CG Baptist dedicates new fellowship center

After years of planning and preparation, the Cherry Grove Baptist Church held its new Fellowship Center/Dinner Theatre dedication and celebration, Sunday, July 13 from 6-9 p.m.

"According to the feedback I have received from our members and invited guests it was an overwhelming success," said Dan Strickland, chairman of the project committee. "We prepared for 298 people and I believe we had approximately 300 or more including our helpers. I especially would like to thank everyone who participated in the planning and building of our fellowship center. The years of planning paid off during our dedication event," he said.

The $550,000 construction is complete with a state of the art, light and sound system, with a huge stage to accommodate religious and patriotic dramas and musicals.

The opening night ceremony was a combination dedication and patriotic event. Dozens of talented members of the congregation performed during the night.

"America-Land I Love" leads the Cherry Grove Baptist Church sanctuary choir in the final scene of the dinner theatre presentation Sunday night. More than 300 church members and guests attended the dedication of the church's new $550,000 fellowship center. "It's been a long time in planning and lots of hard work, but tonight it's a reality," said the Rev. Dr. Doyle Holder. Lori Gelezinsky directed the musical.

Jason Bryan Blackwell of the 82nd Gala event was B.J. Edge. Special guests to the celebration was the Rev. Rick Astle, director of military missions with the Columbus County Baptist Association.

The costumes, lighting, sound had a good time performing with and special effects were some of the Mini Koinonia Kids Choir, as the finest to be found anywhere. It they performed "If You Feel Like Rockin'."

Mistress of ceremonies for the (Bob Morgan)
Dr. Randall Jones is the scheduled speaker for revival services that begin Sunday at Cherry Grove Baptist Church. Services begin at 7:30 each evening through next Thursday.

Dr. Jones is the Pastor of Langston Baptist Church of Conway. During his 23 years of ministry there the church has more than doubled in size and has become well known throughout the area. Under Dr. Jones' leadership the church founded and continues to minister through their Langston Bible Institute.

Dr. Jones can be heard on some local Christian radio stations. Literally hundreds have come to know Jesus Christ as Savior during revivals and crusades led by Dr. Jones in this area as well as across the country and in Jamaica, Haiti, and the West Indies. As a result of his ministry in Haiti twelve churches have been established as well as an orphanage and a health clinic.


Special music is planned for each service. On Tuesday evening Chris Jones, who can be heard on WSTS as well as other Christian radio stations, will be singing.

Dr. Philip Hall, Pastor of Cherry Grove Baptist Church, along with all the members invite all to attend. A nursery will be provided for every service.

Cherry Grove Baptist Church is located on NC 904 half-way between Tabor City and Fair Bluff. For details call 649-7307.
Cherry Grove Baptist Church
a long proud history

Last week, we finished reviewing the history of Bethel Methodist Church. This week, we will be reviewing the history of several churches through this column during the coming weeks. If anyone has information on any of the churches which has undergone many changes through the years, feel free to share it with your readers.

This week, Dan Strickland sent me some information on his church, Cherry Grove Baptist Church, which has undergone many changes through the years. This week, we will share part of Dan’s information.

Cherry Grove Baptist Church was organized in 1810 south of Fair Bluff, North Carolina, by Bethel Methodist Church as Bethel Grove. The name of the church was derived from the grove of cherry trees, by which the name was given. In those days they always had an intermission of fifteen minutes to relax. Sundays were reserved for the worship hour.

In some of the church conferences on Saturdays, the deacons were required to give a sermon and conference was conducted for attending to all church business. Many old timers recall those Saturday conferences.

Rev. Zade Bullock was the first pastor. The building was built in a grove of cherry trees, by which the name was given. In those days they always had an intermission of fifteen minutes to relax. Sundays were reserved for the worship hour.

In 1815, a frame structure was added, painted white in the present location. The old church was sold to Spencer Richardson and moved to the property of Jack Strickland. There was no music and only books with words were used. The pastor read the verse and the congregation followed singing. This brought a greater appreciation for the many blessings that God has showered upon His people.

In the year of 1882 Rev. Ned Stanley was called to pastor and served until 1889; Elisha Coleman was clerk. Other officers are not available. Some of the pastors serving during this time were Rev. Zade Bullock, Rev. D.W. Hill, who also was superintendent of education, Rev. George Harrelson, Rev. Moses Pridgen, and Rev. Dowd.

Through the years from 1810 until 1887 the superintendents and the church were served by many pastors. Among other pastors who served in the Cherry Grove Baptist Church were Rev. John Blanchard, who served until 1957. He was called back for a second term in 1922 and served until 1928. During this time the church membership was growing and more space was needed. A new church was built in 1924.

In 1915 Rev. Willie Coleman was called to be pastor and served until 1919. He was called back for a second term in 1922 and served until 1928. During this time the church membership was growing and more space was needed. A new church was built in 1924.

In 1930, Rev. C.B. Horne was called and served until 1937. During his ministry the church grew and the attendance increased. He was part time pastor, serving twice a month and at regular conference on Saturday afternoons.

In 1915 Rev. Willie Coleman was called to be pastor and served until 1919. He was called back for a second term in 1922 and served until 1928. During this time the church membership was growing and more space was needed. A new church was built in 1924.

In 1930, Rev. C.B. Horne was called and served until 1937. During his ministry the church grew and the attendance increased. He was part time pastor, serving twice a month and at regular conference on Saturday afternoons.

Rev. W.C. Wooten served as pastor from 1938-39. Then Rev. C.B. Horne was called and served until 1944. In 1941, Rev. Paul Britt was called and served until 1949. He was a man who enjoyed singing and one of his favorite songs was "Working For a Beautiful Golden Crown." In the latter part of 1943, his son Rev. Rufus Britt was called to be pastor and served until 1944.

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Cherry Grove Baptist Church
a long proud history

This week, we conclude our series on the history of Cherry Grove Baptist Church.

The year is 1957, and it saw many important additions to the church. Rev. Floyd Enzor was called to supply until April 1957 at which time Rev. O.S. Long became pastor. During his pastorate, the church went to a full time program and a new pastorium was built. The following Sunday School department were established: Nursing, Beginner, Primary, Junior and Intermediate combination and combination of Young People and Adults. The Brotherhood was organized during his pastorate and they erected the bulletin board outside the church.

Rev. Levonne Herring served as pastor from 1965 to 1969. Under his leadership, the church built an educational building for the purpose of furthering the Christian educational program of the church.

In early 1970, Rev. Thomas H. Lambert was called as pastor. During his pastorate, the church went to a full time program and a new pastorium was built. The following Sunday School department were established: Nursing, Beginner, Primary, Junior and Intermediate combination and combination of Young People and Adults. The Brotherhood was organized during his pastorate and they erected the bulletin board outside the church.

Rev. Claire Baker pastored from August, 1974, until February 1979. During his first Christmas at Cherry Grove, he wrote a play titled, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born." Thus the original live Nativity play was born at Cherry Grove Baptist Church. This production, a sound and light extravaganza, involved the entire community. Although a few things have been altered, the Nativity remains a part of the legacy of the church and community. It is still performed every year during the Christmas season. An activity bus was purchased in 1975 and the fenced-in basketball court was built-in 1976. During the year between 1977 and 1978, the nursery, the beginners room, and the conference room were completely renovated and refurbished. The church was carpeted in 1977. In 1978, a large utility building was purchased and set up at the rear of the church's property.

In early 1997, The Columbus Baptist Associational Missionary, Rev. Walter Jones, served while the church was without a pastor. During that same year, Dr. Merlin L. Boone assumed the duties of pastor. Shortly after his arrival, an area of the educational building was converted into a church office. In January of 1998, the church began publishing a monthly newsletter called "The Cherry Branch." During this time, the activity building for the Home Demonstration Club, was remodeled. Restrooms were added on the north end of the building.


Dr. Tony Fullbright became our pastor in 1991 and remained until 1997. During his pastorate, we remodeled the sanctuary and vestibule. A large front porch with columns was erected. The wood was replaced. The church office was relocated within the educational building and new office equipment was purchased that included a computer and copier. New choir robes were also purchased. It was upon the completion of these things that a special dedication service was held.

Dr. McCormick served as interim pastor again from 1997 to 1998.

Our special thanks to Frankie Strickland who wrote and compiled this history of Cherry Grove Baptist Church. Strickland now resides in Cypress Village in Fair Bluff. Also Shirley Hendrix who has been a major contributor to this review on the church.
Gifts galore

Cherry Grove Baptist Church of Cerro Gordo collected 124 gift-filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child — 49 more than they gathered last year. A dedication service was held and the boxes were loaded in the McCleney’s pickup truck and delivered to Boone. Kneeling behind the gifts is Ethan Worley. The boxes will be delivered by Samaritan’s Purse to needy children around the world.
A Special Thanks goes to Reverend Perry Holleman, Minister of Music at Cherryville's First Baptist Church (pictured above). He served on many of the committees this past year and is very responsible for much of the CMA accomplishments. His hard work and leadership is greatly appreciated.
Church History

Cherry Grove Baptist Church

Cerro Gordo, N. C. — Route 1

1810-1960

BUILDINGS

1810
1860
1924
1948

Celebrating The 150th Anniversary
October 2, 1960
"We need to turn back pages from history and catch a glimpse of the pioneer men and women who gave us something in the past to hold today, to cherish in the future.

"Conditions that existed need to be reviewed in order that contrasts and comparisons will induce a greater appreciation for the many showers of blessings that God has poured upon us.

"Just as all pioneers of early days, in caravans of covered wagons and ox carts moving slowly forward, were mothers with spiritual insight, determined to establish a sounder civilization that comes from labor alone.

"Among the men were courageous Baptist ministers and stalwart brave men, heads of families all possessing courage; in the wilderness they built log houses. In most of these homes might be found the guide book. The Holy Bible, in a hallowed place from which passages were read daily, followed by prayers of thanksgiving for protection and guidance.

"Children were taught principles of pioneer life, discipline was enforced, obedience and respect for parents: for law and religion were demanded.

"No well-prepared sermon of thirty minutes, for people went to church prepared to stay at least two hours—preaching at church on Sunday was an occasion looked forward to. For the appointments were irregular.

"The pioneer preacher was looked upon with great respect and reverence and was always a welcome visitor in all homes under any conditions."

The first Baptist church established at Cherry Grove south of Fair Bluff, North Carolina, in the year of 1810, by Bethel Buffkin in view of the little or no organized method of work, Rev. Tarte was the first pastor. The building was built in grove of cherry trees, by which the name was given. It was a long straight building of logs, with four doors, one each for the pastor, men, women and slaves. Bethel Buffkin also served as first superintendent, other officers are not known. There were no pencils and goose quills were used and their ink was made of poke berries.

A few years later more space was needed and a shed was built on the back of the church by Jack Strickland.

There was no music and only books without music were used. The pastor read the verse and the congregation followed singing this was called lining the hymns, Everybody loved to meet at God's house and sing and praise and hear God's word expounded, Saturday being given to a sermon and conference for attending all church business, and Sunday's for the worship hour. Many old timers recall those Saturday conferences even often churches called pastors for twice a month. In these days they always had an intermission of fifteen minutes to relax.

Through the years from 1810 until 1887 the superintendents and officers are not available, some of the pastors serving during this time were: Rev. Zade Bullock, Rev. D. W. Hill, Who also was superintendent of education, Rev. George Harrelson, Rev. Moses Pridgen and Rev. Dowd.

As soon as settlers had established homes and improved surroundings they built another church in 1860. This church was built of wood frame by Ebb and Brazil Strickland. They went out in the woods and cut only the best
timber. They used what was known as whip saws to cut the trees, then a frame was made and the logs were placed in the frame and four men held the frame while the boards were hewn out.

In the year of 1882 Rev. Neil Stanley was called to be pastor and served for twenty three years.

A. M. Worley was superintendent of Sunday School until 1889 and Elisha Coleman, clerk, other officers are not known.

In 1890 William Strickland was clerk and Daniel Strickland was superintendent.

In 1915 Rev. Willie Coleman was called to be pastor and served until 1919 the first term and was called back in 1922 and served until 1928.

During this time the church membership was growing and more space was needed. A new church was built in 1924, it also was a frame structure, painted white in the present location. The old church was sold to Spencer Richardson and moved to the property of O. W. Williamson, and the ground used for a cemetery.

The first organ was purchased in the latter part of 1917.

Among other pastors who served in the Cherry Grove Baptist Church were: 1920 Rev. Marlowe, 1921 Rev. A. P. Stevens, and 1929 Rev. W. J. Ingram.

In 1930 Rev. C. B. Horne was called and served until 1937 the first time. During his ministry the church grew and the attendance was enlarged. He was part time pastor, serving twice a month and at regular conference on Saturday afternoons.

1938-1939 Rev. W. C. Wescott served as pastor, Then Rev. C. B. Horne was again called and served one year.

1941 Rev. Paul Britt was called and served until 1943. He was a man who enjoyed singing and one of his favorite songs was “Working For A Beautiful Golden Crown.” In the latter part of 1943 his son Rev. Rufus Britt was called to finish his term. He was also called to pastor and resigned in the early part of 1944.

In some of the church conferences on Saturdays the deacons really saw to it that every thing was in a spiritual order. Some of the charges brought before the deacons was; fighting, unchristian conduct and drinking.

Rev. L. L. Todd was called in 1944 and served until 1949. During his ministry much progress was made. Rev. Todd had the foresight and interest in seeing the church grow and more room was needed. The present church was remodeled in 1948, those on the building committee were; F. W. Lancaster, O. W. Williamson, Fluke McAllister and Fronis Strickland.

The first piano was purchased in the early thirties and was sold and the present one was bought in 1943.

Rev. R. C. Melton was called in 1950 and served until the first part of 1952. Then Rev. Mark Owens supplied the rest of the term. During Rev. Melton’s pastorate the Training Union was organized and Mrs. Melton organized and led the youth choir. The first vacation Bible School was also held.

Rev. John Blanchard was called in 1953 and served until 1957, he resigned in January. Rev. Blanchard was a hard worker in the community and built up all the organizations; he was a busy man having to serve two churches.

Rev. Floyd Enzor was called to supply until April 1957.
There will always be for those who study the progress of Baptist work and especially significance attached to that period of time which make the advent of women as leaders in organized church work. Believing that women have a great part to play in God's Kingdom.

Our church contribution to missions have not been what they should have been; however, we have contributed. The church has worked with the W. M. U. in giving to the various mission causes.

Since we are minus of the records of our mission contributions for the early years of our church we are uncertain of the support given to each phase of the work. However, our records show that we have supported every phase of our work in recent years. This year we have given the following amounts from Sept. 1, 1959 through Aug. 31, 1960.

- Cooperative Program: $487.92
- Associational Missions: 200.00
- State Missions: 158.00
- Home Missions: 44.73
- Foreign Missions: 193.60
- Christian Education: 5.00
- Orphans Home: 75.00
- Hospital: 200.00
- Heck Jones Offering: 17.13

Other Objects and Relief

In 1936 Mrs. Maggie Worley called Mrs. B. T. Watson who was Associational President of the Woman's Missionary Union. She met with the interested ladies of the community at the church and organized the Woman's Missionary Union of the Cherry Grove Baptist Church; in later years the youth organizations were organized by Rev. John R. Blanchard. A partial list of those who have served as presidents of the Woman's Missionary Union follows:

- Mrs. Maggie Worley
- Mrs. Catherine Richardson
- Mrs. Rubie Lee McAllister
- Mrs. Emma H. Strickland
- Mrs. Reba Strickland
- Mrs. O. S. Long
- Mrs. Ethell Turbeville

The W. M. U. were sponsors in setting the shrubbery around the church grounds.

Mrs. Emma H. Strickland and Mrs. Reba Strickland have served as youth directors along with others.

Our present pastor, the Rev. O. S. Long, came to us from Hopewell Baptist Church, Morganton, N. C. He was called on February 17, 1957 and took up the pastorate on April 1st. During his pastorate, the church has gone to a full time program and a new pastorium has been built. The following Sunday School departments have been established; Nursery, Beginner, Primary, Junior and Intermediate combination and combination of young people and Adults. The Primary in 1938 with Mrs. Louise Strickland, 1959 the Nursery with Mrs. Nellie Mae Strickland, 1959 the Beginners with Mrs. Yvonne Shelley, 1960 the Junior and Intermediate with Mrs. Libby T. Strickland as superintendents. Mr. Guilford Edwards is general superintendent.

During Rev. Long's pastorate the Brotherhood was organized and they erected and sponsored the bulletin board outside the church.

During the development of Sunday School departments Rev. Jack R. Bagwell of the Baptist State Convention's Sunday School Department was invited by the pastor, Mr. Long, to lead the Church in a Sunday School Enlargement Program. He came and directed our study from Monday, December 1, 1959 through Thursday the 4th and brought the study to a close due to freezing rain and ice. However, the following are his recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

After a careful study of the Cherry Grove Baptist Church the following recommendations are made:

I. That the Sunday School be organized as suggested in the following pages of the census tabulation. Move toward departmentalizing the school as soon as possible and practical.

II. Adopt and follow the class, department and general Standard of Excellence as guides to more effective work.

III. Make the best possible use of the six point record system for improving the quality of Bible study and the character development of the members.
IV. That a continuous program of enlistment and training of workers be followed which would include the following:

1. Elect a superintendent of training.
2. Set up and maintain a training file on all the officers and teachers in the Sunday School.
3. Encourage the Sunday School personnel to earn the workers diplomas and continue in advanced training.
4. Offer training courses throughout the year for the workers as needed.
5. Consider starting a monthly workers' conference for building a better Sunday School. Begin now to look toward the time that the church can have a weekly Officers and Teachers meeting for improving the quality of Bible teaching being done.
6. Urge the workers to attend Ridgecrest, the state assemblies, state clinics, and associational meetings for inspiration and help.

V. That the church elect a plans committee to begin the study of future building needs. Work with Mr. L. L. Morgan of Raleigh and through him with the Sunday School Board's Architectural Department in getting a good functional building.

VI. That the Sunday School consider starting a weekly program of visitation for contacting absentees and prospects.

Mr. Long had invited Rev. Ernest Upchurch, Secretary Church Development Department of the Convention to come with us in September 1958 to lead in a study of the Church's total program. He canceled the engagement due to an Association-wide call elsewhere and came to us a year later, September 1959. He showed us through a study of the past five years how little we had been doing and pointed out the fact that the tithe of the resident membership would amount to much over $35,000.00 per year and worked out a five year program and recommended it to the Church as a goal for the future.

Rev. Long visited our church while working with the Sunday School board in 1952 and took a survey and started us on the six-point system.

Rev. Long has an interest in the welfare of the community. He hopes to see a new wing added to the church in the near future, as we are already crowded for space.

We are very fortunate to have Mr. Long as our pastor, also Mrs. Long and their two sons, Charles and David.

A one hundred and fifty year old church — vitally progressive and alive — is the result of the dedicated and effective work of hundreds of people for every one of those years, every pastor, every deacon, every log worker, every participating member, every electrician, every carpenter, and repairman every visiting speaker and evangelist, every oldest, every child, every infant in the nursery has affected in some way.

But it is the spirit of Jesus Christ working through human instrumentality that has accounted for all that is sound, spiritual and regenerative.

At this juncture of the centuries our present generation must not only feel the weight of past achievements, but determine to push forward to greater accomplishments in the century ahead.

General Directors of the Training Union in recent years.
A. E. Lancaster  Russell Odham
Horace Strickland  Rhonoe Strickland
Hosea Coleman  Bryan Lancaster
Oscar Wilson

Names of some who have served faithfully in years as church Treasures.
N. H. Buffkin  Harvey Coleman
A. E. Lancaster  Guilford Edwards
Fronnis Strickland

Those serving as church clerk during the years.
N. H. Buffkin  Frank Turbeville
F. W. Lancaster  O. W. Williamson
Gordon Buffkin  M. W. Strickland
Burney Strickland  Harvey Coleman
Furney Strickland  James H. Smith
A. E. Lancaster

The Brotherhood of the Cherry Grove Baptist Church was organized December 20, 1957. In the service of enlistment and development of the Brotherhood a good core of men have for the first time received a true vision of their duty and responsibility in their church.

The Presidents who have served are:
Hosea Coleman  Russell Odham
Bardin Worley  Guilford Edwards

In the past number of years there has been capable individuals serving as superintendent of the Sunday School.
Harley Godwin  M. W. Strickland
N. H. Buffkin  E. M. Hayes
A. T. Strickland  Guilford Edwards

Through the years these have been the organist and pianist.
Gordon Buffkin  Mrs. Florine S. Winborn
Mrs. Della Mae E. Richardson  Mrs. Bertha E. Smith
Mrs. Sallie T. Strickland  Mrs. Ila Pearl L. Norris
Mrs. Frankie W. Strickland

Through the years among some of the faithful Choir leaders.
Gordon Buffkin  Mrs. Emma H. Strickland
F. W. Lancaster  Robert Earl Williamson
G. L. Turbeville  Mrs. Eloise L. Coleman
Frank Turbeville  M. W. Strickland
Faithful Deacons through the years.

N. Q. Williamson  J. G. Richardson
N. H. Buffkin  Horace Strickland
A. T. Strickland  Guilford Edwards
G. L. Turbeville  Harvey Coleman
Dock Strickland  Joseph Hayes
Hezikiah Strickland  Bardin Worley
Willie Worley  Hosea Coleman
A. E. Lancaster  Russell Odham
E. M. Hayes

Some of the Sunday School Sec. and Treas. were:

Gordon Buffkin  Frank Turbeville
Furney Strickland  O. W. Williamson
Burney Strickland  Horace Strickland
F. W. Lancaster  Bardin Worley
Fronnis Strickland  Miss Lila Earl Lancaster

The first Vacation Bible School was held in 1950, with the help of John Biddles, associational Missionary — those who have served as principles are:

John Biddles  Rev. John R. Blanchard
Miss Dixie Wilson  Rev. O. S. Long
Miss Beaudex  Mrs. O. S. Long

Through the years these are some of the teachers of the Sunday School:

Miss Jennie Strickland  Mrs. Ara Mae W. Williamson
Mrs. Susie S. Edwards  Mrs. Flora Belle H. Enzor
Charlie Floyd  Mrs. Cora Barnhill
A. T. Strickland  Gordon Page
Mrs. Lizzie W. Baldwin  Mrs. Ethelle S. Turbeville
S. M. Richardson  Miss Juanita Sealey
A. E. Lancaster  Mrs. Wilhelmenia L. Suggs
F. W. Lancaster  Mrs. Florine S. Winborn
D. S. Strickland  Miss Doreatha Sealey
Fronnis Strickland  Mrs. Bernice Strickland
Mrs. Catherine E. Richardson  Mrs. Marie Anderson
Mrs. Pearl B. Moore  Dempsey Foley
Mrs. Maggie Worley  Mrs. Sylvia Sealey
N. H. Buffkin  Don Strickland
W. L. Worley  Mrs. Emma H. Strickland

Mrs. Neppie R. Williamson  Vallery Strickland
H. C. Strickland  Harvey Coleman
Tim Strickland  Mrs. Annie Mae Hayes
Mrs. Bertie E. Hisslop  Mrs. Ida Richardson
M. W. Strickland  Duvall Suggs
A. P. Worley  Farley Strickland
Mrs. Lillie W. Richardson  Mrs. Pauline Coleman
E. M. Hayes  Mrs. Curlie Strickland
Harvey Coleman  Mrs. Neta Mae Worley
Mrs. Rubie Lee W. McAllister  Mrs. Reba Strickland
Mrs. Eula W. Hayes  Mrs. Vertie Strickland
Horace Strickland  Mrs. Letha E. Smith
Mrs. Frankie W. Strickland  Mrs. Ldes R. Cooper
 Flake McAllister  Mrs. Elneta Worley
Mrs. Sallie T. Strickland  Mrs. Lucille M. Strickland
Mrs. Easter Edwards  Mrs. Faye Hayes
Mrs. Eloise L. Coleman  Mrs. Eva F. Strickland
Guilford Edwards  Mrs. Louise Page
M. E. Worley  Mrs. Bertha Mae Strickland
Mrs. Sallie T. Strickland  Rhonooke Strickland
Mrs. Edna Buffkin  Mrs. Sallie Lancaster
Mrs. Nevada S. Herring  Mrs. Yvonne Shelley
Mrs. Mae Harrelson  Mrs. Pearl Long
Joseph Hayes  Mrs. Joyce Buffkin
O. W. Williamson  Russell Odham
Mrs. Lula Belle B. Gore  Mrs. Glennie Odham
Mrs. Ruby Deese  Mrs. Nellie Mae Strickland
Mrs. Phetress S. Thigpen  Mrs. Lucille Wilson
Mrs. Reba W. Britt  Mrs. Eva Mae Lovett
Mrs. Ida Mae C. Troop  Mrs. Evelle Strickland
James H. Smith
Number on Sunday School roll through the years beginning in:

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The Young Married Class was divided in the year of 1956-1957. They begin to keep the Nursery in the year 1957-1958.

MEMBERS OF CHERRY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

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The New Cherry Grove Baptist Church
Building Built In 1948

Pastorium Built In Fall of 1957 At Cost Of $17,000.
Occupied By Pastor February 5, 1958.

A. P. STEPHENS
Former Pastor
Cape Fear Minutes, 1846

Received one newly constituted church, viz:
Cherry Grove, Columbus County, N.C. - Presbyter,
Elder Haynes Lennon.

State Min. 1905 signed 1810
Cherry Grove Ch. Columbus Assoc

Bible Rec June 16 1951 p 1, 3.
1836 -
1837 -
1838 -
1839 -
1840 -
1841 -
1842 -
1843 -
1844 -
1845 -

1846 -
Admit. as newly const. by Eld. Haynes Lennon. 18 mem.
No pastor. B. Strickland, B. Buffkin, J.H. Buffkin, delegates.

1847 -
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CHERRY GROVE 1846

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181 men
listed P. D. Harrell
153 members
Eliza Coleman, Clerk

Gravel (levels) to Columbus 9/19

11 11 4 Columbus
Speakers stolen from Brunswick church

A thief broke the door down at Cherry Grove Missionary Baptist Church on Bitmore Road in Brunswick and stole a $1,000 sound system. The church suffered more than $400 damage from the thief’s entry.

According to the Columbus County Sheriff’s Department, the thief gained entry to the church by climbing in a Sunday school room window. He went through the church, rifling through rooms and left with two speakers.

Church member J.B. Davis said the man pried open the church’s baptismal fount and rummaged through the pastor’s study. The Sheriff’s Department is investigating the incident.

Although the church has been vandalized several times in recent months, with obscene graffitti sprayed on the church’s door and the attempted theft of an historic bell, Davis said he does not believe the same person committed this theft.
Living creche

By LEE HINNANT

Members of Cherry Grove Baptist Church will bring the Christmas story to life this week with three nights of performances of a live nativity scene. About 10 people, a mixture of youth and adults, will join with live calves, a lamb and donkey to recreate the story of Jesus' birth. The play, lasting about 20 minutes, will be given from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

"We do this to represent to the community and the public in general the birth of our Lord," said the Rev. Tony Fulbright, pastor of the church. "Members enjoy doing it. There is an air of excitement about it and the various parts that are played."

The tradition started in the late 1970s under former pastor the Rev. Claire Baker, who wrote the script still in use today.

Audience members are invited to watch from their cars, or they can step out and watch from a special viewing area. The performance includes music and lighting.

Cherry Grove Baptist Church puts on the live nativity play every other year. The church is located about eight miles from Tabor City off N.C. 904.

Many more area Christmas traditions and other holiday stories will be featured in a special tabloid section of The News Reporter on Thursday.

Nativity play is Cherry Grove tradition

By LEE HINNANT

Members of Cherry Grove Baptist Church rehearse the live nativity they will perform Tuesday through Friday from 7-9 p.m.

Living creche

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Many more area Christmas traditions and other holiday stories will be featured in a special tabloid section of The News Reporter on Thursday.
Items Worth $2,568 Stolen From Cherry Grove Baptist

The theft of about $2,568 worth of items in a break-in at Cherry Grove Baptist Church in the Brushy Mountain community has been reported to the Wilkes Sheriff's Department.

Reported stolen sometime between 4 p.m. Wednesday and 11:30 a.m. Saturday were two amplifiers, two tuners, two sets of strings, two cords and a guitar. The guitar, which is a Gibson, is valued at $1,565.

The Rev. Vestal Moore of Wilkesboro, pastor of the church, discovered and reported the incident. There are no suspects, stated a sheriff's department report.
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<tr>
<td>1. Name***</td>
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<td>2. Name</td>
<td>New Lenox</td>
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<td>3. Location. Name of County when Constituted</td>
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<td>7. Is the church by either name listed in Convention Annual in 1959 or 1960?</td>
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Live Outdoor Nativity Drama

The live outdoor nativity drama “A Saviour is Born” will be presented through Christmas Eve at Cherry Grove Baptist Church.

The annual presentation, back by popular demand, will feature 14 actors nightly at 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, and 8:30.

Featuring elaborate costumes, lighting and sound, the production may be seen across from the church on N.C. 904, halfway between Tabor City and Fair Bluff.

A traditional part of the Christmas season in the Cherry Grove Community, “A Saviour is Born” may be viewed from your car or from a special seating area.

"The drama, which is back by popular demand, will feature 14 actors with shows nightly at 7, 7:30, 8 and 8:30," a church spokesman said. The production will feature elaborate costumes, lighting and sound, which will add to the professional quality of the show, it was said. This show through the years has become a traditional part of the Christmas season in the Cherry Grove community.

The church is located on N.C. 904 midway between Fair Bluff and Tabor City. The show can be viewed from the car or from a special seating area at the church. The church invites the public to attend.
Outdoor Nativity Play Set

Cherry Grove Baptist Church will present its annual outdoor live nativity drama, "A Savior Is Born," nightly this Wednesday through Monday, Dec. 19-24.

"The drama, which is back by popular demand, will feature 14 actors with shows nightly at 7, 7:30, 8, and 8:30," a church spokesman said. "The production also features elaborate costumes, lighting and sound, which adds to the professional quality of the show. This show through the years has become a traditional part of the Christmas season in the Cherry Grove Community."

The church invites the public to attend. The church is on N.C. 904 midway between Fair Bluff and Tabor City. The show can be viewed from your car or from a special seating area at the church.

GIDEONS and Whiteville Premiere Inn staff pray prior to initial distribution of Bibles in all 60 rooms. Leading the service is R. J. Burroughs, who heads the Columbus County Camp of Gideons International. (Staff photo by Thom Billington)
Cherry Grove Plans Revival

Revival services will be held at Cherry Grove Baptist Church beginning March 26 and continuing each evening through the week. The Rev. Woodrow Harris, pastor of Maple Baptist Church near Conway, S.C., will be the guest speaker. Services will be held nightly at 7:30 and a nursery will be provided.

The Rev. Mr. Harris is a native of Texas and a graduate of Trinity College and Southwestern Seminary of Fort Worth, Texas. Early in his ministry he served as music and education ministers in several churches, his last being with the First Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C.

His first pastorate was with the Mt. Olive and Pleasant View churches in Horry County, S.C. He then served Second Baptist Church in Shelby for 5½ years; Rutledge Avenue Church in Charleston, S.C., for nine years; and Duncan Church in Greenville, S.C., for 16 years. He has been with the Maple Church since 1976.

In addition to his pastoral ministry the Rev. Mr. Harris has served in a number of positions of denominational leadership, including being moderator of the Greenville Association, president of the S.C. Pastors' Conference and vice-president of the S.C. Baptist Convention and two terms on the General Board of the S.C. Baptist Convention.

The Rev. O.A. Anderson, interim pastor, and the congregation invite the public to attend the services.

"Nothing under the sun is ever accidental." G. E. Lessing

The Rev. Mr. Harris is also a soloist, songwriter and poet.
Cherry Grove Church Sets Harvest Day

The Cherry Grove Baptist church begins a busy week with Harvest Day, Saturday, October 8. Dinner will be served at 12:00 noon, followed by an auction at 1:00 p.m.

Items to be auctioned consist of many varieties, usually baked goods, home grown vegetables, hand craft items and many more up to even "live" pigs. These items will be auctioned off and sold to the highest bidder.

The money raised on Harvest Day will be used for various projects that the church is in the process of adopting, according to the announcement.

Fall Revival will begin Monday night, October 10 and go through Sunday, October 16, with services to begin each night at 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be the Rev. Walter Jones who is the new Director for the Columbus County Baptist Association. The public is cordually invited to attend.
The congregation at the dedication of the current building in 1948.

Church, village grow up together

By Mark Harrison
Staff Writer

CHERRY GROVE — The next week will bring changes and celebrations for Cherry Grove Baptist Church.

The change will be on Sunday, when the church, which is between Fair Bluff and Tabor City on N.C. 904, receives a new pastor — the Rev. Rudolph Joseph Hammond. Next weekend, the church and the town celebrate their 175th anniversary. Harvest Day will also be celebrated next weekend.

“I’m looking forward to enjoying the celebration,” said Hammond. “It is a time to get to know one another.” Hammond has spent the last nine years at the Cathedral Baptist Church in Wadesboro.

With such a long history, Cherry Grove Baptist Church has had an impact on the area. “The church is the community,” said Dan Strickland, assistant Sunday school director.

Cherry Grove Baptist was established in 1810. It was built in a cherry grove and church officials decided the trees should be part of its name. The original building — long and straight — was made of logs and had four doors, one each for the pastor, men, women and slaves.

In 1860, a new frame church was built. At that time, construction techniques called for four men to hold the frame while the logs were placed in position and the boards hewn out.

In 1917, the church received its first organ. Seven years later, membership had grown so large a new building was needed. The church built in 1924 was another wood frame building, which was painted white. The site of the church was moved about 100 yards to the south. The space from the old site was used to expand the cemetery.

As the church’s membership continued to grow, more space was needed, and in 1948 the present brick building was erected. In the late 1960s, an education building was added. The church now has about 500 members.

As part of the 175th anniversary celebrations for Cherry Grove Baptist Church, village, and Harvest Day celebrations at noon Oct. 12 the church will hold a covered-dish luncheon. At 1 p.m. the Harvest Day Auction begins.

“You won’t ever see an auction like this. Prices are exorbitant because it supports the church,” said Farley Strickland, chairman of the board of deacons. “A ham could go for $85 to $125, hammers have gone for $80 to $100,” he said. “It’s kind of like the Pentagon’s pricing.”

On Oct. 13 Sunday school begins at 10:45 a.m. and the worship service is at 11:45 a.m. The Fall Revival begins at 7:30 p.m. and will continue each night through Oct. 16.
Cherry Grove Sets Homecoming Aug. 20

Homecoming service will be held at Cherry Grove Baptist Church on Sunday, Aug. 19. One of the featured singing groups for the day will be The Gospel Voices. The public is invited.

Revival services will be held Aug. 20-25 at 7:30 nightly. Guest speaker will be the Rev. Luther Carver of Spruce Pine. The pastor the Rev. Vestal Moore, stated the public is invited to attend.
Cherry Grove Plans Revival

Cherry Grove Baptist Church of Cerro Gordo will hold revival services Monday through Sunday, Oct. 9-15, with services nightly at 7:30.

The guest evangelist for the services will be the Rev. Joseph D. Seay Sr. of Edgewood Baptist Church in Greer, S.C. He received his education at North Greenville Baptist College, Furman University and Southeastern Seminary. He has served two churches in North Carolina and two in South Carolina, including Edgewood.

There will be special music nightly, and a nursery will be provided.

The Rev. Claire C. Baker, pastor, and the congregation invite the public to attend the services.

THE REV. JOE SEAY

[Image of Rev. Joe Seay]

SEP 28 1978
Piety by way of pasta is OK

We find spiritual solace in our own way.

Some find it in a well-appointed church with God's chosen arrayed about them in Sunday clothes. There, in padded pew, air conditioned, stained-glass comfort, the Lord reveals all in middle-class clarity.

For others, the Great Revelation comes on a bleary, beery morning as they make the oh-so-easy and oh-so-heartfelt pledge: "Lord, if you'll just get me through this one, I swear I'll be good. I'll go to church every Sunday and I'll never be bad no more.''

For an Atlanta woman, it came in spaghetti.

Has the sad, loving face of the Prince of Peace revealed itself on a Pizza Hut billboard in DeKalb County? Is he there, lurking on the fork and partially hidden by the words "spaghetti junction"?

Is it, the beloved Nazarene in noodles?'' So said fashion designer Joyce Simpson. Ms. Simpson said that in April, as she was struggling with a torturous decision about remaining in her church choir or turning professional, she saw the face of the King of Kings.

"I looked up and saw the Michelangelo version of Christ's face on a Pizza Hut sign," she said. "It's incredible."

Ms. Simpson was the first to see the carpenter from Nazareth on the billboard but she is not the last. Pizza Hut folks, to their credit, have not said she is crazy. They gently point out that they don't see anything, that nothing subliminal was intended, that it is just a picture of spaghetti. Others have joined Ms. Simpson in claiming to see Jesus, but that is nothing to get excited about.

If you stand on a street corner and look at absolutely nothing, many will follow.

I don't know what it is like to be saved in a pinch-lipped church but when the Lord grabs you by the heart in a Southern Baptist church revival, brothers and sisters, you'll see more than the Father in fettuccine.

For most of us, the Great Spiritual Awakening came hand in hand with puberty. That most young people trapped in the throes

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CHERRY GROVE ADULT CHOIR - (1st row, l-r), Wanda Strickland, (pianist); Alice Erroz, Corey Worley, Beatsey Strickland, Clyde Shelley, Wilhelmena Bugg, Eva Strickland, Pearl Strickland, (organist); (2nd row) Yvonne Shelley, Geneva Belfish, Jasper Wilson, David Baker, Joseph Wilson, Emma Haynes, Faye Haynes, Samantha Crabb, Paige Honeycutt; (3rd row) Shirley Strickland, Richard Williamson, Duvall Buggs, Wayne Hendrix, Bobby Edwards, Joyce Belfish; (not pictured), Eloise Coleman, Ann Fairfax, and Lucille Strickland.


Church Plans Mini-Concert

The Christmas season will be filled with musical and dramatic programs for members of Cherry Grove Baptist Church.

Mrs. Jennifer N. Edwards' piano students will present a mini-concert Sunday, Dec. 7 at 3:30 p.m. The program will include a variety of Christmas pieces, from sacred to secular, including "Deck the Halls," "Silent Night," "Silver Bells" and "White Christmas." Mrs. Edwards will accompany some her students' selections on the organ and she will perform a Christmas medley at the piano.

Mrs. Edwards is also director of the church's adult and children's choirs. During the worship service Sunday, Dec. 14 at 10:50 a.m., the adult choir will render a Christ¬mas cantata, "Come to the Manger," using a Southern gospel motif.

During the evening services Dec. 14, beginning at 7, the children's choir will present a musical drama, "Two Nights Before Christmas." "The children, dressed as toys in a toy store, will come to life at the stroke of midnight, Dec. 23. They, along with Mr. McDuff, the grumpy store manager, learn the true meaning of Christmas and he becomes a changed man," said Mrs. Edwards.

"All participants have worked extremely hard to make each of the programs as good as it can be," said Mrs. Edwards. The public is invited to attend.
Cherry Grove Baptist Has

Special Harvest Auction

On Saturday Oct. 7, the Cherry Grove Baptist Church celebrated Harvest Day by having their annual dinner at 12 noon and their auction at 1 p.m.

The covered dish dinner was served in the Community House, and the auction was under the trees on the lawn and parking area.

A long table down the center of the Community House was completely filled with food dishes.

The meal was served (according to Farley Strickland’s watch) at straight-up noon. The blessing was said by Rev. Claire Baker.

The house was filled to capacity, with chairs lined along the walls, and in the kitchen. When Cherry Grove decides to put on a meal they really DO it.

Steve Wray of Whiteville, was the auctioneer and had his audio-equipment. He has the voice and personality to keep his audience comfortable, squeezing the highest possible bids from the spectators. Just to show you, a claw hammer brought $95, a yard rake went to Letha Smith for $50 (she said later “I took it home and put in on a shelf in the garage for safekeeping. I have no intention of using it”) A toy register went for $100 to a small child, who really wanted it. There were other toys and dolls to delight any little girl.

The membership of the Cherry Grove Baptist Church, does this each year for their church and is a lot of fun to see just how high your neighbors will raise the bid. If you are left “holding the bag,” so be it. It doesn’t matter. Everyone reaps the benefit from the proceeds.

There were about 125 attending the auction, and the proceeds reached the $11,000 mark with a little to spare.

Beasley Strickland and Ted Spivey assisted the auctioneer.

(Belle McNeill)
CHERRY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH held its Sunday School last week, with an enrollment of 146 and an average attendance of 134 for the May 15-19, 6-9 p.m. programs. Each session included worship, Bible study, music, refreshments, recreation, and crafts. Students are shown preparing to enter the church for one of the sessions. A preparation day had been held May 13, including registration, a parade, and ice cream. Commencement was May 21. Mrs. George B. Strickland was the director, and the Rev. C.C. Baker is pastor. (Staff Photo)
CHERRY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH copped the Pioneer League Columbus County Royal Ambassador basketball championship Thursday night with a 31-22 victory over Hinson's Crossroads. Members of the team are, front row, left to right, Micheal Smith, Ryan James, Kevin Strickland, Jody Lancaster. Back row, Chris Worley, Gene Edwards, Kevin Clemmons, Ron Herring, Coach Kent Lovette.
THIS NATIVITY SCENE from the Cherry Grove Baptist Church is from the drama “For Unto Us A Child Is Born”, telling of Jesus’ birth. Left to right are Spencer Strickland, Larry Troupe and Andy Dudney, wise men; Nanette Strickland, Mary; and James Strickland, Joseph. Each show lasts 20 minutes and visitors can view the production from their cars or the bleachers. Shows begin nightly at 7, 7:30, 8 and 8:30. (Photos by Benny Strickland)
Former RA Organizer, Leader John Faulk Is Missed

WILLIAMS -- On Tuesday, March 13, a young man died and many, many people suffered the blow that comes with death, along with his family and loved ones that a crisis like this always is expected to affect.

Hundreds, yes, perhaps a thousand young people, as well as some who are now full-grown adults will well remember John Robert Faulk, who died in an auto collision on his way to work that morning. Some of those that his life touched are even older than John is expected to affect.

JOHN ROBERT FAULK was widely known across SENCland and as a worker in the Columbus County Baptist Association as a layman and licensed minister. He was also noted for his work With a sports field that he loved as well and was a worker in athletics. So busy life that saw him touching many, many young people was in a story. But, we feel if we'd asked him that he would have agreed to use it, if it was in telling the true story about John Robert Faulk...

--JP--

JOHN FAULK not only loved his church, his family and his work. He loved people. Anyone who he taught at West Columbus High School (1969-81) and Williams Township since that time until his death will tell you that he loved his fellowman. It's no secret that the school -- as one of its leaders said, "just about closed down" the remainder of the week after his death, because his going upset the administrators, faculty and students alike.

As a VOCATIONAL Agriculture teacher, this graduate of N.C. Vocational Agriculture Teachers, but always treated his students as he wished them to treat him -- on a man-on-man basis. Any student who wanted to pass his classes under Mr. Faulk would have to prove him he truly made an effort to do so, and could achieve that goal.

As a deacon and Sunday School teacher at Cherry Grove Baptist Church, as the church's Training Director for sometime, as well as a counselor, there he'll be remembered for his boldness. He also served the same posts for the Columbus Baptist Association.

But, who join his many friends and family in sorrow about this loss, will always remember John Robert Faulk as the fellow who was always prompt in letting us have any news. And, the basketball and other sports that he felt might make better men out of the kids and youth that were under his direction in this branch of sports. That, we're truly glad that this man out of Cherry Grove who loved people, found time to cross our path. We were proud to number him among our friends over the years.

--JP--

JOHN'S LETTER continued

"YES, WE're very proud of LLOYD BRITT (who became an ace left-hand pitching star for Whitewite's Wolfpack baseball team) from Brunswick doing so well in the high school ranks. I think this speaks well of the caliber of play in the BAs. There are many other high school athletes who had their beginning in RA sports, but I won't attempt to mention them ... But, winning trophies isn't our main goal, which is to use sports in a Christian atmosphere to help young boys become useful Christians and good citizens. Thanks for Everything! Sincerely Yours, (signed) John R. Faulk."

John had a postscript (P.S.) that said, "I didn't write this for a story." But, we feel if we'd asked him that he would have agreed to use it, if it was in telling the true story about John Robert Faulk...

--JP--

Martin's home at Williamson Crossroads. The original charter members were Cherry Grove, Williamson Crossroads, Western Frong and West Whiteville (Baptist Churches). Of that group, only Cherry Grove and West Whiteville remain active. These two churches are the "granddaddies" of our organization. Since that time, we have grown by leaps and bounds. We have a state championship in track and basketball.

"OUR LARGEST PROGRAM is basketball, in which we fielded 32 different teams in the three age-divisions. The horizon seems even brighter.

"There has been much talk," the staunch promoter of youth sports and of his beloved Cherry Grove Baptist Church, "of even going nation-wide with RA sports. Some states such as Virginia and Texas are very active in RA sports. We're hoping that by 1972 we will be able to send all-star teams from our area to compete with these state associations.

"Any help you can give us through publicity will be greatly appreciated."

--JP--

ALONG WITH his thanks, John Robert urged us to come to some of their contests and tournaments. However, it seems that everyone plays basketball at the same time, and surely play tournaments at the same times and you can imagine what a person already tied up with his fulltime coverage of prep events, well...

"JOHN'S LETTER continued "WE'VE HAD our 'Ups and Downs', but we're still moving forward. Some of our most memorable moments have been: 1. Having a packed gym at Chadbourn (Primary, old Chadbourn High) School for our tournaments the past two years; 2. Those Cherry Grove-Brunswick games; 3. Losing the State RA Track Championship by 1/6th of a point; and 4. Who can ever forget Cherry Grove losing in the district RA Tournament to Raeford in 4 Oxford Times? I'll never forget because I was the losing coach!!!"

"OHH, YES, WE're very proud of LLOYD BRITT (who became an ace left-hand pitching star for Whitewite's Wolfpack baseball team) from Brunswick doing so well in the high school ranks. I think this speaks well of the caliber of play in the BAs. There are many other high school athletes who had their beginning in RA sports, but I won't attempt to mention them ... But, winning trophies isn't our main goal, which is to use sports in a Christian atmosphere to help young boys become useful Christians and good citizens. Thanks for Everything! Sincerely Yours, (signed) John R. Faulk."

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As a VOCATIONAL Agriculture teacher, this graduate of Tabor City High School, also of N.C. State University where he was awarded both his bachelor's and Master's degrees and became affiliated with the Alpha Zeta and Farm House Fraternities, was truly at home in his post as agriculture teacher for more than 20 years. While there he served as Vice President of the State Future Farmers of America; and later had a Williams Township student who was a National FFA officer during the latter's tenure at NCSU.

--JP--

JIMMY SPIVEY, the current director of RA Basketball within the Columbus Baptist Association, remembers John Robert Faulk, who was 26 years young, played on an all-star team that John Faulk coached. Many others will remember him in many phases of his life.

NOT ONLY DID ROBERT earn and receive many professional citations and awards in his working days, he also held offices like that of the Columbus County Agriculture Teachers; vice-president of the N.C. Vocational Agriculture Teachers, but always treated his students as he wished them to treat him -- on a man-on-man basis. Any student who wanted to pass his classes under Mr. Faulk would have to prove him he truly made an effort to do so, and could achieve that goal.

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Cherry Grove to hold revival March 25-28

The Cherry Grove Baptist Church will host its spring revival Sunday, March 25 through Wednesday, March 28. The first service will be during the Sunday morning worship hour at 10:50 a.m. The remaining services will begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday evening through Wednesday evening.

The guest evangelists for the week will be Rev. Royce E. Williams, a native of Rocky Mount, is founder and President of Missions Evangelism Ministries. MEM is a non-profit organization formed in 1991, based in Rocky Mount, and is dedicated to evangelistic preaching and singing, both at home and abroad. Through revivals, evangelistic crusades and gospel concerts, MEM seeks the salvation of souls and the edification of the church. He holds a BS degree from Campbell College (now University) in Buies Creek, and a Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Williams was saved at age nine at Proctor's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, and surrendered to full-time Christian ministry at age 16. He was ordained to the Gospel

(Continued on page 2)
ministry at age 16. He was ordained to the Gospel Ministry at East Lumberton Baptist Church in 1978 in Lumberton and surrendered to God's call to preach the gospel in 1987.

Through music, missions, pastoral ministry and evangelistic preaching, Williams brings a collective 24 years of full-time Christian ministry. He has conducted 200 revivals and led in 150 missions of music events across 12 states: Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri, Mississippi, New York, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia; and in four foreign countries: Romania, Russia, Siberia and Ukraine. Williams is also a Southern Gospel recording artist with Packhouse Records in Greenville.

The revival will feature nightly the church's sanctuary choir and soloists. A nursery will be provided and will open at 6:50 p.m. Cherry Grove Baptist Church is on Swamp Fox Highway (Hwy. 905) between Tabor City and Fair Bluff. Rev. Maurice Gilliam is interim pastor and Rev. Fred Lewis is minister of music. The public is invited to attend.
Prosecutor: Churches Need To Be Involved in Politics

By THOM H. BILLINGTON

United States Attorney Samuel F. Currin of Raleigh says voters must look beyond the promises of a candidate if they are to elect honest politicians. "Just because a candidate puts he's a Christian in his brochure," that doesn't necessarily mean he is one, the prosecutor for eastern North Carolina said.

Currin made his remarks late Monday in a meeting with the pastor and 24 members of Cherry Grove Baptist Church. Currin and the pastor, the Rev. Melvin Boone, serve on a State Baptist Convention committee and Boone had invited the prosecutor here six months ago.

Using Romans 13:1-5 as the basis for his talk, Currin said "government is accountable to God and those who hold the reigns of government are accountable to God. That is a bedrock principle we must reaffirm today."

"I'm convinced we will never be able to meet this nation's crime problem until we . . . reaffirm some age-old principles that right and wrong do matter.

Voluntary compliance with the law, he added, "is absolutely critical to American society.

"If we confine ourselves to the black letter of the law, we then are ignoring the moral principles that the Bible tells us.

"But sometimes the law is not sufficient. The year 1984 "is probably a year of destiny," Currin added. Church people should take "an active role in the political process."

"But if we are going to have a system that is accountable to God, we must have a moral backbone."

"And that's what government needs."

"If we are going to have a moral backbone in government, we are going to have to come out of the steeple tower."

"You're going to have opposition from office-holders, businessmen and others, but you're just going to have to look beyond that," Currin added. "Some of the finest people I know are in Columbus County. You ought to have a fine view of yourselves."

Currin, a Republican, said he accepted Boone's invitation to talk about responsible citizenship. He was in charge of the ColCor prosecutions, here which resulted in the conviction of about 30 persons, including four prominent office-holders. Two of the defendants claimed Cherry Grove Baptist as their home church.

He said ColCor received little support from the political structure here, but "I believe that's changing now. Perhaps we will never be welcomed with a hug and a kiss at Court House Square."

"And the Rev. Merlin Boone, right, listens. Currin, left, makes a point with members of the church late Monday. (Staff photo)
Cherry Grove Baptists Observe Harvest Day

Cherry Grove Baptist Church did it again, Saturday, October 9, when they observed Harvest Day at the church. After the storms on Friday night, the weatherman sent a beautiful day on Saturday. It was estimated that about 300 attended the dinner and auction.

There was the most fabulous dinner imagineable, served in the Educational Building. The week's weather reports had been unpredictable, so the routine was changed from the outside to the inside of the buildings.

The long tables were crowded with delicious food; baked ham, chicken baked, fried, with pastry or rice, barbecue, roast beef and casserole, a variety of vegetables, salads, and delicious cakes and pies for desserts, coffee and colas to drink.

After the 300 or so hungry appetites had been appeased, there began the rush for the auction sale, with Stevie Ray as master of ceremonies. Tables lined one end and half of two sides of the room where articles for sale were on display. Bushel baskets of potatoes and farm tools were placed on the floor.

It was amazing the number of beautiful handmade articles that were on display. Quilts brought up to $250, crocheted afghans up to $150, crocheted capes bid in at $45, a wooden stool for $80, a bag of pomegranates, $50, lovely blouses at $45, flower arrangements from $20 to $90, and a large Smokey the Bear stuffed toy went for $221.00.

Can you imagine a pair of shrub clippers for $60, or an ordinary metal pail for $30? Aes, hoes, shovels, brooms, hammers and various other tools were available. Live pigs, weighing 60 pounds each, brought $130 and a pickup load of corn $225. 12 jars of jelly sold for $75. One bidder paid $100 for a 6-pound canned ham. He remarked that he could only "smell it occasionally, at that price".

This could go on and on, but if you have never attended a Cherry Grove Harvest Day Auction, you have missed a rewarding outing.

There was plenty of food to put everyone in a receptive mood, and the bidding was brisk and competitive, and at the same time the church was helped to reach their goal, this year, $10.00 for some far-reaching projects for the church and community.

The total amount realized has not yet been tabulated, but it is assumed their goal was reached.

It was quite a day.

Out-of-town guests for the day or weekend were: Dr. Aubrey Williamson of Baltimore, Md., and Mrs. A.J. Fairfax, sons of Thomasville. (Belle McNeill).
The Cherry Grove Baptist Church will host its spring revival Sunday, March 25 through Wednesday, March 29. The first service will be during the Sunday morning "worship hour at 10:50 a.m. The remaining services will begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday evening through Wednesday evening.

The guest evangelists for the week will be Rev. Royce E. Williams, a native of Rocky Mount, is founder and President of Missions Evangelism Ministries. MEM is a non-profit organization formed in 1981, based in Rocky Mount, and is dedicated to evangelistic preaching and singing, both at home and abroad. Through revivals, evangelistic crusades and gospel concerts, MEM seeks the salvation of souls and the edification of the church.

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1898 - murder
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Cherry Grove Baptist has Hall behind the pulpit

Dr. Philip Hall has recently been called to fulfill the pastoral responsibilities at Cherry Grove Baptist Church.

Hall and his wife, Janith, from New Bern have four children: one is in elementary school, one in High School, one in college and one married with two children. He is a former Education Director of Calvary Baptist Church in West Virginia and has pastored churches in Virginia, West Virginia and most recently, the Crossroads Baptist Church in New Bern.

Hall's service at Cherry Grove Baptist Church officially began June 1. An installation ceremony will be held for Hall during July.

"The priority and main thrust of my ministry is bringing the Word of God to people in a way that they can apply to their everyday life," Hall says.

Obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Glenville State College, Hall completed his Masters and Doctorate Degrees from Luther Rice Bible Institute and Seminary. He has had additional training in educational ministries, church programming, grief ministries, and church conflict management. Prior to going into the ministry, Hall served in the United States Air Force Aerospace Audio Visual Service. He also had owned and operated a retail business.

Other denominational activities in which Hall has served include: member of the West Virginia Baptist Convention Executive Board, Chairman of the West Virginia Baptist Convention Religious Education Committee, President of the East River Baptist Pastors Association and President of the Atlantic Baptist Association Ministers Association.

Hall's special interests and hobbies include computers, graphic design, photography and choir. He also has an exceptional interest and knowledge of sound systems and lighting. Hall says his ministry skills include preaching, Bible teaching, counseling, pastoral care, conflict/crisis resolution, missions, family ministry, evangelism and outreach as some of his top interests and strengths.

"The worship experience is a high priority," he says. "I very carefully plan services so that they will hold interest, involve the worshipers, and allow God to move in hearts as we worship. Along with this God has given me the ability to be an effective administrator of church programs."

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Dr. Philip Hall and wife, Janith
Along The
LUMBER RIVER
Bob Morgan

Cherry Grove Baptist Church

This week our series on churches in western Columbus County focuses on Cherry Grove, the early community and its church.

The Cherry Grove community is located in the southwestern section of Cerro Gordo Township. Among its early settlers were the Worleys, Stricklands, Coleman, Buffkins, Wilmotson, Edwards and Stallings. A Baptist church was established at Cherry Grove in 1810 by Bethel Buffkin. Its first pastor was Rev. Tart. Since the church was built in a grove of cherry trees, the name Cherry Grove was given to the new church and to the settlement.

The church was a long, straight structure built of logs. Its four doors were designated as follows: one for the pastor, one for the men, one for the women and one for the slaves. The building stood where the old cemetery is now located. There were no musical instruments: only tuning forks were used. Bethel Buffkin served as the first superintendent of the church.

Another church, a frame structure, was built in 1860 by Ebb and Brazil Strickland. Whipsaws were used to cut the lumber. A.M. Worley was the superintendent until 1889. In 1922 this church was moved across the road. It was remodeled in 1948. At one time there was a post office in Cherry Grove. Among the postmasters were Bill Strickland and Harley Godwin. Benjamin H. Buffkin drove the mail from Lumberton to Green Sea, S.C. He usually changed horses in Cherry Grove. People had to walk over rugged roads twice a week to get their mail. The pick-up point was located where the pastor’s home now stands.

Bill Strickland was magistrate for Cherry Grove. Some of the lawyers who came to the community on court days were Robert Schulken, Manly Toon, and Donald McRackan. After the death of Bill Strickland, Bud Anderson became magistrate. Coy Worley served as a justice of the peace.

Spencer Richardson was known throughout the Cherry Grove and Fair Bluff sections for his fine beef, which he sold door-to-door. He usually displayed the beef on pine and sweet gum branches.

Some of the local men worked in the lumber and turpentine businesses. Timber was floated down streams to the Lumber River. A tram track was built, starting on Short Strickland’s property and running throughout the community.

Austin Strickland ground meal and grits for the neighbors in his mill houses. The mill ponds were also used by churches for baptizing.

Among the local crops were corn, rice, cotton and tobacco. The first tobacco in the Cherry Grove section was grown on the A.M. Worley farm. Ed Ring came to Cherry Grove from Georgia and taught the Worleys how to plant and cure tobacco. The tobacco was cured in log barns and strung on sticks with nails.

Geese were raised to keep the grass out of cotton; their feathers were used for making mattresses. Sheep’s wool was spun and made into blankets. The women played an important part by weaving, quilting and husking corn.
Evangelist Larry McFadden leads revival services at Cherry Grove Baptist Church starting Sunday.

Revival services begin at 10:50 a.m. Sunday and 7:30 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday. A nursery will be available.

Pastor Dr. Phillip Hall and church members invite all to take part. The church is located on the Swamp Fox Highway (NC 904) midway between Tabor City and Fair Bluff.

Known throughout the Carolinas for his evangelistic ministry and as the music director for Jim Wilson Crusades, McFadden has led more than 450 crusades and revivals in the United States, India, Australia, Africa, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and Brazil.

As a composer and arranger, McFadden produced two music collections: “Speak the Name Jesus”, and “Speak the Name Jesus Vol. 2”. He has also produced a recording, “Longing For The Moment”.

He has also written several books including “What To Do When The Bottom Falls Out”, “Was Jesus God?”, and “Hope Spiritual Growth Series”.

McFadden says his purpose is “to be an ambassador and servant of Jesus Christ. I want my ministry to glorify the Savior in every way. My ministry in music is to bless the people and prepare their hearts for the gospel.”
Christmas drama

Members of Cherry Grove Baptist Church portray figures from the Bible during the annual holiday drama.
Drive-thru drama

Residents from around the county are enjoying the live nativity sponsored by Cherry Grove Baptist Church. "Unto Us, A Child Is Born" will be performed nightly through Thursday from 7-9 p.m. every hour and half-hour. The drama can be viewed from vehicles or while standing. The church is located on Swamp Fox Highway between Tabor City and Fair Bluff. For information, call 649-7910.
It's Christmas' coming to Cherry Grove Baptist

If you have driven along rural highway 904 between Fair Bluff and Tabor City in the picturesque community of Cherry Grove, you probably noticed that Christmas has been on the air since August. Cherry Grove Baptist Church's 40 member combined Sanctuary, Youth and Children's Choirs will present in concert their first ever musical, an early 20th Century drama that will take the audience on a journey from a traditional Christmas gathering to the nativity.


Also, youth and children choir and cast members in the show are Colby Strickland, Carey Strickland, Clay Strickland, Elizabeth Strickland, Amanda Strickland, Megan Strickland, Haylie Batten, Savanna Strickland, Kayla Worley, Jenna Strickland, Arron Herring, Tiffany Tedder, Olivia Strickland, Alex Herring, Zac Lovett, Walt Strickland, and Ethan Worley.

Dr. Doyle Holder, pastor and the congregation invite the public to attend this Christmas musical celebration. To guarantee seating, complimentary tickets are being issued. Please reserve your tickets by calling Ann Fairfax at 649-7293, or Lou Lovett at 653-3800.

Christmas and holiday events

Friday, Nov. 30
Whiteville City Schools Administration, 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.
County Extension Christmas Bazaar; WHS Chorale

Sunday, Dec. 2
Whiteville First Baptist Church, 7 p.m.
Hanging of the Greens

Tuesday, Dec. 4
Acme-Delco Middle School, 7 p.m.
Christmas Concert and Exhibition with band, chorus and art

Thursday, Dec. 6
Hallsboro Middle School, 7 p.m.
Christmas Concert and Exhibition with band, chorus and art

Tuesday, Dec. 11
Chadbourn Middle School, 7 p.m.
Christmas Concert with band and chorus

Thursday, Dec. 13
West Columbus High School, 7 p.m.
Christmas Concert and Exhibition with band, chorus, dance, theater and art

South Columbus High School, 7 p.m.
Winter Concert with band and chorus

Tabor City Middle School, 7 p.m.
Christmas Concert with band and chorus

Monday, Dec. 17
East Columbus High School, 7 p.m.
Winter Concert and Exhibition with band and chorus.
The Cherry Grove Baptist Church will present an early 20th century Christmas spectacular "It's Christmas" to the public on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 8 and 9 at 6:30 p.m. featuring the 40 member combined Sanctuary, Youth and Children's Choirs. Period costumes from early 20th century America will illuminate the stage as church members take you on a journey from a traditional Christmas gathering to the nativity. To be guaranteed a seat, complimentary tickets are being issued. Please reserve your tickets by calling Ann Fairfax at 649-7293, or Lou Lovett at 653-3800.

Soloists for the production are Stacey Graham, Trey Lewis, Debbie Lovett, Jonathan Lovett, Tiffany Ransom, Boyd Worley and Tina Worley. Other choir and cast members are Nanette Strickland, Gay Strickland, Gwen Strickland, Wanda Strickland, Lucille Strickland, Anna Williamson, Marie Faulk, Cyndi Lewis, Tonyua Herring, Deborah Suttles, Dan Strickland, Richard Williamson, Mark Lovett, Charles Ray Worley, Ron Herring, Sonnie Graham, Wayne Hayes, Jody Nance, Jerome Ward, and James Strickland. Also, youth and children choir and cast members in the show are...
Christmas, at least its spirit, will be celebrated in three performances of the musical extravaganza "It's Christmas" beginning this weekend at Cherry Grove Baptist Church.

Performances are set for 6:30 p.m. this Saturday and Sunday, and at 7 p.m. Monday, all in the church sanctuary, located in the picturesque community of Cherry Grove, midway between Tabor City and Fair Bluff on NC 904. Demand for tickets forced the third performance.

Organizers of this major musical event worried that some who wished to attend might be turned away at the door. To prevent that, complimentary tickets are available for each performance. To reserve tickets call Ann Fairfax at 649-7283, Lee Holder at 649-7307 or Lou Lovett at 653-3800.

Members of the Cherry Grove Baptist 40 member combined Sanctuary, Youth and Children's Choirs have come together for their first musical. It's an early 20th Century drama that will take the audience on a journey from a traditional Christmas gathering to the nativity.

Changing direction from past years of performing seasonal cantatas to combining all choirs into producing a large musical has motivated the entire church to get involved in the production, organizers say. Minister of Music Fred Lewis and Children's Choir Director Tina Worley direct the performance. Theatrical directors are B.J. Edge, Lori Gelezinsky and Lynn Strickland.

Period costumes from the early 20th century have been researched and designed by Tina Worley, Lynn Strickland and Nanette Strickland and sewn by seamstresses throughout the community. The elaborate set of a turn-of-the-century home and nativity scene is designed by Kelly Jones and constructed by the Baptist Men's Organization.


Youth and children choir and cast members are Colby Strickland, Carey Strickland, Clay Strickland, Elizabeth Strickland, Amanda Strickland, Megan Strickland, Haylie Batten, Savannah Strickland, Kayla Worley, Jenna Strickland, Arron Herring, Tiffany Tedder, Olivia Strickland, Alex Herring, Zac Lovett, Walt Strickland and Ethan Worley.

Dr. Doyle Holder, pastor, and congregation invite all to take part.
Workers are putting the finishing touches inside the Cherry Grove Baptist Fellowship Center.

Dinner theater to dedicate new church Fellowship Center

Story & Photos
By DEUCE NIVEN

A dedication ceremony will be part of the dinner theater and patriotic show, Strickland said. Cast members will include members of the preschool, children, and adult choirs. Individual and group acts from the church and community will also be featured.

Church youth, college and career students will serve as waiters.

The new structure replaces a much smaller fellowship hall located across NC 904 from the Cherry Grove community church. Activities there have been cramped for years, and there were worries about church members - especially children - crossing the busy highway, Strickland said.

(Continued on page 3)
Three years in the planning and construction, the new 6,600 square foot Fellowship Center has seating for up to 250 for meals, 350 for auditorium style seating.

Stage productions will be enhanced with state of the art lighting and sound centered on the large auditorium style stage. There is plenty of storage room, a commercial kitchen with pantry, restrooms with parlor for the ladies.

Tennis and volleyball courts, displaced by the new building, have been moved back and will be back in use soon, Strickland said. A new children’s playground on the property has been furnished through efforts of the young couple’s class.

Additional parking lots and outdoor lighting was part of the project, with a covered drive-through rear entrance. The new structure is connected to the present education building.

S&G Builders, Inc. of Green Sea is constructing the building, with final work and paving scheduled for completion before the July 13 dedication.

Fellowship Center Building Committee members include Strickland, Ron Herring, Charles Worley, Sonny Graham, Phyllis Coleman, Debbie Lovett, and B. J. Edge. Dr. Holder serves as an ex-officio member.

Sunday School classes are provided for nursery, preschool, children, youth, college and career, and adults.

Choirs for preschool, children, youth and adults are active with special programs throughout the year.

Mission organizations include the WMU, BYW, Brotherhood, Acteens, GA’s, Mission Fiends, RA’s.
Cherry Grove Baptist to dedicate new $550,000 fellowship center July 13

By BOB MORGAN

Cherry Grove Baptist Church on Hwy. 904 between Fair Bluff and Tabor City will celebrate the opening of its new fellowship center on Sunday, July 13 at 6 p.m. The celebration will consist of a dinner theatre "America-Land that I Love" with a dedication ceremony and patriotic show. Cast members for the show will be members of the preschool, children, and adult choirs plus individual and group acts from the church and community. Complimentary tickets for former church members, friends and family of current church members may be obtained from Lee Holder at 649-7307, Ann Fairfax at 649-7293 or Lou Lovett at 653-3800. Only 240 seats are available for the program.

The new fellowship center was three years in planning with a budget of $550,000. The fellowship center has an estimated floor space of 6,600 sq. ft. with seating for 250 for meals or 350 for auditorium style seating. The ultra-modern center has a stage for productions with state of the art lighting and sound, storage room, a commercial kitchen with pantry, restrooms with parlor for ladies, new children's playground (furnished and assembled by the young couples class), new additional parking lots and outdoor lighting, covered drive-through back entrance, and it is connected to the present education building.

Pastor, Dr. Doyle Holder extends congratulations to the Fellowship Center Building Committee: Dan Strickland—chairman, Ron Herring, Charles Worley, Sonny Graham, Phyllis Coleman, Debbie Lovett, and B.J. Edge, and Dr. Holder (ex-officio).

Contractor was S&G Builders, Inc. of Green Sea, S.C. Cherry Grove Baptist is a growing church with a membership of approximately 350. They have an active average Sunday school attendance of 120-130 and active average worship attendance of 130-140.

The church has a wide range of programs to offer its members. They include Sunday school: Class for adults (singles and adults), College and Career, Youth, Children, Preschool and nursery.

Mission Organizations: WMU, BYW, Brotherhood, Acteens, GA's, Mission Friends, RA's.

Music Department: Choirs for preschool, children, youth and adult.
Cherry Grove Baptist Church, located approximately 9 miles South of Fair Bluff along Highway 904 has undergone many changes in its colorful 193 years of history. The above photo was taken in 1985 during its 175th anniversary. During the 1990s a large front porch with columns was erected. The steeple was also replaced. This renovation was done while Dr. Tony Fulbright was pastor. The church has a history of documenting its special events. (See photos on page 2 dating back to the year 1860. The church was founded in 1810.)

Cherry Grove Baptist Church
'A Living History Since 1810'

By BOB MORGAN

The history of Cherry Grove Baptist Church is as colorful as the pioneers who established it in 1810. The church is almost as old as Columbus County and in 2010 will celebrate its 200th anniversary. The present-day congregation keeps their ancestral heritage alive and well through a recorded history of past events and documentation of faithful servants who pastored the church throughout the years.

In 1985, the church celebrated its 175th anniversary which was highlighted by their annual "Harvest Day" auction. It was preceded by a covered dish dinner at 12 noon. Throughout the past several years folks have traveled to the area to see the living nativity scene put on by members of the congregation each year in December.

As they make plans to celebrate their 200th anniversary in 2010 the following historical information will give readers a chance to look back and reflect on the past and look forward to the future.

Continued on page 2
The second church building of Cherry Grove Baptists, circa 1860

Cherry Grove Baptist Church
Historical Review of 193 Years

(Cherry Grove History)

50th Membership during dedication of sanctuary, completed in 1948

There was no music and only recitation was permitted in the early building. There was no organ until 1894. The first Baptists were instrumental in calling to the pulpit in 1917 a man who was to become the state's first black minister, Rev. W.C. Wescott. He served for the worship hour. There was no music and only recitation was permitted in the early building. There was no organ until 1894. The first Baptists were instrumental in calling to the pulpit in 1917 a man who was to become the state's first black minister, Rev. W.C. Wescott. He served for the worship hour.

During his pastorate, the church grew in size and significance, and a new pavilion was added to the existing building. A Sunday school was added, and the church began to hold special events, such as revivals and concerts, which attracted people from surrounding areas.

In 1970, the church leadership decided to expand the facility to accommodate more people. A new construction project was initiated, and the work was completed in 1972. The new building was dedicated on June 3, 1972, with a celebration that included a revival service.

During the years that followed, the church continued to grow in size and influence. It became an important center for the community, offering programs and services to meet the needs of its members and the wider community. As the church has grown, so too has its impact on the community and beyond, becoming a beacon of hope and love for all who enter its doors.

In 2023, the church celebrated its 193rd anniversary, a milestone that marks its long and storied history in the community. As it looks to the future, Cherry Grove Baptist Church continues to be a place of worship, learning, and service, committed to sharing the love of Jesus Christ with all who come through its doors.