

WALNUT GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Twenty Bethel Baptist Church members withdrew from that church to organize the Walnut Grove Baptist Church January 18, 1875.

Founding brothers and sisters were Viz Robert Loveday, Cornealou Fox, Catharine Loveday, Vasta Benson, J. L. Brown, Nancy Loveday Caughron, Roten Loveday, Lavina Loveday, Eraline Fox, Sarah Loveday, Catharine Brown, Elizabeth Brown, Nancy Loveday, Mary Reece, William C. Loveday, Ira Loveday, Mary Benson, Sarah Loveday Jr., Louiza Newman, and Elizabeth Connatser. The first baptism added 13 members.

Visiting elders helping with the organization were William Gorman, N. S. Blair, Lewis Breeden, and Preston Maples. John Russell was moderator and J. H. Frame and G. A. Atchley were clerk's protom. The first pastor was Elder William Gorman. Gideon Hurst served as first clerk and A. R. Connaster, one of the first deacons, was treasurer. Other deacons ordained to service at the beginning were Ira Loveday and Cornelius Fox.

The Connatser family donated land on which the first church was built. It was a one-room log cabin with a dirt floor. The roof had wooden shingles, which were later replaced with a galvanized roof. The church had since been improved and made into a beautiful worship place. The bell, purchased in 1900, still rings.

Walnut Grove was one of the first Association churches to send money for foreign missions in 1875. She was one of 24 churches included in the Sevier County Baptist Association organization in November 1886.

Henry Newman, J. J. Loveday, Robert Loveday, W. R. Loveday, L. D. Connatser, A. R. Connatser, and Gideon Hurst represented Walnut Grove at the Association organizational meeting. J. J. Loveday served on the Education Commission and the church contributed 75 cents toward the printing of the first books of Annual meeting minutes.

Pastors of Walnut Grove to date, 1988: William Gorman, John Sutton, John Russell, E. Holt, S. F. Payne, J. W. A. Coker, L. Cunningham, Levi Branson, William Brown, Evan Hurst, G. S. Houser, William Hurst, J. W. Moreice, D. R. Mullendore, Newt Clabough, W. E. Conner, W. W. Bailey, S. A. Clark, J. E. Hicks, R. E. Rule, G. M. Fawver, J. A. Atchley, J. R. Connatser, J. A. Caylor, W. W. King, W. A. Masterson, John M. Fox, A. P. Valentine, H. W. Fans, E. E. Adams, R. A. McCarter, Robert Langston, H. R. Whaley, J. D. Compton, Collie O. Shields, Gene Berrier, Leonard Adams, Earl Lane, James Bumgardner, Herbert Etherton, David Montgomery, Otha McCarter, Lloyd Loveday, Andy Ball, and Lawrence Castle.

Pastor, Reverend Lawrence Castle, 1989.

Information, Rachel Whaley, Verol LaFollette, "Homecoming, 1986."