New pastor is 88

The new permanent pastor at Sandy Flat Baptist Church in Blowing Rock admits to not being all that new.

"I'm 88," said the Rev. Sam Silver, named this past summer to lead the 80-member congregation in the N.C. mountains. "I don't know any North Carolina pastors older."

Silver has pastored 15 churches over the course of 59 years. When he agreed to return to the ministry full time, he decided he still had the spiritual get-up-and-go required.

"I think about some of the experiences I've had in the ministry," said Silver, who was raised in Spartanburg. "It's a thrilling experience. To tell you the truth, I almost preach from memory."

Religion columnist and reporter Kathleen McClain will return.
Rev. Ivey White To Speak
Sandy Flat Baptist
Will Host Revival
From April 11 to 14

Revival services begin this Sunday, April 11 at Sandy Flat Baptist Church on Highway 221 near Blowing Rock. The special services will continue nightly through Wednesday, April 14.

The Rev. Ivey White from Lagrange, North Carolina will be the featured speaker and along with his very meaningful message there will be special music and singing at each service.

The Revival begins with the 11 a.m. morning worship hour on Sunday, April 11 and continue each evening at 7 p.m. and everyone is invited to participate.

For more information call (828) 297-1223.
The two-room school house could comfortably accommodate up to 50 or 60 students, the children of employees plus some "outsiders." The building manifested the Cone's concern for the welfare of their employees and the rural community in general. They not only were the primary support for the school, but also encouraged the county to move from a six-month time frame to an eight-month schedule, the first school anywhere in western North Carolina to do so. Among the first teachers there was Mabel Hollars, who many fondly remember as one of the most beloved second-grade teachers at Blowing Rock Elementary through the 1940s and 1950s.

During the years it was a school, the building also housed many other special events, from social gatherings to business meetings, and in 1918 the building more than once held rallies for the war effort, with speeches, songs and other patriotic events. According to one local resident who recalls those days at Sandy Flats, former President Woodrow Wilson even lent his talents to the effort to raise funds to support the war.

After school consolidation in 1928, Mrs. Cone gave permission for the building to be converted to a Baptist church, with the provision that it would revert to the estate and better equipped school was built. At the time the school was closed in 1977, enrollment stood at 47 students. The new charter membership included Lillian Bierhout, I.W. Henderson, Ruby Henderson, Ed Robbins, Evelyn Henderson, Delie Hatton, Richard Hollars, Nettie Hollars, John Teague, Mary Travis, Clay Pinnell and Rosa Green. The Rev. Ed Robbins, a former mayor of Blowing Rock, served as the pastor of the church with S.J. Bierhout appointed the clerk of the session.

The charter membership continued to make a major contribution to the Christian education of both adults and children. The young people that attend the church today make up an active Sunday school program that would make the Cones proud of the very special school they started almost 90 years ago.
The rustic charm and beauty of what was once Blowing Rock's only school facility has been maintained by the congregation of Sandy Flats Baptist Church, located just off the Blue Ridge Parkway on Highway 221. The culture of the past still echo from the halls and assembly room where a pot bellied stove still supplements the warmth generated by those who call the church home.

Structure Built By The Cone Family In 1908 As School
Sandy Flats Baptist Church Enters Its 70th Year As A House Of Worship

It’s always been a house of learning, but not always a church, or a school. In fact, it’s been both — a school and a church. Today its home to the membership of Sandy Flats Baptist Church and the days of the tiny one-room school building are but a memory.

Built in 1908 by the late “Denim King” Moses H. Cone, the building was the school for this section of Watauga County. At that time Watauga County had one small school, but because of its limited size many youngsters were unable to attend.

To Moses and Bertha Cone the fact that children did not have a school to go to was unthinkable, and a situation they quickly went about correcting. Although he built the school primarily for the children of the families that worked on his great estate, the facility was “open to all children who wished to better themselves.”

Built as a one-room building in 1908, it was converted to two rooms the following year because of the age difference of the students. The school started with one teacher, Mr. Pal Harmon, who taught grades one through seven. Half his salary was paid by the County and the other half by Mr. and Mrs. Cone. Later the teaching staff was increased to two, with one salary paid by Mr. Cone and the other by the County.

The two-room school house could comfortably accommodate up to fifty or sixty students, the children of employees plus some “outsiders.”

The building manifested the Cones’ concern for the welfare of their employees and the rural community in general. They not only were the primary support for the school, but also encouraged the county to move from a six month time frame to an eight month schedule, the first school anywhere in western North Carolina to do so.

Among the first teachers there was Mrs. Mabel Hollars, who many fondly remember as one of the most beloved second grade teachers at Blowing Rock Elementary through the forties and fifties.

The school operated approximately 20 years before a Board of Education was formed and a larger and better equipped school was built. At the time the school was closed in 1927, enrollment stood at 47 students.

During the years it was a school, the building also housed many other special events, from social gatherings to business meetings, and in 1918 the building more than once held rallies for the war effort, with speeches, songs and other patriotic events. According to one local resident who recalls those days at Sandy Flats, former President Woodrow Wilson even lent his talents to the effort to raise funds to support the war.

After school consolidation in 1928, Bertha Cone gave permission for the building to be converted to a Baptist Church, with the provision that it would revert to the estate when and if the congregation disbanded. The building today is owned by the National Park Service, who continue to abide by the wishes of Bertha Cone, that it remain an active Baptist Church.

First organized as a Baptist Church on February 12, 1928 with twelve charter members, Sandy Flats was managed under the tutorship of four ministers then active in the region: the Rev. Ed Robbins, the Rev. Wesley Ashley, the Rev. Robert Shore and the Rev. I. W. Wilcox.

The charter membership included Lillian Isenhour, I. W. Henderson, Ruby Henderson, Ed Robbins, Mrs. Evelyn Henderson, Mrs. Sallie Hatton, Richard Hollars, Mrs. Nettie Hollars, John Teague, Mrs. Mary Teague, Cloy Pennell and Mrs. Rosa Greene.

The Rev. Ed Robbins, a former Mayor of Blowing Rock, served as the pastor of the church with S. L. Ienzhenhour appointed the clerk of the session.

Through the years a number of ministers of the Gospel have served the church and its congregation. While the church is currently without a permanent pastor, the body of the church remains active and services are held each week in the one room chapel that includes a pot-bellied stove as a focal point in the left center of the room.

The members of the church continue to make a major contribution to the Christian education of both adults and children. The young people that attend the church today make up an active Sunday School program that would make the Cones’ proud of the very special school they started almost ninety years ago.
Youth Revival Planned At Sandy Flat Baptist Church

A Youth Revival is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, May 19 at the Sandy Flat Baptist Church on Highway 221 just outside Blowing Rock. The Revival will continue through Sunday, May 23. The Revival itself will end on Saturday, May 22, however to celebrate the occasion a covered dish dinner will follow morning worship on May 23.

Featured speakers will include Glen Luttrell on Wednesday, Andrew Rawls on Thursday, and Brent Bouck on Saturday. Glen Luttrell will lead the worship hour at 11 a.m. on Sunday, following Sunday School at 10.

Everyone is invited to join the celebration and special services.

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The featured singing group will be the Calvary Way Trio from Avery County. Everyone is invited to the 7 p.m. singing, free of charge.
Sandy flat Missionary Baptist Church is located 2 miles west of Blowing Rock, NC, on Highway #63 and was organized Feb 12, 1928 by a Presbytery consisting of Robert Shore, W.B. Ashley, and others.

The charter members were: E.D. Robins, F.H. Henderson, Richard Hollars, John Teague, Mr. Sallie Hohen, Miss Ruby Henderson, Miss Julia Hollars, Lythia Dunham, Mrs. Kate Hollars, Mrs. Mary Teague.  

Pro E.D. Robins was selected pastor and served until Feb 15, 1930.

Pro Robert Shore was elected Feb 16, 1930 and has served the church ever since.

STONY FORK ASSOCIATION

S.D. Duncan Church Clerk
Oct 12, 1930