

SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH

Uncle Amos Garner said that if a person came into Shiloh community who was able to read or write and make a few figures, parents would employ him to stay several days or weeks to teach their children. Through the years, several log cabins were built for this purpose, one being the Whittles School House where Shiloh Baptist Church began.

Located "...in the first hollow west of the Lige Garner home," additional land was later given by C. E. Atchley and Mr. and Mrs. Lige Garner. Families living near the Whittles School petitioned Zion Hill Church "...for the purpose of doing business and or an arm of said church." The petition was granted in January 1874 with the following members as a nucleus: Assa Rogers, Eliza Rogers, Jesse Rogers, Hannah Rogers, and Eliza C. Rogers, all from EliJoy. From Knob Creek came Claiborn Lowasser, Anderson Lowasser, Margaret Lowasser (later spelled 'Loposser'), W. M. Household and Rebecca Jane Householder.

Zion Hill members were William Odem, Mary Odem, Mary Nichols, Margaret Nichols, Matilda Nichols, and Nancy Sexton. At the organization meeting, N. H. Haggart became moderator and William Householder church clerk. Additional members were Mary Hyde, Eithur Hyde, Emily Hyde, William Yeats, Jesse J. Carver, and Lucinda Hyde.

It is not known how long worship services were held in the school. The first building to house the young church was on the grounds of the cemetery adjacent to the present church property, separated by a public road on the South side of the church.

Shiloh joined Little River Baptist Association in 1874 sending Asa Rogers, W. M. Householder, and William Yates as messengers. Church membership had grown to 55 at the end of the first year.

During the first nine years membership increased to 105. First messengers to Sevier County Association were R. T. Hood, John Linebager, James Garner, and W. E. Drinnen.

In 1890, a special committee called the "Missionary Beggars," was appointed: Rachel Shelly, Minnie Johnson, Sarah Sexton, Rettie Clark, Purly Thomas, Pearl Knight, Martha Brower, Voly Thomas, and Sally Ann Clark.

Shiloh assisted in organization of First Chilhowee, now known as First Seymour Baptist Church. A. J. Goolsby, Calaway Linebarger, James M. Garner, and Elijah Johnson represented Shiloh at the organization meeting June 9, 1893.

The Whittle School house had been a life saver for the newly organized Shiloh Baptist Church, but the main concern was to build a new church building.

At a meeting called to discuss the possibility of building, the people concluded that the undertaking would be too great for them. With sorrowful hearts, they began leaving the church. Suddenly a peculiar noise was heard coming from the top of the old log building. Several people had already mounted wagons, horses and mules, discouraged and sad. After a brief investigation, Uncle John Shelly was found on top of the church pulling off boards with all his might. He was heard shouting: "We're going to have a new church if I have to build it myself!"

The group reassembled and A. J. Temple donated land for a building site. In July 1883, a building committee was appointed: Asa Rogers, William Nichols, T. G. Flanagan, Henry Franklin. Michael Wardell, W. C. Dunlap, and W. Hutchins.

Sunday morning, April 4, 1948, while J. L. Helton was pastor, a little girl came running down the aisle shouting, "Preacher Helton, the church is on fire!" Pews, piano, light fixtures, and furniture were saved, but the building the old patriarchs sacrificed so much to give went down in flames.

The church continued worshipping in the Shiloh School until the new church was built. This building committee was Lige Garner, Bill Miller, Dewey Tipton and pastor J. J. Helton.

By December 23, 1953, the building was completed-and the debt paid in full. June 5, 1960 the church voted to build a pastorium on church grounds. It was completed in 1961 for \$7,590. Much time, work and material were donated.

Sunday School began in 1888, BYPU in 1950, VBS in 1936, deposited money in bank in April, 1937, bought piano in 1937, installed electricity March, 1941, combined treasuries in 1955 added parking space and restrooms in 1957, held a school of Missions in 1959, joined pastor's retirement plan in 1959.

Shiloh Baptist Church has had a long and fruitful history amidst many difficulties and problems, and its future is as bright as God's promises.

Pastor, Reverend Melvin Carr, 1989.

Information: Rev. Jeb Helton and Bill DeLozier.