

JUBILEE MOMENT #1 1843-1868

On November 18, 1843 the following eleven people led by God felt a need for a place of worship in this community and met together with Elders J. J. Salmon and Benjamin Roberts for the purpose of constituting a church. John R. Scott, Rebecca Scott, Bolling Hall, James M. Hall, Mary Hall, Mary A. Hall, Elizabeth Hall, Rebecca Hall, Julia B. Palmer, Charlotte Shuffield, and Mary Pulley all handed over their letters for membership to Br. Salmon who read the proposed constitution and covenant and believing all to be orthodox, proceeded to pronounce them a regular constituted Baptist Church according to the gospel. He then gave the right hand of fellowship to all members, and they to each other. The Baptist Church of Christ at Black Springs was now a reality.

No mention is made of where the church body met for services until in Sept. of 1846 when Michael Graybill donated three acres of land for a church building and school house. The church building was completed in April of 1847.

Church conference was an important part of the church decorum. Only male members were allowed to attend, and strict rules regarding non-attendance were kept. Failure to attend without a deemed legitimate excuse was cause for dismissal from the church. While all were welcomed to attend services and accept the saving grace of our Lord, there were limitations in participation not only along the lines of race but gender also. Thankfully these lines have been erased in our present day church body.

In conference during this 25 year period business such as adopting of reading of previous meetings minutes, petitioning of membership to the Washington Baptist Association, examining of membership list from quarterly to yearly, reporting of treasurer of expenses, moving the pulpit from the south side of the building to the east end of the building, paying for the care of the church to be \$3.00 per quarter were all passed. From Aug. 1862 thru May 1863 the names of three men lost in the war were listed, Nathaniel Russell, Jesse Russell, and Henry Russell. It is not noted as to the relationship to each other of these three men.

Also during this 25 year period some of the offenses which were noted as disciplinary infractions were, using profane language, stealing and killing a shoat, failing to attend three conferences, drinking ardent spirits to intoxication, visiting gambling houses and participating in the game of billiards, and even one father asking action to be taken on his daughter for unchristian conduct. These offenses were addressed according to the covenant which states "walk together in brotherly love, exercise Christian care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish or entreat one another as occasion may require." Offenders were given the opportunity to repent for their failing and then

were extended the right hand of fellowship again. This example of the knowledge that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” was evident in this early congregation.

During this period there were eleven pastors who served in the pulpit. Each was only hired for a one year period with the understanding that their calling for another year would be examined prior to the year end, with either the church or pastor having the option to renew. Membership grew to 85 on roll in this time period.

As we prepare for the 175 year celebration a quote from the 100 year celebration still stands for this Body of Christ, “For yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision, but today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.” (Author unknown)

CHURCH COVENANT

Having as we trust been brought by divine grace to receive the Lord Jesus Christ and by the influence of the Holy Spirit to give ourselves to him, we do now proceed to give ourselves to one another by the will of God, to this end uniting heartily and unwaveringly in the foregoing declaration of faith we do unanimously enter with each other into the following covenant.

We will, as God shall enable us, walk together in brotherly love, exercise Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully admonish or entreat one another as occasion may require. That, so far as it may be in our power, we will visit the sick, relieve the distressed, and in our intercourse with the world, improve every opportunity which may present itself and by all other available means, seek to spread the truth of the holy religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and impress the necessity of its practical influence to their present wellbeing and future happiness. That we will not forsake the assembling ourselves together, for the purpose of prayer and religious improvements, but will constantly attend the means of grace in our church every convenient season.

So far as our heavenly Father shall assist us, and we do mutually agree to use our utmost endeavors to induce those under our care and influence to do likewise. That we will not neglect the great duty of prayer for ourselves and others. That we will endeavor to bring up such as may be at any time under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and by a pure and lovely example to win our kindred and acquaintances to the Savior to holiness and to eternal life. That we will participate in each other's joys and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear other's burdens and sorrows. That we will constantly seek divine aid to enable us to live circumspectly and watchfully in the world, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts; always keeping in mind that as each of us has upon a profession of our faith been voluntarily buried with Him in baptism wherein we are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead. So there is on us individually a special obligation to walk in newness of life. We agree to strive together for the support of a faithful evangelical ministry among us and through life amidst evil report and good report, earnestly and prayerfully seek in all things, to live to the benefit of our fellow mortals, and the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into this marvelous light.