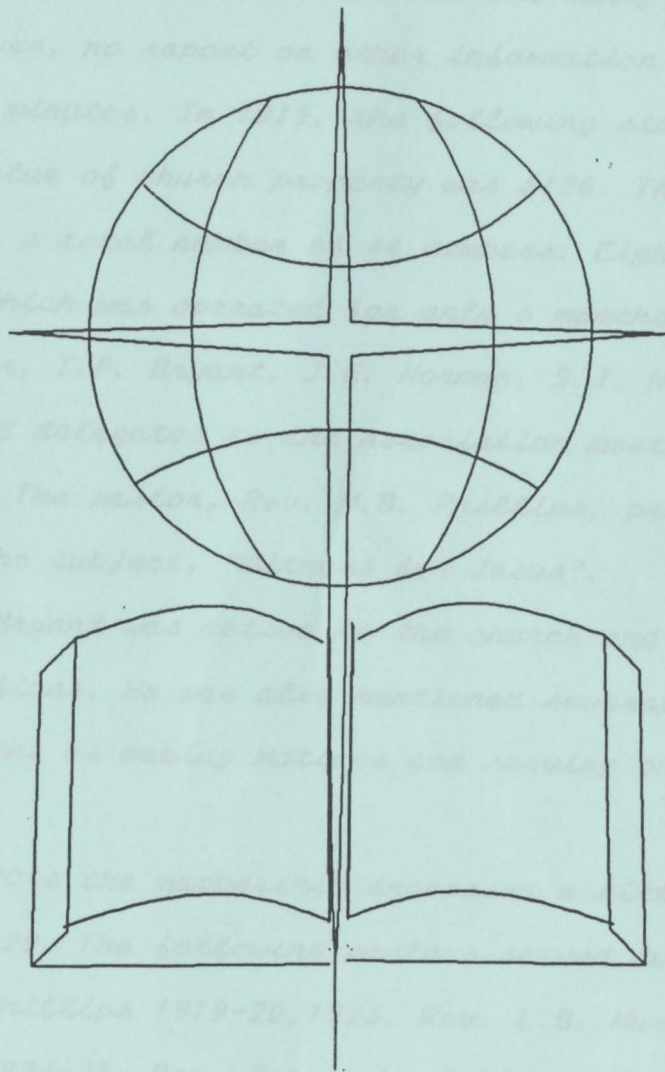


A BRIEF HISTORY OF NEW LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH



JULY 18, 1993

A Brief History of New Life Baptist Church

The New Life Baptist Church was organized in 1918 under the leadership of Rev. M.B. Phillips who became pastor and served until 1920 and again in 1923. The young church met in the Old Tucker School House until a church building was constructed in 1920.

In 1918, the church was received into the Surry Baptist Association. However, no report or other information is recorded in the Associational minutes. In 1919, the following statistics are recorded. Total value of church property was \$150. There were 16 male and 28 females for a total number of 44 members. Eighty were enrolled in Sunday School which was operated for only 6 months at a cost of \$3.00. On this year, T.F. Bryant, J.E. Norman, S.J. Hodges, and C.M. Adkins were elected delegates to the Association meeting with the Rocky Ford Church. The pastor, Rev. M.B. Phillips, preached the annual sermon on the subject, "Witness for Jesus".

Brother T.F. Bryant was active in the church and served by holding various offices. He was also mentioned several times in associational minutes as making motions and serving on a number of committees.

During the 1920's the membership increased a little, fluctuating from 45 to 72 in 1929. The following pastors served during this period. Rev. M.B. Phillips 1919-20, 1923. Rev. L.B. Murry, 1921-22. Rev. E.B. Draughn 1924-25. Rev. George W. Oakley 1926-30.

The young church was struggling for life and growth. Providing a place of worship claimed their attentions. The records show that during the first 12 years the church gave a total of \$68.27 to all

missions.

In the 1930's the membership continued to increase. However, the reports show an up and down pattern. In 1932, 86 members were reported, but in 1934 it was down to 69. By 1938 it was back up to 80. Rev. W. Frank Weatherman served as pastor for most of this period, 1931-36 and 1938-39. Rev. Lloyd Pardue was pastor in 1937.

During the decade of the 30's the church continued to be more interested in its own existence. The missionary's vision was dim as a total of \$36.07 was recorded as gifts to missions in the ten-year period.

In 1941 the highest membership on record, 97, was reported. However in 1942 it dropped to 77 and remained in the 70's for about 6 years. By 1949 it had gone back up to 86. However, in 1950 the record shows a drop to 42. This fell again to 36 in 1951. The implications and details of this are best forgotten except to remind us that factions and splits do come to churches. This period was characterized by short pastorates. For seven years there was a different pastor each year. Rev. John Weatherman served in 1940 and 1944. The following also served during this period: Rev. D.W. Day 1941, Rev. Hubert Hawks 1942, Rev. Samson Collins 1943, Rev. Sam Jones 1945. In 1946 Rev. Charlie Jackson became pastor and continued until 1948. He returned in 1954 and served for two more years. Rev. Elbert Hawks served in 1949. Rev. R.D. Fletcher was pastor in 1950-51.

During this period the mission activities of the church increased just a little.

The decade of the 40's saw the greatest growth in the history of the church. The membership rose a steady gain each year. Cooperation

Beginning in 1952 the membership began to move up again, 44^{1/2} being reported. By 1953 it had gained to 55. Rev. Fred McHone was the pastor during these 2 years. However the next two years there was a drop back to 45 members.

The early 50's was a difficult time for the church. However, it refused to die and continued to slowly move forward. About 1955 a period of growth began that has continued until the present. In this decade increases in membership, giving and missions was recorded. Mission contributions were \$581.

In 1956 Rev. E.M. Eldridge became the pastor and continued until 1961. His salary for the first year was \$296. The Church building, constructed in 1920, was becoming too small and two Sunday School rooms were built. During Brother Eldridge's ministry the membership increased from 45 to 91. Two worship services a month were conducted. Salary had increased to \$304 by 1961.

Rev. Joe Bowman became pastor in 1962. That year the membership was reported as 45 resident and 51 non-resident, 96 total. During his ministry the membership has increased to 167.

In the spring of 1963 the new building was started. It was located across the road on a new lot donated by Mr. Charlie Atkins. The total cost of the building was \$57,000, \$27,500 of which was borrowed. The first service was the first Sunday of 1964. The dedication service was held on the third Sunday of January. The mortgage was paid off in August 1972 and a note burning was held on September 24, 1972.

The decade of the 60's saw the greatest growth in the history of the church. The membership made a steady gain each year. Cooperation and dedication of the people has produced harmony and spiritual growth. During this period the Mission contributions amounted to \$3,223. Rev. Bowman's contribution of time, talent and resources challenged the people to do their best. His faithful service year after year produced a steady growth in many areas.

The 70's began on a continuing path of growth. While working hard to finish paying off the debt the church gave \$2,221 to missions in 1970 and 1971. In August 1972 the church adopted a new budget which designated 25% to missions. On March 6, 1977, Rev. Joe Bowman resigned due to ill health.

In May of 1977, Rev. Kenneth Jessup was elected as pastor. Under Rev. Jessup's leadership the parking lot was paved and paid for in October of 1978. Mission contributions continued to grow.

In July, 1980 the church rebuilt the altar making the choir loft larger. The church saw the need for a handicapped ramp and one was built in October of 1984. The pews were also upholstered. In December of 1985 a P.A. system was installed. In February of 1988 Rev. Jessup resigned.

In August of 1988, Rev. L. J. Rippey was elected as pastor. He was ordained on September 10, at Oak Ridge Baptist Church in Cana, Va. In June of 1990 the parking lot was resurfaced and in September the church saw the need for putting vinyl on the outside of the church. In 1992 the church started the project of renovating the basement. In August of 1992, Rev. Rippey resigned.

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In January of 1993, Rev. Ernest Nichols, was elected as pastor.

In the 75 years of the existence of the New Life Baptist Church it has come a long way. It has come from a little group worshipping in a borrowed school building to the present comfortable and beautiful building. The membership, though at times up and down, has grown to the present 162.

As we look ahead it is hoped that New Life Baptist Church will be a greater influence in the community as well as around the world.

We are grateful to those of years gone by who saw a need for a church and worked to bring about its organization. As we enjoy today the fruits of their sacrifices we give thanks to Almighty God for this blessings. Most of all we are thankful for the saving grace of His son, Jesus Christ, who has changed the lives of hundreds through the New Life Baptist Church.

JULY 13, 1993