

DEDICATED TO .....

Those whose devoted services to the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church have significantly contributed to making the **ATHENS BAPTIST CHURCH** what it is today.

#### GREETINGS

Friends, you have come to this Church; leave it not without a prayer. No man entering a house ignores him who dwells in it. This is the House of God and He is here.

Pray then to Him who loves you and bids you welcome and awaits your greeting.

Give thanks for those who in past ages built this place to His glory and for those, dying that we might live, have preserved for us our heritage.

Praise God for His gifts of beauty in painting and architecture, handicraft and music.

Ask that we who now live may build the spiritual fabric of the nation in truth, beauty, and goodness, and that as we draw near to the one Father through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we may draw nearer to one another in perfect brotherhood.

The Lord preserve thy going out and thy coming in.

Canterbury Cathedral

**FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR —**

**Rev. Frank E. S. "Ted" Reid**

It is said that a certain family was proud of its possession of George Washington's axe, which he had used on his survey trips into the Virginia wilderness. The axe has been used by the family for over two hundred years; the head had been replaced twice and the handle seven times. The question is, "without a single atom of the original axe, in what way could this be called 'George Washington's axe'?"

No one remains of the original founders of the Athens Baptist Church. In our centennial year, our oldest member is a few years shy of one hundred. Our church house dates from a few years after the founding of the congregation in its original form. Only paper and records remain; and some of our present day members trace family relationships to the founders.

**THESE THINGS REMAIN!**

The founders were committed to the concept of organized missions; and their spiritual offspring stand high among the churches of the West Virginia Baptist Convention in per capita giving to our American Baptist Mission Program. A continuing interest, study, and support of the American Baptist Boards of Ministries marks our annual School of Missions.

The congregation continues in its sense of witness and ministry to the Athens community, as members have been chosen "Athens Citizen of the Year" in a number of years. Co-operative work with other churches that marked the church's beginning continues in the present.

Any church worthy of the name, whatever the year of its foundation, counts faith in God the Father, through the grace of Jesus Christ and the present action of the Holy Spirit, as its truest beginning. That faith is witnessed by the addition of members through the public witness of believer's baptism by immersion, and by public statement of Christian experience.

A community of faith ought to engender a community of fellowship. In our diversity, there is a oneness in our congregation. A centennial does not happen by accident or with the passage of mere time. It is the product of faith and ideas in action in a believing people who work together as one body, whose head is Christ Jesus.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
A T H E N S   B A P T I S T   C H U R C H  
1887 - 1987

I am a church. I was born in 1887 when a Council of Baptist Churches of the Greenbrier Association and the Valley Association of Virginia met in the town of Concord, Mercer County, West Virginia. It was Saturday, October 29. My birthing attendants were people with such names as Campbell, Meador, Caperton, Williams, Bird, Kirtner, Reynolds and Bowling. I heard no nursery rhymes being crooned upon my arrival, rather, I was nurtured with such serious phrases as "the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired"; "man was created in Holiness"; "salvation of sinners is wholly of grace"; "the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel"; "Justification and Santification"; "the Lord's Supper is the sacred use of bread and wine." These facts being fully discussed and accepted, I was finally given a name - **The Concord Church.**

This small group also chose my first pastor, J. P. Campbell, and services were to be held on the 1st Sunday of each month. In my first year, the names of Gore, Blankenship, Oxley, Wiley, Pettrey, Sloan and Pack became familiar to those who attended services and business meetings. In 1889 a Sunday School was organized with an enrollment of over 100. I was growing in number - families of Martins, Halls, Vermillions and Goodes came with their talents and material means to help in my service to this community. They were paying my pastor \$100 per year, and voted to begin a building fund for a house of worship for me. Their goal was \$2,100, a sufficient sum to build a house of this kind. My congregation was giving \$10 to the Foreign Missions Board and \$20 to the Home Missions of the Southern Baptist Convention - per year! They were also giving as much as \$8 to the Sunday School and Bible Board.

I had my problems. Disagreements between members had to be heard. This meant calling delegates from other churches to settle these grievances. Disputes fell into some of these categories: "reports of derogatory remarks about the character of certain members"; unChristian conduct of adulterous designs in the town of Princeton"; "bad language attributed to certain members"; "show just cause for non-attendance at meetings for several months"; "members who walked 'disorderly'". These grievances sometimes took many months to settle.

I was still growing and the names of Sweeney, Snider, and Dickinson were added to my rolls. At times I had no services because the house was occupied by the Methodists, and sometimes Deacons had to seek out those who would help to pay the preacher's salary.

During the years 1889-1897 no regular system of business meetings was observed, but regular preaching on the 4th Sunday of each month was observed, both morning and evening.

In 1898, W. L. Ball succeeded Mr. Campbell as pastor. When I was first organized and named there was a church in Tazewell County, Virginia whose name was Concord. A Brother Morris was asked to contact this Concord Church and ask them to change their name so our work would be distinguished from theirs. They refused, and twelve years later (1899) I became the **ATHENS BAPTIST CHURCH.**

My missions giving by 1900 had increased to about \$30. Families of Barber, Chattin, Lilly, Crawford, Broyles, Noble, Easley and Scott helped me to reach this gift to the State Missions Board.

On January 27, 1901, I became the **NEW** Athens Baptist Church. When W. L. Ball conducted the first service here — one of "great spiritual power; some professed faith in Christ, some were reclaimed; many asked for prayer" — all marvelled that they were at last in their own house of worship. When Mr. Ball left, R. H. Bowden came and we were able to pay him the sum of \$250 per year. My people were always aware of the hardships and troubles of others and they made a contribution of \$18.04 to a citizen whose house and contents were burned.

W. L. Richardson was the pastor in 1906-1907 followed by B. P. Pennington (1908-1910); J. J. Cook (1911-1912) and T. E. Peters (1912-1917).

At some time during this period the Regular Baptist (I was Missionary) was being formed and eight of my members "broke covenant" with me and joined with them.

In 1912 my first janitor was hired, and a committee to "look over his work." Cords of wood and sometimes coal were donated by members. The next year my first music committee was appointed: Mrs. N. L. McComas, Buren Toler, and Miss Dona Meador. More families - Massie, Hylton, Caldwell, Dove, Keaton, and Peters added to my lengthening roll.

In 1914 it cost my people \$13.75 to send two delegates to the Rockcastle Associational Meeting. We owed \$54 to Missions and had only \$10 in that fund. This year we voted to adopt the policy of the Missions Committee of the United States, which was to canvass every member for money for this work. We did have faith in the future; we voted to pay our pastor \$600 this year. A stone sidewalk was laid in front of the building with plans for a concrete one later. Scholars enrolled in Sunday School numbered 185, with an average attendance of 115.

Committees were appointed to attend the lawn and to prune the fruit trees on the church ground. The care of the furnishings inside were left to the care of the Ladies Aid.

In 1917 the practice of systematic giving was adopted and budgets would be proposed based upon pledges received. Important names which I now add to my family are Bailey, White, Thompson, and Wyatt.

In 1917 (the years fly by), it is time for the Missionary Baptists to supply their pastor and his family with a parsonage. The Committee recommended property owned by R. G. Meador on Summers Street (now Broadway) which was valued at \$2,700. Mr. Meador agreed to donate \$1,450, leaving a balance of \$1,250. One-half of that amount was immediately promised by a few members of the congregation; it was purchased. Insurance on the parsonage was taken for \$2,000, but some of the pledges on the house had not been completed so the pastor's wife was asked to call on those members who were delinquent in their giving and try to collect the money. It was all paid by 1920.

W. M. Hall was my pastor from 1919-1922 and under his leadership it seems that committees for all areas of the church life were formed. On those committees were found such names as Beckett, Powell, Meadows, Hatfield, Weeks, Brammer, Thornton and Crawford.

W. L. Swope called to serve as interim pastor and was paid \$25 for each Sunday service since he had to drive from Princeton. It was decided that we would not rent out our now-empty parsonage. Rev. Swope accepted the invitation to be a full-time pastor for \$1,800, but he asked permission to teach at the local school (Plymouth District High School) and his salary was reduced to \$1,200 per year.

In 1927 my windows were screened and I was fenced in on my school side; for the first time, I advertised in the Concord College Annual. It cost \$7.50 for a  $\frac{1}{4}$  page and it was done "to help the college men and women."

The ladies kept a constant eye on me and my parsonage. They had a rod, with curtains, installed at the choir platform and a heatrola placed in the parsonage.

Rev. C. T. Hensley followed Rev. Swope in helping my church family continue in its community service. He stayed for ten years. Wells, Bibbee, Rogers, Lane, McGraw became well-known names in our growing family. The fence which had guarded me so faithfully was removed in 1933, and a kitchen and one Sunday School room were added to my structure. This year I found my program struggling to stay alive; a building program in arrears, hymnals which needed replacing, and my pastor had not been paid all year - it was October, my 46th birthday. Hope and faith have always been a part of my being and by the next year we had cleared up most of our indebtedness and we were able to give Rev. Hensley the month of August off so that he could go to the Baptist meeting in Germany. We survived, but financial problems kept all of my workers busy.

Paul Bowling came in 1941 for one year and when he left Rev. A. B. Moore (a Methodist minister) came to us for the summer. We voted to present him a gift of appreciation "not to exceed the price of a good fountain pen." The peaches at the parsonage were sold to Mrs. Hawey Wells since there was no pastor's wife to preserve them.

Scott A. Swinehart came in 1942 and Edgar Bottorff in 1945-1948. During this pastorate the brick home of Mr. Bob Davis was purchased to be used as a

parsonage. It was on State Street on the corner where the present Bank of Athens is situated. Mr. Bottorff said it was a sin to "purchase a mansion for the pastor and let the house of worship go neglected." Discussion began as to a new building - it continued.

In 1944 we were advised by a Mr. Carr that it would be to our advantage to transfer to the Southern Baptist Association. This group, he said, would be able to help us more financially than did the Northern Baptist Convention. We declined.

Rev. George Cutlip (1948-1952). During these years under the watchful eye of T. A. Beckett, I got a thorough facelift; floor, walls, all redone. My services were held at the Masonic Lodge during this time.

Our fiscal year had changed from October to October to January through December. In 1949, it was suggested by the minister that written reports be submitted by each individual or committee of responsibility. Communion cup holders on the backs of the pews were completed in 1949 - a gift from the Frances Crooks Circle.

The Mercer County Board of Education asked that we consider selling the land at the rear of our lot. Upon hearing this, the members declined to sell and later heard that a possible condemnation suit was being considered, we sought the advice of Judge Howard Jarrett. He advised us that there would have to be a precedent set and didn't think any action by the board would take place.

My appearance was changed a bit in 1951 when chimes were installed as a memorial to those who had given of themselves in the past. Later in the year I literally had the props knocked from under me when excavation was begun for classrooms, kitchen facilities and dining hall. T. A. Beckett kept us informed as to progress and spending. He was asked to name the hall - it became Fellowship Hall.

Rev. O. J. Byrnside, Sr. was the pastor for two years (1952-1954). A bulletin board was placed in my front yard; regular business meetings were held on the Wednesday after the first Sunday and became the practice of the church. "Cottage" prayer meetings were introduced. Mr. Lloyd Oxley completed the cabinets in the kitchen, donating his labor and two cabinets. During this time the names Eskew and Woodrum became well-known in the church. Our pulpit chairs were refinished and re-upholstered (two were free of charge by Pruitt Upholstering Company); a new piano and organ were purchased.

The Anderson Estate was settled and a check for \$14,000, a negotiable note for \$9,000, and a ring (\$100) was transferred to the Trustees of the church. A misunderstanding as to who would decide the use of the monies arose. It began a period of turmoil and trouble, but my people were strong; they joined hands in fellowship and loyalty to me - the church.

Leonard Bias was my interim pastor for a part of 1955; James Fogg accepted a call during this year and was with me until 1959. The practice of a Candle-Lighting Communion Service on Christmas Eve became a "looked-forward-to" event. We had a triple anniversary celebration in 1957;

250th Anniversary of American Baptist Association; 125th Anniversary of American Baptist Home Mission Society; 50th Anniversary of the American Baptist Convention.

I grew physically when another addition brought a pastor's study and two adult classrooms to my back wall. The Children's Division downstairs was also remodeled. Seaver Funeral Home gave us a red carpet runner for the hallway. Every Member Canvass was made an important activity of the year.

Rev. Bill Withers (1959-1963). During these years great emphasis was placed on the youth of the church. Our Constitution was revised. We were 75 years old in 1962 and we had a great celebration. Former ministers came for the morning worship services and the entire community joined in greeting each other at a grand reception. The names of Stewart, Sheets, Hill, and Hartman appeared on many of the church records.

When Bill Withers left, Albert Wright, a Concord College professor served us, followed by Rev. George Sublette. Mr. Charles Baxter installed railings along the front steps; a Building Council was formed to hear opinions from all areas of the church concerning a new edifice. Mr. Everett White, Treasurer, kept us fully informed as to our financial status and guided us well in many areas, weighing what we had with what we might plan to do. Miss Ora Peters kept a watchful eye on all the interior furnishings and equipment within the church. Mrs. Avon Cook was inspired to furnish the church with a silver service. Under her leadership (and many books of green stamps) this was done. Mrs. Addie Vermillion gave a lace tablecloth on which to display it.

It was in 1965 that we asked to be dismissed from the Rockcastle Association and immediately united with the Greenbrier Association — much to the disappointment of "Uncle Barty Wyatt." We found activity and challenge in this affiliation. Names to be remembered in this era include Benson, McKenzie, Pendleton, and Kessinger.

We again discussed the possibility of an associate membership in the Southern Baptist Association; the Board of Deacons recommended that we dismiss it from our immediate plans.

My building was open to Boy Scouts, private piano lessons, Brownies and Omegans. The sanctuary was carpeted; Mrs. Lane and Carl Noble made and hung new drapes in Fellowship Hall. Our midweek prayer service was discontinued, and yes, we revised our Constitution — again.

Rev. Thomas J. Goldston, Jr. (1968-1978) A beautifully carved communion table was added to our sanctuary, a memorial to Rose Lee Stein, our organist. A new communion service was dedicated from memorials made in tribute to Ora Peters, Bob Beckett, along with J. I. Scott, Beulah Crawford and Winton Mills. Mrs. Mable Linberry gave to the church a speaker system and asked that it be in remembrance of her neice, Phyllis Lilly Hinton. In 1973 my parsonage was moved because of a new bank development and Rev. Goldston and his family moved to Princeton while all the necessary adjustments of moving a house were

completed. We still had Sunday evening services, and the midweek prayer meeting was reinstated. Community Thanksgiving and Easter services were held, but soon became the responsibility of each church who wished to observe them in their own way. Visitation was still an important part of our ministry. New choir robes were purchased (one for the minister) in 1976. New hymnals were purchased by Rev. and Mrs. Goldston. A plaque honoring Mrs. Ruth Caperton Rutherford and collection plates honoring Mr. Everett White were purchased as a remembrance of both who were most generous in their affiliation with our church.

Dr. Jack McMichael brought inspiring and memorable sermons during the early part of 1979. Our present minister, Frank E. S. "Ted" Reid came in June.

I have been covered outside and carpeted inside. Janice Vermillion added to my outer look by having beautiful shrubs planted. William Hartman placed a new yard calendar on my front lawn to better identify my affiliation. Michael Kessinger and William Hartman worked to "light up" my towering steeple during the celebration of Christ's birthday, a tradition started with Rev. Bill Withers. It has been admired and enjoyed by all who passed our way. A new organ was purchased; the nursery was moved upstairs and beautiful wall murals were painted by Ricci Joyce Fuller. Mrs. Bergie Thornton initiated a fund drive for the purchase of lovely red pew cushions; she assumed half the cost herself and others gave as memorials to loved ones. Our Missions giving under the guidance of Mrs. Charlotte Reid increased greatly - a far cry from the \$30 "scraped together" in my infant years. The midweek prayer group, though very small has been led by our minister in informative, educational, and spiritual sessions, and Sunday morning sermons have given us much to think about. We have not suspended any of our services except Sunday evening; we have added some, and many of these services have been some of the most beautiful in my history.

I am 100 years old. There have been many names and places too numerous to mention who have supported me through the years I have been serving my God, my people, and my community. I have despaired in many valleys, sorrowing with my people, and I have risen to the top of the mountain in sheer joy. One does not survive by "folding up" when things are not going smoothly or by following the bright and shining path. One is strengthened when he dares to take the straight and narrow road with all of its hardships, discouragements, and defeats - and wins!

I have survived - **I AM THE CHURCH.**

## THOSE WHO SERVED

### PASTORS

1887 - 1898 J. P. Campbell  
1898 - 1902 W. L. Ball  
1902 - 1905 R. H. Bowden  
1906 - 1907 W. L. Richardson  
1908 - 1910 B. P. Pennington  
1911 - 1912 J. J. Cook  
1912 - 1917 T. E. Peters  
1918 - 1922 W. M. Hall  
1923 - 1930 L. W. Swope  
1931 - 1941 C. T. Hensley  
1941 - 1942 Paul Bowling  
1942 - 1944 S. A. Swineheart

### PASTORS

1945 - 1948 Edgar Bottorff  
1948 - 1952 George Cutlipp  
1952 - 1954 O. J. Byrnside, Sr.  
1955 Leonard Bias (Interim)  
1955 - 1959 James Fogg  
1959 - 1963 Bill Withers  
1963 - 1964 Albert Wright (Interim)  
1964 - 1966 George Sublette  
1966 - 1968 Albert Wright  
1968 - 1978 T. J. Goldston, Jr.  
1978 - Frank E. S. "Ted" Reid

### TREASURERS

J. P. Campbell  
D. L. Cottrill  
Donzie Lilly  
J. W. Bailey  
Luther Bowling  
Levi B. Scott  
Carl Bailey  
B. Rousse Cook  
Everett B. White  
Garnet C. White

### CLERKS

R. G. Meador  
J. R. Vermillion  
Elbert Vermillion  
W. J. Lilly  
Wilbur Swecney  
John H. Smith  
J. W. Bailey  
Thomas A. Cook  
Ora Peters  
L. G. Dodd  
Verlie White  
Virginia Williams White  
Lucille Goode Hartman

### DEACONS

R. G. Meador  
John Caperton  
B. H. Oxley  
L. H. Goode  
J. B. Meador  
T. W. Dickenson  
J. W. Bailey  
Judge J. A. Meadows  
Fred S. Rogers  
W. H. Caldwell  
Virgil Beckett  
Donzie Lilly  
P. C. Bibbee  
Barty Wyatt  
H. A. Wells  
Tom Beckett

### DEACONS

D. C. Pettrey  
C. D. Ashworth  
Linn Sheets  
Everett B. White  
Ralph Kirkman  
Eddie Kessinger  
Jack Oxley  
Charles Baxter  
Arthur Benson  
Henderson Wiley  
Eugene Wiley  
James Gore  
Modoc McKenzie  
Thomas Pendleton  
Willard Mills  
Eric Dye

**DEACONS**

B. Rousse Cook  
Virgil Stewart  
Ray Eskew  
Carl Bailey

**DEACONS**

Dale Dickens  
James Sartin  
John Rowe  
Jonathan Reid

**DEACONESSES**

Mrs. Vida Oxley  
Mrs. J. W. Weeks  
Mrs. Clyde White  
Mrs. Uriah Vermillion  
Mrs. J. S. Ferrell  
Mrs. Scott Rogers  
Mrs. Viola Lane  
Miss Ora Peters  
Mrs. Roy Beckett  
Mrs. Kenneth Cook  
Mrs. J. O. Stone  
Mrs. H. A. Wells  
Mrs. Ethel Martin  
Mrs. Clinton Webb  
Mrs. Maude Martin  
Mrs. Ennis Martin  
Mrs. Jennie Goode  
Mrs. Sadie Atkins

**DEACONESSES**

Mrs. Eddie Kessinger  
Mrs. Lila Coburn  
Mrs. Laraine Gore  
Mrs. Margaret Wright  
Mrs. Arthur Benson  
Mrs. Oletha Sheets  
Mrs. Barbara Pendleton  
Mrs. Ruby Mills  
Mrs. Ruth A. Sheets  
Mrs. Marie Thompson  
Mrs. Dale Dickens  
Mrs. Wendell Carr  
Mrs. Carl Noble  
Mrs. Rosalie McKenzie  
Mrs. Nina Rowe  
Mrs. Doug Fuller  
Mrs. Bergie Thornton

**TRUSTEES**

D. C. Pettrey  
B. H. Oxley  
R. G. Mcador  
Donzie Lilly  
Uriah Vermillion  
Fred S. Rogers  
Hawey A. Wells  
B. Rousse Cook  
Levi B. Scott  
D. C. Pettrey  
Barty Wyatt  
Clyde Ashworth  
Pauline Beckett  
Avon Cook  
Addie Vermillion  
Garnet C. White

**TRUSTEES**

Carl Bailey  
Clinton Webb  
Viola Lane  
Carl Noble  
Cleo Ferguson  
Richard Lilly  
Julia Wiley  
Joyce Kessinger  
Violet Bailey  
Arthur J. Benson  
Elizabeth Noble  
Jean Dickens  
Ennis Martin  
Eddie Kessinger  
Dale Dickens  
Bergie Thornton

In 1984 the Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees were merged.

\*Many of these have served multiple terms; others may have served and were not recorded.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

W. J. Lilly  
Thomas A. Cook  
Donzie Lilly  
Ora Peters  
George Bryson  
John McGrew  
Kelton Eskew  
Levi Scott  
Carl Bailey  
Barty Wyatt  
Hawey A. Wells  
Ray Eskew  
William Parker  
Clyde Ashworth  
Linn Sheets  
Charles K. Baxter

Violet Bailey  
Lucille Hartman  
Virginia White  
Janice Vermillion  
Ruby Holland  
Jack Oxley  
Cleo Ferguson  
Garnet White  
Tom Pendleton  
Arthur Benson  
Barbara Pendleton  
Eddie Kessinger  
Lyndall Wiley  
Dale Dickens  
Kathy Eskew  
Charlotte Reid

The Church School Superintendents listed above have served in one of three areas, Adult, Youth, Children's Departments.

## FINANCIAL SECRETARIES

Margaret Peters  
Verlie White  
Jean G. Hill