

A HISTORY

OF

THE BETHANY BAPTIST

as found in a history of the General  
Aassociation of the churches, and in  
the old minutes of the church meetings.

D. Blanton Allen  
August 24, 1930.

Bethany Church, formly known as Guinea's bridge, was constituted about 1770 by N. Holloway. It is the fourth oldest church in the Goshen Association, having been admitted in 1771 with J. Waller as pastor and forty-five members.

The following is a decription of the church at the time as found in an old church history:

#### GUINEA'S BRIDGE

" This chruch, so called from its vicinity to its bridge of that name, is a church of high standing having a number of picus and worthy members. The gospel was preached here, in its power and purity, at an early date after the rise of the Baptists. This place was not without its persecutors also. At one time, several people were apprehended by virtue of warrant from a magistrate; among them was Joseph Craig, remarkable for his eccentric manners. On their way to the magistrate's house Mr. Craig thinking it no dishonor "to cheat the Devil " as he termed it, flipped off the house and took to the bushes. They hunted him wiht dogs, by Asanel like, being light of foot, he made good retreat.

The church was constituted under the care of Mr. N. Holloway. After various successes Mr. Holloway left them and moved to the country of Halifax. They then procured the state ministration of elder John Waller, under whose care they prospered.

In 1787 the Lord poured out his spirit abondantly, and many were turned to righteousness. More than one hundred were added. After the removal of Mr. J. Waller, in 1793, they were destitute of stated preaching for several years. So great was the decline that they had serious thoughts of dissolving their constituting, but finally obtaining the regular ministrations of A. Waller, they again raised their heads. In 1800 they had the happiness to see a precious work of God among them. As many as 104 were baptized, and some of the were clever and useful men. Their neeting house is a very short distance from the county line, in Carloline, Mr. Waller still attends them."

In 1807 we entertained the Goshen Association for the first time, wiht John Poindexter moderator and Andrew Broadus as clerk. I am told that the church was moved in 1818 to a spot about 100 yds. northwest of our present site. In 1825 we again entertained the Goshen association.

Tradition says that this was frame building of the old style, situated near the large oak trees to our northwest. Later a building was placed on the present site, which was burned in 1842. In 1843 it was rebuilt of brick -- a part of which constitutes our present building.

Between the periods of 1843 and 1866 I have no official record, except the fact that we did have the Goshen Association with us in 1850.

In 1857 Mr. F.L. Kregil was pastor, and the Goshen Association again met with us. In October 1872 the church authorized the clerk to give letters of desmission to such of our colored members as showed a desire to unite in forming a church of their own. During this time we had as our pastor elder Haley who resigned in 1882. By 1887 our membership was 215.

During the next thirty years the following pstors served:

E.W. Wingrey	1883-86
W.L. Catlett	1886-89
E.S. Baptist	supply in 1889
J.T. Betts	1889-90
E.B. Winfrey	supply in 1890
J.S. Ryland	1893-1901
L.D. Craddock	1901-03
Decatur Edwards	1903-1912

At a called meeting of the church on Sunday, July 27, 1913, Mr. Overton was called as pastor for the period of one year at a salary of \$300.00. During Mr. Overton's parorate the church was remodeled and beautified -- at an expense of approximately \$ 180.00 In a church meeting on January 31, 1920, he offered his resignation and at the same time made a fifteen minute talk emphasizing the necessity of the church calling a pastor for his full time. Many of you will recall his farewell sermon of which his text was " And God said, Gideon the people are yet too many;" stretching the possibilities of a few.

In a call meeting of the church on April 24, 1920, the church unanimously voted to call Mr. W.L. witt, as our first full time pastor. Under his leadership the parsonage was built at an expense of approximately \$5,000.00 Our Sunday School increased from 104 to 300 and our church membership from 387 to 475, which made us the second largest church in the assoctiation. We were also the second to have a full time pastor. During the same period we increased our contributions from \$1,000.00 per year to \$3,572.44 in 1926. In many instances Mr. Witt showed himself a man sent from God for the task.

In 1924 we again entertained the assoctiation making a total of six times it has met with Bethany. On June 7, 1925 Mr. Witt offered his resignation to take up work in another field.

Before calling our present pastor we had as our supply a very capable and forceable speaker Mr. W.B. Dennison, a student of U. of R.

On July 1, 1926, we called to service our present pastor. After about two years with us he conceived the idea of remodeling the present building. On January 15, 1928 in a

called meeting of the church it was voted that we build a Sunday School room. The work was begun in the fall of 1929 and at a total expense of approximately \$11,000.00 our present building was completed. The addition consists of eight individual class rooms, and enlargement of the auditorium, removing the two front doors, elevating the floor, adding a porch, enlarging the rostrum and through the beneficence of two of our families, we have added two memorial windows.

This year we celebrate our one hundred and sixtieth anniversary, the tenth anniversary of our full time pastor the fourth anniversary of our present pastor, and the dedication of our new church building. Now in the words of Paul, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus".

Respectfully submitted,

D. Blanton Allen.