

CHURCH HISTORY

The idea to form a church in a section of Greensboro then called **DINGLAND** was originated and spearheaded through Rev. J. T. Hairston who was then pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church located then on Ashe Street. Many people living in the Dingland area attended Shiloh. Later on, the name Dingland changed to New Town.

In May 1906, the land was purchased from Jerry and Manerva Shoffner for \$250.00. In March 1912 the trustees, Mr. James Allen, Mr. James Land and Mr. Lewis Trice had the deed recorded and filed for registration in the Guilford County Courthouse. Through the efforts of Mr. C. C. Rucker, who chaired the board, construction on the church began in 1913. He was assisted by the community and area churches. Because of the red siding on the outside of our church, and possibly the red mud of the street we were called the "Little Red Church on the Hill". The first church had about 25 members. Sunday School was first held on Sunday morning, followed by two services at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. You could hear the bell ringing out its invitation to those services every Sunday.

During the 1930s, church picnics were held at new Goshen Church (walking distance of the St. James) and on Vanstory Street (Mrs. Hearst) near the cemetery when members were able to rent a truck for transportation.

Under the leadership of several pastors, associate ministers and deacons, that small church grew. Rev. Bunkers was the first pastor followed by Rev. Long, Rev. Leak, Rev. C. W. McBroom, Rev. W. T. Byrd and Rev. H. C. Hairston. Associate ministers included Rev. Glenn, Rev. Bidding, Rev. J. A. Ellis, Rev. Dodd, Rev. Brice, Rev. Grant Williams and Rev. Will Green. The deacons served these pastors and worked hard to help keep our church growing. Mr. C. C. Rucker served as our first chairman and Mr. Wrenn Thompson served as treasurer. Other deacons included: Mr. Allen, Mr. Bud Lane, Mr. Major Evans, Mr. Oscar Garrett, Mr. Hazel Hurst, Mr. John Hood, Mr. Pap Johnson, Mr. Asberry Brown, Mr. John Bell, Mr. Bradshaw, and Mr. Tom Kimble.

Our first Sunday School teachers were Mrs. Mollie Trite, Mrs. Debbie Burton and Mrs. Margaret Rucker. Our first Senior Choir was organized in 1945 by Mrs. Annie Wiley and Mrs. Angeleter Brown was the first President. Our first Junior Choir was organized in 1950 under the leadership of Mrs. Bernice Foster. The first church pianist was Mr. Fred Rucker. The first Mother of our Church was Mrs. Flora Rucker Green.

St. James was still growing, still reaching out to help all people. As time passed on, some of the members did also. Upon the death of Mr. C. C. Rucker, Mr. Tom Kimble became our chairman of the board. Through all the workings and organizing, there were faithful members who helped as founders as well. We recognize them as Mrs. Charlotte McBroom, Mrs. Hattie Hood, Mrs. Pearl Cathey, Mrs. Glenn, Mrs. Rosa Hurst, Mrs. Becky Thompson, Mrs. Luella Williams and Mrs. Gertrude Wilson.

In recognition of one of our past pastors, a choir was organized and named after him in the year of 1964 by Mrs. Bernice Foster – The Will Green Gospel Choir (Rev. Will Green).

In 1953 Rev. Prince Edward Graves took over as Pastor of St. James Baptist Church. He was a young man of 32, married to Dolly Rives Graves, and the father of four little girls, Joan, Judy, Cynthia and Sharon.

When he accepted the Pastorate of St. James there were less than 28 members, the church was in very poor condition and there was maybe \$65.00 in the treasury. Since Rev. Graves had a day job as a masonry contractor, he was able to do patchwork repairs on the failing building until a new building could be started. With the average Sunday offering at \$20-\$25 there was not much for a building fund.

Without getting discouraged, ladies of the church sold delicious dinners. Being a brick mason, Rev. Graves and his fellow brick masons laid bricks on Saturdays. There was still not enough collateral to use for securing a loan. Determined to build a secure, pleasant place of worship, Rev. Graves and his wife agreed to mortgage their home to get materials to finish the church. It took a little over two years but on December 14, 1958, the new church facility became a reality. This was called the cinder-block church.

As part of St. James Baptist Church's history, the church was located uphill from other properties that were located on Florida Street. The church's address at that time was 536 West Florida Street. During the redevelopment of the Warnersville Community, the apartments and houses were not rebuilt but the church was rebuilt. Reverend Graves liked 536 West Florida address and did not see the need to change it. So as it goes, the address remains 536 W. Florida Street.

The new building and the energy of Rev. Graves' messages seemed to give the church new life. The congregation began to grow and new organizations and clubs were needed. During these same years God blessed the Warnersville area to be redeveloped. This gave rise to better housing conditions, recreation facilities, paved streets, better lighting and many in the community and our congregation were able to purchase their own homes. Because of the growth of the community, St. James grew and it was time for us to build again. As with the first new building, there were many obstacles, but the new building was ready for service on April 14, 1968. In 1978 the building was expanded to the building we now use for worship.

The 1970's began the era of the St. James congregation's service to the community. Realizing that God still has something great in his plans for St. James, Rev. Graves opened a store in the church basement. The church family donated and collected good used clothing and food. The St. James family also sponsored a City-Wide Breakfast Program so that no child went to school hungry. Several women of the church prepared breakfast at our church for as many as 100 children. Word spread quickly and people as well as businesses donated food for the project. When this plan was brought to the attention of school officials, another

plan was started in the schools so breakfast would be available for all children at their own school. As a result, our program here at St. James was discontinued.

We then moved our community service to another area. St. James opened our church basement to the homeless and became the first overnight shelter. God blessed us to become the builders, owners and managers of St. James Homes. By the 1980's we were managers and owners of two other housing communities: *Cumberland Courts* and *Prince Edward Graves Homes for the Elderly and Handicapped*.

Deacons and trustees have worked hard to help our church maintain the crusade that was started so long ago in that "Little Red Church on the Hill". Until the late 1960's Deacon Tom Kimble served as Chairman of the Deacon Board. At his death, Deacon Asberry Brown assumed that role and served until 1988 when his health would no longer permit service. He was made Chairman Emeritus and Deacon Frank Williams took on duties of Chairman. At the death of Deacon Williams in 1991, Deacon Ervin Harris became Chairman. Deacon Harris died in 1995 and Deacon Joseph Garner served as Chairman until his death in 1998. Deacon Ron Galloway then became Chairman and served as chairman until April, 2015. Deacon Ellis Armstrong now serves as Chairman of the Board. Deacon John Courts served as Church Treasurer from the early 1960's until 2015. Mrs. Louise "Weesie" Person was elected Church Treasurer February 6, 2015 at the Church Conference. Also at this meeting Mr. Dexter Dawkins, Ms. Connie Drummond, Mr. James Perry were elected to the Board of Trustees which includes Mr. Samuel Chapman and Mr. Charles Tuck.

Through the years our Church Mothers have been there for us. Mrs. Flora Green was our first mother of the church. Mrs. Nellie Kimble became our next Mother of the Church. Mrs. Kimble was followed by Mrs. Corrine Williams. After Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Charlotte McBroom held the position until 1997 when she became Mother Emeritus. In the year 2000, Mrs. McBroom was 100 years old. Mrs. McBroom died in November 2001. After Mrs. McBroom, Mrs. Ada Williams served as Mother of the Church from 1997 until her death in 2006. Mrs. Dorothy Thomas is currently serving as Mother of the Church.

During the 1970's and 80's the church maintained five choirs, two fully staffed Usher Boards and two fully working Missionary Circles. There was also a Miscellaneous Club whose purpose was to assist in raising funds for any needed project. During the 1990's the Miscellaneous Club members were thanked for their services and the club was disbanded. The Missionary Circles became a part of the Baptist Women with ministries in Education, Outreach, Social Services and Health Services. Other committees formed were: The Scholarship Committee, New Members Committee and a Sharing and Caring Committee.

With the Holy Spirit as their guide and Rev. Graves as their Shepherd, several ministers began at St. James and are now Shepherding other flocks or ministering in whatever capacity the Lord has given them. These ministers include:

Rev. Will Moore -Founder of St. Paul Baptist Church (deceased)

Rev. Gilbert Walker	-Deceased
Rev. Kenneth Lilly	
Rev. Wayne Clapp	-Inner Growth Life Enrichment Center
Rev. Bobby Ratliff	-Deceased
Rev. Richard Thomas	-St. John Baptist Church, Climax, NC
Rev. Ezell Maness	
Rev. James Johnson	-Cedar Grove Tabernacle of Praise
Rev. William Key	-Charlotte, NC
Rev. Lonnie Walker	-Deceased
Rev. James Lacewell	-Founder of Good News Baptist Church
Rev. Phillip Noble	-Eternal Life Baptist Church
Rev. Jerry Raleigh	-Maple Grove Baptist Church, Burlington, NC
Rev. Hank Simmons	-Bethany Community Church of Sedalia, Sedalia, NC
Rev. Freddie Maynard	-Deceased
Rev. Andrei Spells	-Faith Step Ministries Church
Rev. Eva Ratliff	-Guiding Light Ministries
Rev. Bobby Brown	-Community of Faith Baptist church
Rev. Howard Goode	-Deceased
Rev. Bobby Smith	

St. James currently has several Associate Ministers. They are:

Minister Tyrone M. Alston, Jr.
 Rev. Sylvia Bennett
 Elder Brenda Burton
 Minister William Dingle
 Rev. Pamela Green
 Rev. Robert McKnight
 Rev. James Moses
 Rev. Gloria Rankin
 Minister Darryl Walker
 Minister Jean Williams
 Minister Wayman "Tony" Williams

Minister William Armstrong, Rev. Mary Brown, Minister Brenda Burton, Minister Robert Galbreath, Rev. Elliott Hendrix, Minister Sheila McAdams, Rev. Bobby Smith, and Rev. Terry Woods (deceased) and Minister Candy Williams (deceased) are former associate ministers of St. James Baptist church.

In December 1998 after 45 years of outstanding service as Pastor and community leader, Rev. Prince Edward Graves retired and became Pastor Emeritus of St. James Baptist Church. After Rev. Graves' Retirement, the St. James Family playfully sought a new pastor to continue the great work that the Lord began when the land for St. James was first purchased.

In March, 2001, The St. James Family proudly installed Rev. Vernon C. King as our new Shepherd. Rev. King was born in Atlanta, Georgia and is a graduate of Morehouse College. He came to us from First Baptist Church in Fairmont, NC with his wife, Robin Scott King and their two daughters, Victoria and Venus.

Under the leadership of Rev. Vernon King the church continued to grow, numerically and financially, and the following new ministries were organized: Boy Scouts was re-established, Girl Scouts, Birth Month Ministry, Men's Mentoring Program, Mime Ministry, Parking Lot Committee, Pastor Support Ministry was reinstated, Singles Ministry, Praise Team, Golden Age Ministry and Web Site Ministry.

The Reverend Vernon C. King peacefully departed his life on Friday, May 1, 2009 at his home. He was pastor of St. James Baptist Church in Greensboro, N. C. for eight years.

After the death of Rev. King, the church diligently searched for a new pastor. On Sunday, March 20, 2011, the members of St. James Baptist Church voted Rev. Dr. Jerome Lee, Jr., as its new pastor. He started his pastoral ship on Sunday, May 15, 2011.

In June 1995, upon confirmation from the Lord through prayers, Dr. Lee accepted his call to ministry and preached his initial sermon on February 25, 1996. It was then that he was licensed by Gethsemane Baptist Church. He was ordained on August 21, 1999. Dr. Lee is the proud son of Mr. Jerome Lee, Sr. and Mrs. Sandra Y. Packett. He has one brother, Jeffery H. Lee. He is married to the former Cynthia J. Adkins of Cheriton, Virginia.

Without members a church does not survive. We thank God for the great people of our growing congregation. Over 102 years ago the land was purchased to begin a worship center on these grounds. Our founders worked hard and paved the way for us. For 102 years God has been blessing the efforts and industry of the St. James Baptist Church Family. That same God is working with us now. Trusting in God who never changes, we are moving forward with God's Plan.