant pastor and minister of youth. On January 13, 1971, the church voted to accept the gift of a missionary home (to be used by missionaries on furlough) from Mrs. D M. Wallace and Mr. John Wallace and to approve the purchase of an activities bus.

Rev Brunelle "Bud" Phillips Jr. (the church's Minister of Music) was ordained on Sunday, June 20, 1971. During the business meeting of September 2, 1971, approved a recommendation from the Property Committee with the approval of the deacons to purchase property adjacent to our church, the former Doctor's Hospital, at a total cost of \$35,000 to be paid in four years.

On July 2, 1972, a Rev Robert Smiddy of Knoxville was called to be Minister of Education/Church Administrator. During the business meeting of July 19, 1972, the church approved a recommendation from the deacons and church council to purchase lot 6A behind the pastorium at \$1,000 per year for 5 years at 5% interest on the unpaid balance.

On August 14, 1972, Mrs. Shirley Wallace was hired to serve as secretary to Dr William Palmer. On Sunday, September 10, 1972, First Baptist Church began a bus ministry that lasted several years. On Wednesday, March 14, 1973, the church voted to authorize moving the sanctuary organ from the choir loft to the floor on the east side of the sanctuary at no cost to the church. The Deaf Ministry was begun in July of 1973 when

Pat Bryant was hired as our Minister to the Deaf. He served for two years and began a sign-language class for interested members. One of his students, Mrs. Paula Wallace, became our Director for the Deaf Ministry in September of 1975.

In September of 1975, two new ministers joined the church staff. Rev Perry Scott came to serve as minister of music from the First Baptist Church of Hialeah, Florida. His wife Anne served as our church organist. Rev Clay Krummel came to serve as Minister of Education. His wife Betty served as part-time director of children's work.

On Sunday, December 14, 1975, First Baptist Church was recognized by Carson-Newman College as having completed their pledge of \$100,000. This is the largest gift ever received from any church during Carson-Newman's Penny-A-Day Campaign to provide funds to construct the Dougherty Science Center. The church continued to support the Development Campaign with gifts of \$30,000 for three more years.

On January 30, 1976, the church received \$28,000 from the State Highway Department of North Carolina because Interstate 70 took a portion of the Ridgecrest lot and cottage.

The First Baptist Church began color television broadcasting on Sunday, April 3, 1977, after Allied Sound/Visual Education of Nashville installed a \$134,000 system that included two Plumbicon broadcast cameras, Color Tran lights, and recording capabilities. Eldon K. Sparrow, the Vice-President of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission supervised the installation. Nine people were required to operate the system, and a team of 28 members was trained. The televised services were broadcast on Channel 8 Cable on Sunday mornings and evenings.

In 1977, a 42-rank Reuters pipe organ was installed in the 1913 Sanctuary. The formal dedication service for the \$106,000 installation was held on Sunday, June 19, 1977, with guest organist Don Hustad.

On Sunday, August 20, 1978, the 150th Anniversary of First Baptist Church was celebrated with Homecoming services and the publication of History of First Baptist Church, researched and written by Juanita Loving.

DR. IAN WALKER was called as pastor in May of 1982 and served until 1992. Dr. Walker was born on September 30, 1932, in Scotland to Rev. and Mrs. James Walker, who served as missionaries in Africa for 29 years. The first seventeen years of his life were spent in South Africa. Dr. Walker was a graduate of Baylor University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Luther Rice Baptist Seminary. He has served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

On Easter Sunday, March 27, 1983, First Baptist Church voted to build a new sanctuary - the Fifth House of Worship. The sacrificial giving began on May 21, 1983, as the campaign was launched to finance this construction. Although the official vote to construct a new sanctuary was passed in 1983 a Planning Committee was appointed in 1982. Twelve members served on this Committee with Lynn Dawson, Chairman, Lelia Gray, Vice-Chairman, and Carolyn Quarles, Secretary. Following a thorough analysis by the Planning Committee of the existing programs and the facilities needed for the future ministries of First Baptist Church, Gilleland & Associates, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee, drew a master plan. This proposed master plan consisted of three phases. Phase I included a new worship center for 1,200 (including the choir), an office complex, and a

music suite at an estimated cost, \$2,860,000. Phase II was the remodeling of the 1913 Sanctuary and the 1952 Educational Building. Phase III would be a Christian Activities Center. John T. and Kathryn Bible were appointed in the spring of 1983 to serve as Campaign Directors for the Capital Stewardship Steering Committee. "Forward in Bold Commitment" was launched July 8, 1983. The plan was to raise \$3,000,000 during this four-week campaign. A banquet was held at Walters State Community College on Sunday, August 7, 1983, at 6:30 pm for over 700 church members. This served as the inspirational climax of this four-week campaign. Over 300 members served on various committees and teams. In August of 1983, a Capital Stewardship Follow-Up Committee was appointed and served until 1988. Co-Directors were Bryan and Jean Sanders and Bob and Peggy Bible. The Building Committee, under the Chairmanship of Bob Bible, served from 1983 to 1988. Other members were John T. Bible, Lynn Dawson and Dot Gibson. Alan Guy (1983-1984), Carolyn Quarles, John D. Wallace, and Henry Young. By the first anniversary of the Capital Stewardship Program, August 26, 1984, a total of \$952,212.47 had been given. Dr. Raymond DeArmond delivered a message entitled "The Time is Now" at this special celebration service on August 26. The scale model of Phase 1 was unveiled. During that same year, Mrs. Virginia Myers was hired as the pastor's secretary. She is still on the staff as of 2023 serving as the longest running employee in First Baptist history.

In July 1984, the Blossom Shop located across from the 1913 building was purchased by the Eversole family to be used as the new Youth Center. This would be in memory of Mr. William Eversole. The Center has become the main area of our Student Ministries.

The contract for the construction of this, approximately, 50,985 square foot Fifth House of Worship was awarded to the Catron Construction Company of Morristown. On April 21, 1985, the groundbreaking for the Fifth House of Worship was held. Tom Madden, Executive Director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention was the guest speaker for the two morning services. Dinner-on-the-grounds was served to all in attendance following the 10:55 a.m. service. By July of 1986, the total receipts had reached \$2,220,279.55. On Sunday, July 27, 1986, 450 members gathered at 6:30 pm in the partially completed building to worship. On July 5, 1987, the Wallen-Purkey Sunday School Class presented a check for \$60,000 to Bryan Sanders and Bob Bible, Co-Directors of the Capital Stewardship Follow-Up Committee. This check covered the actual cost of construction of the Wallen-Purkey Sunday School Classroom in the new worship facility. The class members also purchased the chairs and furnishings for this room. Many groups through the week use this classroom for church reception. This room and the Church Parlor may be thrown "en suite" for a large room.

Over 500 attended the laying of the cornerstone on Sunday, August 30, 1987. That evening, Dr. Ian H C Walker, Pastor, delivered the first sermon in the unfinished setting of the new sanctuary. The last Sunday evening worship service in the 1913 Sanctuary was held on November 29, 1987. There were 1,011 presents at the first Sunday morning service on December 6, 1987, in our Fifth House of Worship. The television system was moved to our new facilities, and through the years the system has continued to be upgraded with the addition of new cameras and other equipment. On July

31, 1988, a report was given that 600 families had given \$3,529,465.06. By that time, our total expenses had reached \$5,072,467.11. A total of \$1,613,814 was borrowed in addition to the funds contributed. The theme used was "Not equal giving, but equal sacrifice". The formal dedication of our Fifth House of Worship was on Sunday, November 13, 1988.

REV. RANDY C. DAVIS became the pastor on August 2, 1992, and served until 2001. Rev Davis was born on January 6, 1957, in Mobile, Alabama. He grew up in Satsuma, Alabama where he graduated from Satsuma High School. Rev Davis is a graduate of William Carey College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He earned a doctorate degree from seminary during his tenure at First Baptist Church. Rev Davis, or Brother Randy as he preferred to be called, was active in local community affairs, in the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention He also served on the Board of Trustees for Carson-Newman College.

Soon after coming to Morristown, Brother Randy felt a burden for the Church to be free from the remaining building debt (principal and interest). A 40-day period of prayer and fasting was begun by some of our concerned members. A target date of December 6, 1992, was set for "Miracle Day" to raise the funds necessary to clear our debt. A total of \$377,753.94 was given on this special day. During the remainder of December, another \$52,431 was contributed toward our debt. "A Celebration of Building Program Completion" was held on Sunday, February 7, 1993, when the burning of our note took place. First Baptist Church was debt free for the first time in almost ten years.

In the quarterly business meeting in May of 1993, the church voted to purchase the Payne Property located across the street from First Baptist Church on Main at a cost of \$25,000, to hire a consultant to design a master plan for the long range planning of the church and to call a full-time staff member as an Executive Associate Pastor for ministry and coordination.

In June of 1993, Jim Mathis was called to serve as Associate Pastor and Administrator. He served in this capacity until 2002. At a called business meeting on August 1, 1993, the church voted to purchase property located on Jackson Street running on the north side of the railroad tracks until it joins property currently owned by First Baptist Church. The property was purchased from Charles Gardner for a cost of \$23,000 with \$3,000 of that being spent on an acquisition study. The purchase of the property was to allow for church growth. In 2003, this property was part of the parking lot across from the church on Main Street.

During the later part of 1993, the Higher Ground Media Ministry upgraded its equipment to begin broadcasts on WBIR Channel 10 in Knoxville This was made possible through the efforts of Mike Hill, the manager of the local cable company. At this time Glen Cragwell, a Carson-Newman professor who taught television production and broadcast was hired to manage the television ministry. Broadcasts on Channel 10 began in 1994 and continued for several years until network sports programming eliminated the broadcasts.

Recognizing that God's servants need ministry also, "The Prophet's Chamber was built by members of First Baptist Church for the sole purpose of encouraging ministers of

the Gospel a place for rest, deep spiritual renewal and encouragement. Located in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains at our lake property- Harrell Park.

In the spring of 1994, the Long-Range Planning Committee presented a list of priorities for The Master's Plans for First Baptist Church. Phase I of the plan included the projects of a Fellowship Hall (seating 500), the Eversole Youth Building, 1950 Educational Building Renovation and 1913 Sanctuary Restoration. Phase II was to build a Christian Life Center Phase III was to upgrade Harrell Park and build a Conference Center. The church voted to accept this list of priorities.

In June of 1995, the church voted that Myrick & Batson be appointed the Design/Build Team for the new Fellowship Hall and Youth Building remodeling. On October 1, 1995, the church voted to proceed with the remodeling of the Youth Building and the construction of a new Fellowship Hall. In 1996, the dedication of the First Baptist Student Center (Eversole Youth Building) was held.

Christmas of 1997 was a special time in the life of First Baptist Church when the music ministry, under the direction of Jon Marks, Minister of Music, produced its first annual Living Christmas Tree. Each year this event provides a meaningful Christmas experience for the community.

In November of 1998, the dedication of the Fellowship Hall was held during a Sunday evening service in that facility. In October of 1998, Tim Thompson was called as Minister to Preschool and Children. Pastor Tim continues to lead our preschool and children's ministry as more children are involved in its programs and activities. In September of 1999, the AWANA Program for children ages 3 through Grade 6, was started. Many children have made professions of faith because of this program.

In May of 1999, the church voted to approve the Harrell Park Master Plan and to pursue the completion of the plan. However, no additional funds were allocated at this time for the completion of the project.

On January 26, 2000, the church voted to pursue the option of locating a new structure for the children and preschool consistent with the Master Plan. In May of 2001, the First Baptist Church voted that a new Preschool and Children's Building be constructed for preschoolers and children.

REV. JAMES MARK "JIM" HARMELING became the Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church in May of 2002. He was born in Texas and grew up in Michigan but spent most of life in Southern California. He has degrees from Wheaton College, Talbot School of Theology, and The Master's Seminary.

In September of 2002, Danny Georges returned to the church to serve as Minister of Pastoral Care and Senior Adults. In October of 2002, church members received the first issue of Viewpoint, a monthly magazine that features articles of interest concerning the activities and ministries of First Baptist Church. Under Rev Harmeling's leadership, our church continued to foster a big sister relationship with Pastor William Burton and the Hispanic church La Gran Comisi3n that had about 120 attendees from 15-20 countries.

In February of 2003, Doug Malousis was called to be the Director of Media. Under his leadership, the first Bible School video was produced to share the activities and excitement of Bible School with the church family. In August of 2003, the media ministry began to make CDs of the worship services available immediately following the 10:30

service. In 2003, John Walker was called to be the Pastor of Students and began several new programs to reach out to all students.

In 2003, the International Mission Board sent Pastor Jim Harmeling, Children/Preschool Pastor Tim Thompson and several others to Rasem, Croatia to lead a pastor's conference, teach about children's Bible study and to work with missionaries, Ben and Nancy Husk.

On Sunday, August 24, First Baptist Church celebrated its Bicentennial with a great Homecoming Day with Dr. Ian and Esther Walker leading in worship and Sunday School. The day concluded with a concert by Jane Greene (Johnson) Goforth, the Talley Trio, and Greater Vision who are all part of our church fellowship.

In 2004, mission trips were taken by the pastor and members of the church to Venezuela, Kenya and Brazil. Because of the emphasis on missions, a Missions Wall was created between the sanctuary and the fellowship hall and has since been expanded into a Missions Hall with maps, pictures and displays featuring missionaries associated with the church and mission activities with which the church is involved.

In June of 2005, Joel Young was called to serve the church as Church Administrator. In September of 2005, a group of twelve individuals, coordinated by Cheryl Seale, went on a mission trip to Bulgaria in September to work with Paul and Judy Ridgeway. In January of 2006, Don Beach was called to serve as Pastor of Adult Education and Discipleship. In February of 2006, the church's new website debuted and enabled people to download sermons, receive newsletters online, look at the church calendar and read blurbs about upcoming events.

In March of 2006, a group of church members went on a mission trip to Kenya with Dale and Mandy Schneitman leading a conference for educators and Pastor Jim Harmeling leading a conference for pastors. In June of 2006, John Greene was called to serve as Pastor of Worship.

DR. DEAN HAUN was called as Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church on October 28, 2007, He and his identical twin brother, David, were born in Knoxville, Tennessee. When Dean was a senior at Doyle High School his dad challenged him and his brother to attend a Campus Crusade Youth Conference. It was at that conference that Dean repented of his sins and trusted in Christ as his Savior. Six months later, at another Campus Crusade for Christ Bible Conference, Dean sensed the Lord's call to preach the Gospel. He was licensed in February of 1974 and ordained in 1976. Dean received a Bachelor of Arts from Cumberland College with a major in Religion and Pastoral Counseling in May of 1977. He received a Master of Divinity (with an emphasis in Preaching) from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas in 1981. He received a Doctor of Ministries in Expository Preaching through Trinity Theological Seminary in 1998, where he had the privilege of learning under the great expositor Dr. Stephen Olford. Brother Dean has served churches in Kentucky, Texas, south Florida, Tennessee, and Georgia. Brother Dean is an avid Big Orange fan and especially loves UT football and basketball. He also loves the mountains and four-wheel off-road driving. He and his wife, Pam, have a great love for Israel and have been on numerous trips to the Holy Land.

In 2007 a new mission house - "Lydia's Home" - was purchased at 2400 Elgerlotte Lane. The home provides for our Missionaries a place of refuge, rest and retreat.

In 2008, after a series of sermons by Pastor Dean Haun on "Rebuilding the Walls", God led the members of First Baptist Church to give the money in 52 days to renovate the sanctuary and to do necessary repairs and updating to the church plant. On October 5, 2008, First Baptist Church celebrated its 205th Anniversary with the first service in the newly renovated sanctuary to give God the glory for what He is doing in our church!

Located near the church in the downtown area in 2010, the church opened "First Love on Main". This facility offers free dental care, flu shots, allergy clinic, chiropractic care and medical screening for high blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol. It also offers a program to help the families of the developmentally disabled obtain medical equipment and supplies.

2012 was the organizing of another local outreach ministry as "Baptist Builders". Their mission is to help with everyday maintenance of community members' homes that may not be able to afford this type of work.

Teatime Friends is an outreach program established by FBCM's Baptist Women Aware (BWA)It partners BWA volunteers with participants in the Pregnancy Crisis Center on Wednesday nights at the church's main campus for food, fellowship and Bible study on Truth as well as through one-to-one ministering throughout the week.

The Harrell Park Cherokee Lake facility received a new meeting facility with a large area for many kinds of meetings, kitchen facilities, rest rooms, storage and media room. This facility was named the Loving-Gray Pavilion for former members Miss Juanita Loving and J.D and Lelia Gray,

3:16 TV Expansion of our Higher Ground Ministry will now accommodate anyone from around the world who has access to Charter Cable, MUS Fiber, local radio or the internet. Our TV Channel (3:16 TV) can be seen every Sunday from 8 a.m. until midnight. 2013 expanded worship services to three on Sunday mornings with "theWAY" Contemporary Service. There were also two morning Sunday Schools.

An outreach "Biker Church" was opened in 2013 with service on Thursday nights and Sunday's meeting in "The Crossing" building located adjacent to the main church. As our Anniversary Year 210 came to a close, FBC completed and opened a 15-year dream for a new Children's Building. Our church was excited about this new opportunity to expand outreach and to influence current and future generations of God's greatest blessings to come and grow in their faith becoming strong, healthy, vibrant followers of Christ.

In Proverbs, the writer states that where there is no vision, the people perish. At First Baptist Church of Morristown, there has always been a vision and as the church celebrates its 220th year, the vision for its future is continuing to be revealed by God.

Over two centuries is a very long time, spanning two and one-half lifetimes and the events of much of our country's history. It is hard to realize that Morristown could not even be termed a community when the church began. It was the best watering spot where the east and west trails met. The First Baptist Church has grown with the locale as Morristown has become a full-fledged city, so has First Baptist Church expanded from a

log cabin on North Cumberland Street with 18 members in 1803 to an imposing edifice on West Main Street with almost 2000 resident members

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The references for this history were taken from the following:

Burnett, J.J. *Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers*, Nashville, Tenn. Press of Marshall & Bruce Company, 1919

Loving, Juanita *First Baptist Church, Morristown, Tennessee 1803-1976* Morristown, Tenn. 1976

McKinley, Jane *Moments in Our History* Morristown, Tenn First Baptist Church 1993.

Other church records, documents, newspaper articles, and written and oral accounts of church events.

Rev. Clay Krummel, Church Historian until his death in 2022.

Melissa Krummel Wheeler, Church History Team Chairperson

Highlights of FBC's History

- **1803** Bethel South of the Holston (Bethel South) was organized out of Bent Creek Baptist Church, now Whitesburg Baptist Church, on August 24. There were thirteen charter members (including "Phillip and Phanne, Negroes") with Rev. Isaac Barton as the first pastor. Later the church became known as First Baptist Church of Morristown
- **1815** The church, in conjunction with the Holston Association, constituted a missionary society after being challenged by Luther Rice at an associational meeting
- **1818** Head of Richland Church was started
- **1819** Friendship Baptist Church was started
- **1825** Blackwells Branch Church was started
- **1828** Bethel South and several other churches formed the Nolachucky Association
- **1831** The first school in the area was begun in the Bethel South Building. The last teacher in the log church, Rev. William Rogers became the first president of Mossy Creek College (Carson Newman College)
- **1831** Rev HO Taylor became the pastor and incorporated following in the doctrine of Bethel South, the depravity of the human mind free will, free grace, general atonement and the obligation of the churches to give the gospel to every creature.

- **1836** Rev H W Taylor was the first pastor to receive a salary - \$50.00 for the year.
- **1846** The first Sunday School was organized at Bethel South
- **1853** A new frame church building was erected on the east side of North Cumberland Street across from the location of the original log church that was occupied from 1803-1853
- **1855** The city of Morristown was formed with Bethel South being within its boundaries
- **1858** Bethel South officially changed its name to Morristown Baptist Church with the name First Baptist Church of Morristown appearing in the Nolachucky Association for the first time in 1859
- **1863-Fall 1865** The church met infrequently and no known records were kept of that period, however, during this time the African American members of the church established their own church retaining the name Bethel. During the War between the States, Morristown was a village of sharply divided loyalties when neighbors and family members were often on opposing sides, and the church was converted into a hospital for the use of both armies.
- **1867** Reagan High School (the first African American high school in the area) was started in the church building by a Professor Wilson
- **1868-1871** The church, along with the Methodists and Presbyterians, met in the Southern Methodist Church (now First United Methodist Church) building for a combined Sunday School with the Baptists having a worship service once a month. At that time the church had no building; it had been converted into a hospital during the war years.
- **1870** IP Haun and Mark M Murrell, with an unknown third gentleman, were sitting under a tree located on the property of today's First Baptist Church when they created Hamblen County
- **1871** First Baptist Church moved into a new red brick building at the church's present location on Jackson Street between Main and First North.
- **1875** Rev OC Pope became pastor and for two years edited the Baptist Reflector in Morristown, later to become the official state newspaper of Tennessee Baptists.
- **1881** The property on North Cumberland Street was sold to the Methodist Church for the purpose of establishing Morristown College, the first institute of higher education for African- Americans at that time.
- **1883** The Foreign Missionary Society was organized at First Baptist Church five years before the Southern Baptist Convention organized the Women's Missionary Union
- **1896** The church had a membership of 205 and the church property was valued at \$12,000.
- **1902** Mr. MP Jarnigan conveyed the Jarnigin Cemetery Property to the trustees of First Baptist Church.
- **1906** The name of the Foreign Mission Society was changed to the Ladies Aid and Missionary Society because the society gave as much for Home Missions and for church aid as for Foreign Missions

- **1913** The church purchased the lot at the southeast corner of Main and Jackson Streets (adjacent to the red brick church) for the purpose of constructing a new yellow brick building which is currently known as the 1913 building
- **1913** Ninety-seven new believers were baptized in sixty-five minutes in the Holston River in the presence of 5,000 witnesses
- **1913** An M.P Moller Pipe-organ was installed in the First Baptist Church at a cost of \$6500 and was at that time one of the largest and best church pipe organs in the South
- **1913** The church was given its first grand piano by FA Witt, son of the founder of a local company that built wagons, hacks, etc. The piano was brought from New York to Johnson City by train and then to Morristown by wagon. That piano can be seen in the Fellowship Hall foyer today. This was also the first grand piano in this area.
- **1918** On Sunday morning, November 24, the new church building was dedicated with special guest speakers, a church roll call and a necrology service.
- **1922** Reverend Billy Sunday held a citywide six-week crusade in Morristown's first tobacco warehouse. It was recorded that 139 people were baptized into the membership of First Baptist Church as a result of that crusade.
- **1924** Dr. Harvey Deere published the first issue of The Weekly Bulletin to be distributed to church members.
- **1931** The Ham-Ramsey Revival was held for six weeks during November and December. Dr. Mordecai Ham preached in our church on December 21, nineteen people made professions of faith that day.
- **1934** The Regional Sunday School Convention was held at First Baptist Church; the church was commended for "a most splendid job" in the Baptist and Reflector.
- **1938** The Silver Anniversary of the 1913 building was observed with a five-day celebration including several former pastors speaking.
- **1939** The 1913 auditorium was redecorated, moving the choir loft and baptistry.
- **1940** The Woman's Missionary Union State Convention was held at First Baptist Church.
- **1943** The church purchased the lot on the north side of the church property for future growth.
- **1947** Dr B.B McKinney, noted hymn writer, led the music in a revival with Rev. Clyde Wydick preaching. Forty-nine members were accepted into the church. BB McKinney left Morristown to lead Music Week at Ridgecrest and was killed in an automobile wreck leaving Ridgecrest.
- **1947** On Sunday morning, December 28, Rev. Clyde Wydick pastor, suffered a heart attack in the pulpit but managed to complete his sermon, give the invitation and receive a new member upon profession of faith. He died on January 2, 1948. During his twenty-seven-month ministry at FBC, 406 people joined the church.
- **1948** Miss Lexie Hurley established the first church library at First Baptist Church.
- **1948** Buffalo Trail Baptist Mission was started.
- **1949** First Baptist Church built the Mamie Jackson Cottage at Ridgecrest to accommodate the great number of church members attending conferences there.

- **1949** Camp Carson opened in Cocke County with FBC being instrumental in soliciting funds and making plans for the camp.
- **1949** The church purchased the three remaining lots north of the church properties, the church then owned all of the property from the corner of Main and Jackson Streets to the corner of 1st North and Jackson Streets.
- **1950** Groundbreaking was held for the construction of a new educational building on July 9, 1950.
- **1951** A new pastorium was built on the corner of West 2nd North and McFarland Streets.
- **1951** The laying of the cornerstone for the new educational building was held, the cornerstone contained numerous items including a Bible, a list of men in service at the time and a handful of the first soil turned for the building.
- **1953** On August 21, First Baptist Church celebrated its 150th Anniversary. The church had 1693 members at this time.
- **1953** Buffalo Trail Baptist Mission was organized into the Buffalo Trail Baptist Church.
- **1954** Hillcrest Baptist Church was started
- **1955** The church voted on Wednesday, April 20, to accept a deed to a two-acre plot of land on Cherokee Lake in Grainger County given by Mr. Ed Harrell to be used as a church park.
- **1956** First Baptist Church acquired adjoining property to the west of the educational building and another lot on West Main Street through donations and purchases. The addition made the church a U-shaped property with two frontages on West Main Street and the base of the U on West 1st North Street.
- **1958** The church began a radio ministry with borrowed equipment from Station WCRK.
- **1961** The cornerstone of the 1913 building was opened. It contained numerous items including a Bible, one page on the History of the First Hundred Years of the Church, and a program of the centennial of the church and cornerstone laying.
- **1961** Six additional lots were purchased adding 2 ½ acres to Harrell Park.
- **1961** A new parsonage was constructed on Darbee Drive.
- **1964** Manley Baptist Church was constituted.
- **1966** The first kindergarten program for First Baptist Church was begun.
- **1966** The church purchased the Bible-Higgins property adjoining the church property on West Main.
- **1969** First Baptist Church had its first television broadcast in black and white on Cable Channel 3 with Charles Skaggs operating a stationary camera. This was the humble beginning of a major outreach program for the church.
- **1971** The church accepted the gift of a missionary home to be used by missionaries on furlough.
- **1971** The first activities bus was purchased by the church 1971 First Baptist Church purchased the property adjacent to our church, the former Doctor's Hospital, leaving only one parcel of land on West Main Street not included in church property.

- **1973** The Deaf Ministry was begun by Pat Bryant, who was hired as Minister to the Deaf.
- **1977** First Baptist Church began color television broadcasting with two cameras, television lighting and recording capabilities.
- **1977** A new 42-rank Reuters pipe organ was installed. Guest organist Don Hustad gave a concert for the formal dedication.
- **1978** The 150th Anniversary of First Baptist Church was celebrated with special Homecoming Services and the publication of History of First Baptist Church by Juanita Loving.
- **1985** Groundbreaking was held for the Fifth House of Worship for First Baptist Church.
- **1987** The laying of the cornerstone was held on August 30, 1988. The formal dedication of our Fifth House of Worship was on Sunday, November 13.
- **1992** December 6 was the date set for "Miracle Day" for an offering to allow the church to be free from building debt. A total of \$377,753.94 was given that day - a miracle that allowed the church to be debt free for the first time in almost 10 years.
- **1993** The church purchased several properties between West Main Street and the railroad track to allow for more parking and future church expansion.
- **1994** First Baptist Church voted to approve "The Master's Plans"; Phase I included building a Fellowship Hall, remodeling building across the street from the church for a student center (Eversole Youth Building), renovation of the 1952 Educational Building and restoring the 1913 Sanctuary.
- **1996** The First Baptist Youth Center (Eversole Youth Building) was dedicated.
- **1997** The first Living Christmas Tree was presented under the direction of Jon Marks, Minister of Music.
- **1998** The new Fellowship Hall was dedicated in a Sunday evening service held in that facility.
- **2001** On May 13, the First Baptist Church voted to build a Preschool and Children's Building.
- **2003** First Baptist Church celebrated its 200th Anniversary (Homecoming) on August 24 with Dr. Ian Walker leading in worship and his wife, Esther, in Sunday School. Homecoming Day concluded with a concert by Jane Greene Johnson, the Talley Trio, and Greater Vision with all members of the church.
- **2003** The International Mission Board sent Pastor Jim Harmeling. Children/Preschool Pastor Tim Thompson and several others to Rasem, Croatia to lead a pastor's conference.
- **2004** Mission trips were taken by the pastor and several members of the church to Venezuela and Brazil.
- **2005** A group of twelve (12) individuals, coordinated by Cheryl Seale, went on a mission trip to Bulgaria in September to work with Paul and Judy Ridgeway.
- **2006** A group of twelve church members went on a mission trip to Bulgaria in September
- **2007** Pastor Dean Hawn and his wife Pam were called to FBCM.

- **2008** After a series of sermons by Pastor Dean Haun on "Rebuilding the Walls", First Baptist Church led by God gave the monies in 52 days to renovate the sanctuary and to do necessary repairs and updating to the church plant.
- **2008** First Baptist Church celebrated its 205th Anniversary on October 5th with the first service in the newly renovated sanctuary to give God the glory for what He is doing in our church!
- **2010** "First Love on Main" opened as a free dental clinic offering other services to the community.
- **2010** J. Harrell Smith Bi-vocational Training began
- **2011** God's warehouse began.
- **2012** Harvest of Israel began shipping containers to the Messianic believers of Israel.
- **2012** Baptist Builders organized to help with everyday maintenance of community members' homes.
- **2012** Teatime Friends outreach program established to help with the Pregnancy Crisis Center.
- **2012** New meeting facilities built at Harrell Park as the Loving-Gray Pavilion.
- **2012** 3:16 TV expansion of the Higher Ground Ministry.
- **2013** Addition of "theWay" Contemporary worship service on Sunday mornings.
- **2013** "Biker Church" begins at "The Crossing" building.
- **2013** Children's Building completed and opened.
- **2013** The 210th Anniversary and Homecoming held on October 13, 2013.
- **2015** Harvest of Israel Tours was founded.
- **2018** Mid-West Food Bank established at God's Warehouse distributing food across the East Tennessee area.
- **2018** Several ministries to local jails began
- **2020-2021** The world-wide COVID-19 pandemic touched our area.
- **2023** New Residency/Intern ministry established.
- **2023** The 220th Anniversary and Homecoming was held throughout the month of September.
- **2023** What is next????!!