

HISTORY of THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
of Pilot Mountain, North Carolina

The Rev. J. H. Lewellin, a missionary with the Pilot Mountain Baptist Association, organized the Pilot Mountain Baptist Church on Saturday, July 23, 1892. Assisting in the service was Elder Alexander Stamey. Those present at the organizational meeting were: Rev. Lewellin, his wife Sarah E. Lewellin, daughter, Martha S. Lewellin, and son, Frank T. Lewellin, all from Cross Roads Church; John H. Boyles, his wife, Sarah Needham Boyles, and their four youngest children, David, Edna, Jennie, and Nealy, from Shiloh Church; Daniel and Matilda M. Marion, Rufus H. Redman and wife, Lucy Ann Haymore Redman, with daughter, Roxanne Redman Stephens, from Hollow Springs Church. According to the original minutes of that meeting, others were present. In addition to the individuals listed above, other charter members include: William R. Dunman, Lydia Dunman, and Lillian Jackson, Sulphur Springs Church; William H. Stephens and W. M. Stone, Shiloh Church; Joseph F. Kirkman, Hollow Springs Church; Lucinda Boyles Stephens, Mount Olive Baptist Church; and Adoline Whitaker, White Plains Church. The membership rolls continued to grow through the year 1892, by both transfers of letter and baptism.

Based on information found on the deed, it is known that the Pilot Mountain Church existed prior to its official date of organization. Trustees, Daniel Marion, Emanuel W. Culler, and John H. Boyles, purchased the land on which the first church was built on October 23, 1890. The land was purchased from Daniel Marion and wife, Matilda M. Marion, and Bynum Boyles for the sum of one dollar.

The first church building was a wooden structure with two separate front doors. It was located on a 100' by 70' lot on Depot Street. The home of the late Meigs and Gertrude Mills Needham occupies the original church site and is currently owned by Scott and Erin Needham, grandson of Meigs and Gertrude Mills Needham. The church building was situated between the homes of Christie Needham and O. T. Fowler. During the early morning hours of March 12, 1919, the block of houses, including the church, was destroyed by fire. For the next two years, the congregation met at the old school, located on Key Street, and at the old Methodist Church on Stephens Street.

On October 24, 1919, the church trustees, J. W. Redman, Samuel W. Fulk, James M. Napier, Thomas G. Cressman, and Isaac Martin Gordon, bought the present site from Miss Rosa Stephens, daughter of charter members John Francis Stephens. and Lucinda Boyles Stephens. The lot, which measured 180' x 90', was located on the south side of West Main Street. The purchase price was \$1200. During the year, 1922, the front portion of the present building was constructed. The new building included the sanctuary and eight classrooms. The new facility was dedicated on July 27, 1927.

In 1949, the education wing was constructed. The new addition originally included thirteen classrooms, kitchen, and fellowship hall. Also, in 1949, the name was officially changed from Pilot Mountain Baptist Church to First Baptist Church of Pilot Mountain, and the church constructed a parsonage at the corner of Dodson Mill Road and Lynchburg Road, on a lot given to the church by Betty Leake Smith and daughters, Neva and Norma. The lot adjoining the parsonage was given by Walter M. Matthews in 1987. The deed was recorded on June 8, 1987.

In 1980, the church purchased the adjoining property of the late Dr. and Mrs. R. A. Frye. The church offices, conference room and library were moved to the "Rock House," in 1982.

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In 1992, renovations were completed which included the following: revamping the front steps; remodeling the vestibule to include a side entrance and a bride's room; expansion of the sanctuary through incorporation of four Sunday school classrooms; and remodeling the choir loft and pulpit area. During the same renovation, the fellowship hall was enlarged by the removal of several walls, and the kitchen modernized.

During a called conference on Sunday, August 18, 2002, church members voted to address additional needs of our church. Approved were the addition of Sunday School classroom space, new fellowship hall, commercial kitchen, parking and handicap needs. In the fall of 2003, the congregation voted to proceed with fund raising efforts for a planned 1.2-million-dollar addition/renovation/preservation project. It was completed in the summer of 2009 by general contractor Garanco, Inc.

Pastors who have served our church are J. H. Lewellin, James M. Haymore, R. M. Loftis, Dr. C. C. Haymore, Dr. Tom Smith, W. H. Beamer, E. W. Turner, J. W. Burchette, W. E. Linney, E. T. Simms, R. W. Hovis, Dennis M. Larkin, Otis Lanning, Valmer Meadows, Thomas Herbert Parris, R. Claxton Hall, Kenneth Lee Hollifield, Lowell F. Sodeman, William H. Edwards, Dr. Carlton Mitchell, Ronald Reid Settle, Dan Ryan Hutchens, William Amis Daniel, Floyd Eugene Sherrill, Walker Armstrong, Stephen Pierce, Mike Willard, Robert Dixon, Mike Willard, and Andy Hughes.

June 23, 201



### **Pilot Mountain Baptist Church (First Baptist Church of Pilot Mountain)**

The Rev. James H. Llewellyn, a missionary with the Pilot Mountain Baptist Association, organized the Pilot Mountain Baptist Church on Saturday, July 23, 1892. Assisting in the service was Elder Alexander Stamey. Those present at the organizational meeting were: Rev. Llewellyn, his wife Sarah E. Llewellyn, daughter, Martha S. Llewellyn, and son, Frank T. Llewellyn, all from Cross Roads Baptist Church; John H. Boyles, his wife, Sarah Needham Boyles, and their four youngest children, David, Edna, Jennie, and Nealy, from Shiloh Church; Daniel and Martha Matilda Ashburn Marion, Rufus H. Redman and wife, Lucy Ann Haymore Redman, and daughter, Roxanne Redman Stephens, from Hollow Springs Baptist Church. According to the original minutes of that meeting, others were present. In addition to the individuals listed above, other charter members include: William R. Dunman, Lydia Dunman, and Lillian Jackson, Sulphur Springs Baptist Church; William H. Stephens and W. M. Stone, Shiloh Church; Joseph F. Kirkman, Hollow Springs Baptist Church; Lucinda Boyles Stephens, Mount Olive Baptist Church; and Adaline Whitaker, White Plains Baptist Church. The membership rolls continued to grow throughout the year 1892, by both transfers of letter and baptism.



**Figure 126: Pilot Mountain Baptist Church on Depot Street, prior to 1919 fire.**



Based on information found on the deed, it is known that the Pilot Mountain Church existed prior to its official organization. Trustees, Daniel Marion, Emanuel W. Culler, and John H. Boyles, purchased the land on which the first church was built, October 23, 1890. The land was purchased from Daniel Marion and wife, Matilda M. Ashburn Marion, and Bynum Boyles for the sum of one dollar.

During the early morning hours of March 12, 1919, the block of houses on South Depot Street, including the church, was destroyed by fire. According to her daughter, Mary Lois Gordon Thomas, Mary Oliver Gordon's reaction upon learning of the destructive fire was, "What a terrible loss, but now I will get my Sunday School." For the next two years, the congregation met at the old school, located on Key Street, and at the old Methodist Church on Stephens Street.

On October 24, 1919, the church trustees, Joseph William (Will) Redman, Samuel Wilson Fulk, James Monroe Napier, Thomas Graves Crissman, and Isaac Martin Gordon, bought the present church site from Miss Rosa Stephens, daughter of charter members John Francis Stephens and Lucinda Boyles Stephens. The lot, which measured 180' x 90', was located on the south side of West Main Street. The purchase price was \$1200. During the year, 1922, the front portion of the present building was completed. The new building included the sanctuary and eight classrooms. The new facility was dedicated on July 27, 1927.



**Figure 127: Pilot Mountain Baptist Church and congregation upon completion of new building in 1924.**



In 1949, an education wing was added. It originally included thirteen classrooms, kitchen, and fellowship hall. Also, in 1949, the name was officially changed from Pilot Mountain Baptist Church to First Baptist Church of Pilot Mountain.



**Figure 128: First Baptist Church of Pilot Mountain, circa 1998, after 1992 renovation.**

In 1982, the church purchased the adjoining property of the late Dr. and Mrs. Richard Alexander Fry. In 1992, renovations were completed which included the following: revamping the front steps; remodeling the vestibule to include a side entrance and a bride's room; enlarging the sanctuary, accomplished by incorporating four Sunday School classrooms and remodeling the choir loft and pulpit area. During the same time, the fellowship hall was enlarged by removing several walls and the kitchen was modernized. The church offices, conference room and library were moved to the former Fry property known as the "Rock House."

During the summer of 2008, ground was broken on an addition that included more Sunday school rooms and a larger fellowship hall. The addition also included a covered entrance, elevator and other handicap accessible equipment, including a new handicap ramp from the Main Street sidewalk to the church building. The new ramp was paved with brick pavers engraved with the names of many of the church founders. Every attempt was made to make



the building more accessible for the elderly and handicapped. The new facility was dedicated on 19 April 2009.<sup>65</sup>



**Figure 130: First Baptist Church after completion of 2012 addition and renovation.**



**Figure 129: W. M. Matthews' Men's Bible Class picnic on a farm on Simmons Grove Church Road. Class members and their wives, from left to right: Edith and Delbert Boyles, Willie Kay and Lester Brown, Maggie and Pate Fulk, Nonnie and Roy Bullington, Everett Wall, Hessie and Walter Matthews, Ruby Lynch Wall, Mr. Davis, Myra and Walter Lynch, Stella Gordon Redman, Wick Gordon, Claude Redman, I. M. Gordon, Buck Merritt, Dr. Charles Sykes, Willie Merritt, Mrs. Sykes, Mae and Codell Owens, Rev. John D. Smith.**

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<sup>65</sup> History of First Baptist Church of Pilot Mountain, NC, by Carolyn Boyles