

## ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH

The cornerstone in the red brick sanctuary of the Antioch Baptist Church, located just off Chapman Highway on White School Road, gives the founding date as 1868 but the oldest book of records gives account of a business meeting on the first Saturday in May 1868, leaving the exact date of the beginning of Antioch unknown. At that meeting the church considered a building location. .“whether the church was willing to build or go to the place selected or not...” Outcome of the vote was unclear: “Opposed unanimously, seven approved...”

Because N. H. Haggard moderated the meeting, he evidently was the first pastor. At the next meeting, September 1, 1869, the investigating committee “reported the place selected was near S. A. Rule’s spring on the Sevierville Road, for which Mr. Rule agrees to give one acre and a half of land for the benefit of the church.”

Final agreement was reached at a November 1, 1869 meeting when land belonging to “Brother Laban Jenkins and C. Jenkins, for which he agrees to give as much as is necessary” was selected. The present Antioch Baptist Church is built on that property which includes additional land from Mrs. Porter Ogle and Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Huskey.

Weather dictated whether or not services would be held many times. When weather was bad, the whole community, all denominations, mostly Baptist and Methodist, met at the closest church, which was either Antioch, Black Oak, or Pleasant Hill Methodist Church. On one occasion church minutes report the preacher couldn’t attend because his horse was sick.

On Thursday, December 23, 1869, the church elected the following trustees, some of whose descendants still serve the church: Laban Jenkins, Henry Baker, S. A. Rule, Caleb Rule, and Joshua Jenkins.

Members voted to sell the old church house to the highest bidder in 1893 and the going price was \$37.70 with three months in which to make payment. Membership in 1895 was 128. Antioch records show that the church was using Southern Baptist literature even at that early date.

Old minutes were filled with judgmental proceedings based on straying members selling moonshine, gambling, cursing, playing cards,

and other actions considered unchristian. Many times members were turned out of the church on these grounds, some of them later repenting and being re-instated but others being hurt, never to return. At the back of the very old books of Minutes, there are beautifully written obituaries penned in calligraphy with delicately described lives of the deceased, a practice that should have been continued as a legacy.

With the evolving of a more affluent membership, giving increased. In 1886 the church gave \$1.52 as collection for a colporter. Ten years later in 1896, 55 cents was given to missions and by 1909 the pastor's salary was \$50 per year. Money for missions increased to 77 cents and on June 14, minutes indicate that the women voted to give eggs or the proceeds thereof to the treasury.

Many outstanding Christian leaders began their Christian leadership lives at Antioch, some working in the home church, others moving to other areas of service. In 1917 Freeman Baker and Stewart Rule received the blessings of the church, later becoming influential pastors. The Reverend Baker pastored in Kentucky, Mascot, and in Sevier County. Caleb Rule, ordained at Antioch, became pastor of churches in Sevier and Knox counties. The Reverend Jepp Helton, one of the best loved pastors in Sevier County, pastored the church that ordained him in addition to other area churches. Robert Broome, ordained at Antioch, became founder of the Baptist Peace Movement, going on peace missions from Louisville, Kentucky to Russia, Switzerland, and other countries. He published the first Baptist Peacemakers International Spirituality Pamphlets from Kentucky. A young man, who though not ordained, dedicated his life for special service, is Mike Justus. While working on his Doctorate, he served with Smoky Mountain Resort missions at Dollywood, at the present time, 1991, teaches history at the Georgia Southern University.

On February 3, 1946, the membership voted to build a beautiful red brick building with sanctuary and classrooms and the first service was held in the new building February 3, 1951 while the Reverend Glenn Whaley was pastor. Later the church began construction of a seven- room red brick parsonage across the parking area from the church. The new home was ready for occupancy in 1960 when Pastor H. N. Key and family moved in.

On "Old Timers' Day," 1975, the church broke ground for still another building. Connected to the original building by a breezeway and overhead enclosed walkway, the two-story Ray F. Williams

Education Building was dedicated May 2, 1976, again on "Old Timers' Day," honoring Reverend Williams who served the church first as interim several months, then as pastor for 15 years, and again as "fill-in" until the next pastor was called.

The church worked together on all three buildings, largely directed by committees: For the brick sanctuary building, Vestal Lewelling, E. E. Jenkins, and Sam Moore, treasurer. The parsonage building committee consisted of Sam Moore, chairman, Janette Jenkins, and Eugene Jenkins. For the Education Building, Truett Frazier, Priscilla Garner, and Sam Moore served. A finance committee was composed of Junior Jenkins, Bobby Joe Garner, and Conrad Jett.

Deacons in 1976 were Lloyd Flynn, Sherman Baker, Earl Price, Conrad Jett, Ernest Justus, Jim Arwood, and Carl Wilson. Jim Catlett was Sunday School Director and Joe Crisp directed the Training Union.

Three organized choirs were under the direction of Kathryn Fox, Mike Justus, Arnold Parton, Charles Baker, and Bobbie Williams, Music Coordinator. Pianists in 1976 were Dicey Lawson, Gail Atchley, Judy Catlett, Brenda Brannon, Ruby Walker, and Bobbie Williams. Pat Price is 1991 pianist and Dixie Lawson is organist. Phillip Meek plays the piano for evening worship and choir director is Mike Williams. There is a children's choir and a youth choir. Music has always been a primary interest at Antioch.

Pastors serving Antioch through the years were: Noah Haggard, 1869; William M. Burnette, 1870; Langston Cunningham, 1874; Noah Haggard, 1871; Langston Cunningham, 1873; William M. Burnette, 1880; David Russell, 1881; H. S. Blair, 1882; W. C. McPherson, 1884; J. B. Walker, 1886; Caleb Rule, 1889; Mark Roberts, 1890; A Hurst, 1892; Ben Langston, 1893; J. W. Kite, 1896.

Levi Branson, 1897; E. L. Titsworth, 1900; W. E. Conner, 1905; M. C. Atchley, 1909; W. W. Bailey, 1910; W. M. Hodges, 1911; W. E. Connor, 1912; J. W. Grubb, 1913; J. R. Dykes, 1914; R. E. Rule, 1916; J. E. Hicks, 1919; W. Stewart Rule, 1920; J. E. Hicks, 1922; W. Robert King, 1923; J. E. Hicks, 1925.

I. C. Frazier, 1929; L. S. Carnes, 1931; I. C. Frazier, 1932; J. E. Hicks, 1933; J. L. Helton, 1936; J. Dillard Brown, 1944; P. B. Baldrige, 1945; W. R. King, 1948; Glenn Whaley, 1950; Keith Whitehead, 1952; M. Drinnen, 1953; Finnis Fuller, 1954; H. N. Key,

1957; Charles R. Hitson, 1961; Ray F. Williams, 1961; Ernie Coleman, 1979; and Mike Jones, 1987.

Dates refer to the year in which pastors began their ministries at Antioch.

Information came from the Antioch Historical research team: Ruby Walker, Judy Catlett, and Bobbie Jo Williams.