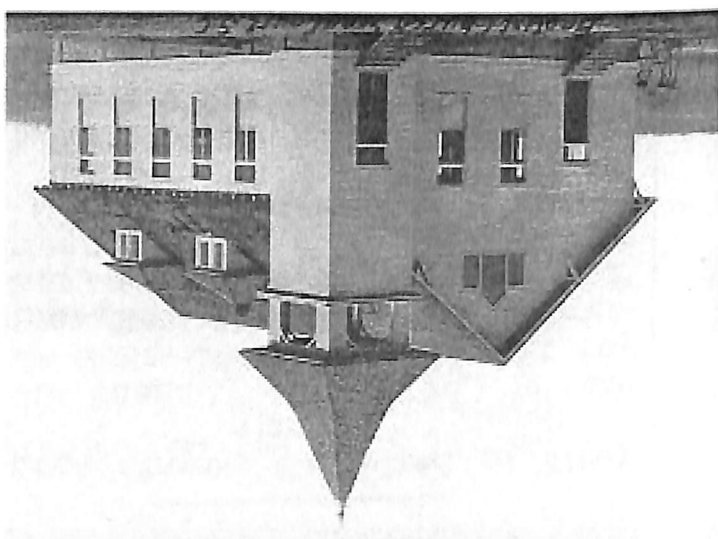




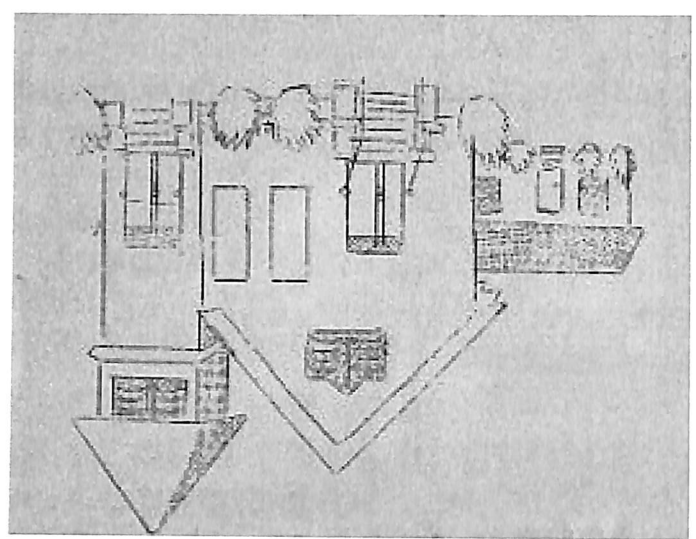
Baptist Church, Smith, S. C.

# Our Church Through The Years

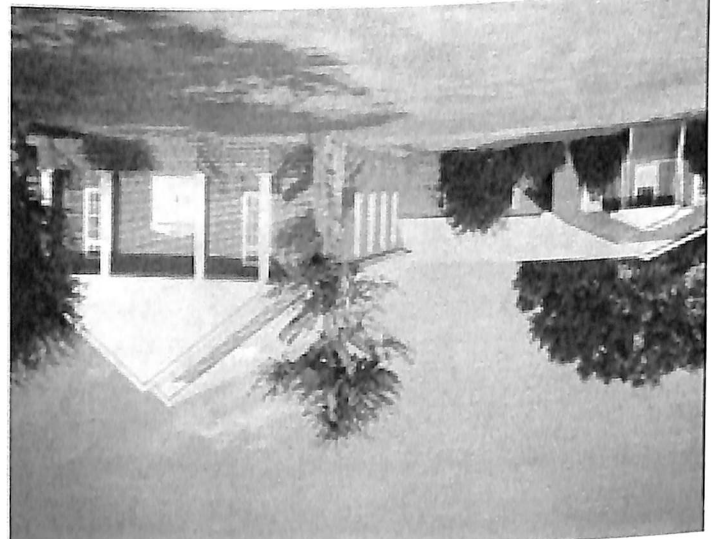
1912



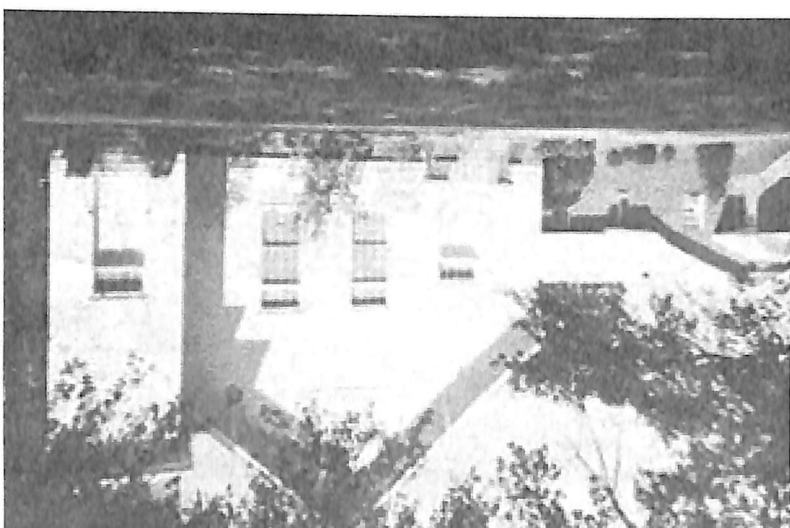
1962



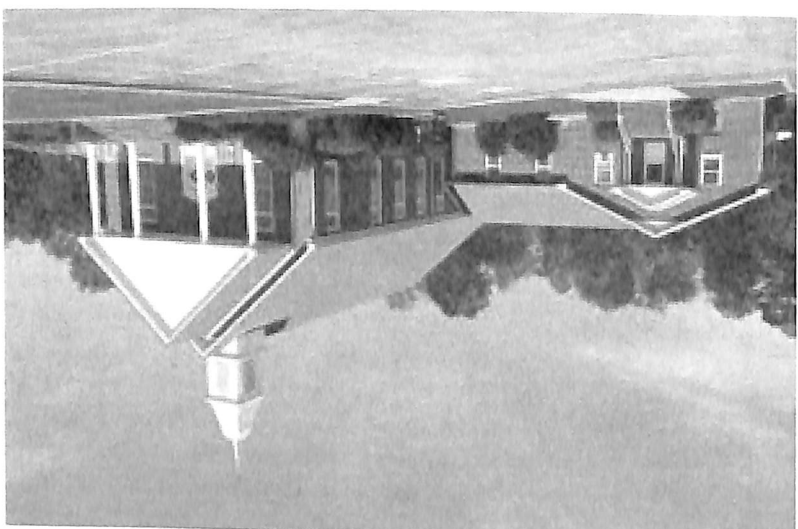
WHERE'S THE STEEPLE?



1974



NOW



## The Founding of Gray Court Baptist Church

This is a newspaper article dated August 25, 1912, describing the founding of Gray Court Baptist Church. Rev H. L. Baggott later became the first pastor of the new church.



H. L. Baggott

### Baptist Church Organized at Gray Court.

On Sunday, August 25, in the Gray Court-Owings Institute at the call of Rev. H. L. Baggott a presbytery consisting of Dr. W. T. Derieux, Dr. W. J. Langston, Rev. H. L. Baggott, Rev. W. E. Thayer, W. S. Rower, S. M. Garrett, C. B. Bobo was called for the purpose of considering the establishment of a Baptist church at Gray Court. The council organized by electing Dr. W. T. Derieux chairman, and C. B. Bobo secretary. After devotional exercises the letters of those wishing to enter the new organization were read and approved by the council. Brother Baggott then read the articles of faith held by Baptists as laid down in Pendleton's Manual. The same was adopted by a rising vote by those entering the new organization. After this Brother Baggott read the church covenant which was also adopted. The new organization was then recognized by the council as a regular Baptist church. C. B. Bobo then led in prayer. Remarks were then made by Brethren Derieux and Langston. A collection of \$6.25 was taken for State Missions, after which the benediction was pronounced by W. E. Thayer. The new church numbers forty members, thirty-seven of whom were received by letter, and three under watch care. This young church expects to occupy its own house of worship, which building now is in process of construction, some time in November. On the second Sunday in September the church met for the purpose of considering the election of officers, and the calling of a pastor.

C. B. Bobo, Secretary.

## HISTORY OF THE GRAY COURT BAPTIST CHURCH 1912 - 1962

ON THE 25TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1912, A SMALL NUMBER OF BAPTISTS MET IN THE GRAY COURT-OWINGS SCHOOL BUILDING AT 4:00 P. M. AND, AFTER A SERMON BY REV. H. L. BAGGOTT, HELD AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE AND RESOLVED TO UNITE IN THE CONSTITUTION OF A BAPTIST CHURCH. AND THERE AND THEN APPOINTED A BUILDING COMMITTEE OF THE FOLLOWING NAMED BRETHREN: O. F. ROPP, JOHN B. OWINGS, W. T. OWINGS, M. A. JONES, W. M. COKER, TO WHICH WAS ADDED A CHAIRMAN OF SAID COMMITTEE, REV. H. L. BAGGOTT.

ON THE SECOND SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER, BEING THE 8TH DAY OF THE MONTH, 1912, THIS LITTLE COMPANY OF 39 SOULS WAS ORGANIZED INTO A REGULARLY CONSTITUTED BAPTIST CHURCH BY A PRESBYTERY COMPOSED OF BRETHREN: W. T. DERIEUX, D.D., W. E. THAYER, C. B. BOBO, H. L. BAGGOTT.— SAID CHURCH CONTINUED TO WORSHIP REGULARLY TWICE A MONTH IN THE AFORESAID SCHOOL BUILDING UNTIL THE 4TH SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER, 1912, ON WHICH DATE THE COMMITTEE PRESENTED TO THE CHURCH A COMPLETED HOUSE OF WORSHIP AND SERVICES WERE HELD THEREIN ON SAID DATE. THUS WITHIN THREE MONTHS FROM THE DAY THESE MEN AND WOMEN RESOLVED TO ORGANIZE A CHURCH THEY WORSHIPPED IN THEIR OWN NEW BUILDING.

AFTER A LIBERAL SUBSCRIPTION ON THE PART OF THE MEMBERSHIP, WITH GENEROUS HELP FROM OTHER FRIENDS, THE COMMITTEE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO AFFECT A LOAN OF \$1,600. THIS MONEY WAS OBTAINED FROM THE BANK OF GRAY COURT AND SECURED BY NOTES, AND MORTGAGES ON CHURCH PROPERTY. SOMETIME IN THE FALL OF 1913, THREE OF THE MEMBERS, NAMELY, O. F. ROPP, JOHN B. OWINGS, AND W. T. OWINGS PROPOSED TO PAY \$1,000 OF THIS INDEBTEDNESS UPON CONDITION THAT THE BALANCE OF THE CHURCH PAY THE REMAINING \$600. WHEREUPON, W. M. COKER MADE A HURRIED CANVASS AND READILY SECURED THE FULL AMOUNT. AND ON JANUARY 1ST, 1914, THE INDEBTEDNESS

WAS CANCELLED, THE NOTES AND MORTGAGES BURNED, AND THE GRAY COURT BAPTIST CHURCH WAS DECLARED FREE FROM DEBT.

THE TOTAL COST OF HOUSE AND FURNISHINGS IS \$3,191.15, BESIDES THE CHURCH HAS PAID HER APPORTIONMENT TO MISSIONS AND BENEVOLENCE AND PASTOR'S SALARY. AND NOW AS A CHURCH, WE BOW WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS TO GOD, AND PLACE OURSELVES UPON THE ALTAR OF SERVICE AND SACRIFICE. AMEN.

THIS NEAT AND SUBSTANTIAL HOUSE OF WORSHIP WAS FORMALLY DEDICATED TO GOD ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 1914 BY REV. W. T. DERIEUX, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY AND TREASURER OF THE STATE MISSION BOARD OF S.C., PREACHING THE SERMON, AND LAYMAN C. B. BOBO, MODERATOR OF THE LAURENS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, OFFERING THE DEDICATORY PRAYER. THUS BEGINS THE HISTORY OF THE GRAY COURT BAPTIST CHURCH. MAY THE HOLY SPIRIT LEAD THEM TO GLORIOUS TRIUMPHS FOR THEIR KING. (THIS PORTION OF HISTORY RECORDED BY REV. H. L. BAGGOTT).

.....  
 CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE GRAY COURT BAPTIST CHURCH, (REPORTED BY HISTORICAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY CHURCH SOME YEARS AGO, COMPOSED OF MRS. ARCH C. OWINGS AND MRS. TOM BALL), WERE: MR. AND MRS. T. M. BALL, MR. AND MRS. S. P. BALL, MR. AND MRS. ED BOLT, MR. AND MRS. ALLARD COKER, MR. AND MRS. W. M. COKER, MRS. ETTA DORROH, MR. AND MRS. MAXCY JONES, MR. AND MRS. WILLIE JONES, MRS. GUSSIE MOORE, MRS. ELLEN OWENS, MRS. COLUMBUS OWENS, ADOLPHUS OWINGS, MRS. ARCH C. OWINGS, MR. AND MRS. EFFIE OWINGS, MR. AND MRS. JOHN B. OWINGS, MR. AND MRS. W. T. OWINGS, TOM RIDDLE, MR. AND MRS. JIM RHODES, DR. C. T. ROGERS, MR. O. F. ROPP, WARREN STEPHENX, MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR STEPHENS, MRS. L. A. WILLIS

.....  
 THUS BEGINS THE HISTORY OF THE GRAY COURT BAPTIST CHURCH, AND FOR 50 YEARS SHE HAS STOOD AS A LIGHT HOUSE BECKONING SOULS TO COME UNTO HER GOD. ONLY 11 PASTORS HAVE SERVED HER THROUGH THE YEARS. THEY ARE: REV. H. L. BAGGOTT 1912-1915. IT WAS UNDER HIS MINISTRY THAT THE CHURCH WAS ORGANIZED, CONSTITUTED, AND THE PRESENT BUILDING ERECTED.

REV. J. H. WASHINGTON 1916; REV. GEO. HOPKINS 1917-1922; REV. B. F. CARSON 1923-1932; DR. A. B. LANGSTON 1933-1944. WHEN IT WAS LEARNED THAT DR. LANGSTON, A RETIRED MISSIONARY FROM BRAZIL, WAS RETURNING HOME, A COMMITTEE FROM GRAY COURT MET HIM AT THE TRAIN IN LAURENS TO ASK HIM TO BECOME THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH. HE ACCEPTED AND SERVED THE CHURCH FAITHFULLY AND WELL FOR 11 YEARS. DR. LANGSTON WAS FOLLOWED BY REV. W. B. BOLT 1944-1948. DURING HIS TENURE THE PASTORIUM WAS BUILT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY REV. H. W. LONG 1948, WHO WAS THE FIRST TO LIVE IN THE PASTORIUM, BUT SERVED ONLY A FEW MONTHS WHEN GOD CALLED HIM TO HIS HEAVENLY HOME.

REV. NORWOOD DAVIS FOLLOWED IN 1949-1952. DURING THESE YEARS THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WING WAS BUILT. PRIOR TO THIS, AT TIMES, IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO HOLD S.S. CLASSES IN THE BAPTISMAL POOL. AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING MR. RAYMOND COOPER PRESENTED THE CHURCH WITH TEACHING STANDS AND TABLES FOR EACH OF THE ROOMS. THE AUDITORIUM WAS REDECORATED, THE CHOIR LOFT REDONE, AND DR. BEASON GAVE THE CHURCH THE BEAUTIFUL ELECTRIC ORGAN.

REV. S. P. JOHNSON, 1952-1954, SPENT TWO YEARS WITH US, THEN SERVED ONE OTHER PASTORATE BEFORE LEAVING THE UNITED STATES TO BECOME A SOUTHERN BAPTIST MISSIONARY IN EAST PAKISTAN.

IN 1954, REV. OLIN F. HUTCHINSON, OUR PRESENT PASTOR, CAME. THE CHURCH MOVED FROM A FIELD OF FOUR CHURCHES, UNITING WITH THE FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, AND EACH CHURCH HAS ONE SERVICE EACH SUNDAY. THE OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH HAS BEEN REDONE, CATHEDRAL WINDOWS INSTALLED, AND WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF AGAIN REDECORATING THE AUDITORIUM.

THESE ARE PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE. IT IS DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO WORDS THE LOVING SACRIFICES WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THE CHURCH. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS WHILE MRS. T. M. BALL (OUR FIRST SUNBEAM LEADER, AND DAUGHTER OF REV. H. L. BAGGOTT) WAS LEADER THAT SHE LED HER GROUP TO PICK COTTON AND PURCHASE OUR PULPIT BIBLE.

OUR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP VARIED FROM TIME TO TIME. OUR PEOPLE MOVING ON TO OTHER LOCALITIES TO FILL PLACES OF LEADERSHIP IN CHURCHES WHERE THEY LIVED. OUR PRESENT MEMBERSHIP IS 75.

THE ONLY ORDAINED MINISTER TO COME FROM THIS CHURCH IS REV. HUGH COOPER, NOW SERVING IN NICHOLSON, GA..

MANY PERSONS HAVE COME AND GONE THROUGH THE YEARS BUT TODAY WE MEET TO CELEBRATE OUR 50TH BIRTHDAY AS A CHURCH, AND TO HONOR THOSE 7 PERSONS WHO WERE AMONG ITS FIRST 39 MEMBERS. THE 7 WHO HAVE GIVEN TO GRAY COURT BAPTIST CHURCH 50 YEARS OF LOVING, FAITHFUL, AND SOMETIMES SACRIFICIAL SERVICE, ARE: MR. AND MRS. T. M. BALL, MR. AND MRS. W. T. OWINGS, MRS. ARCH OWINGS, MR. JOHN OWINGS, MRS. ETTA DORROH.

MAY WE WHO ARE YOUNGER CATCH A VISION FROM THESE FAITHFUL ONES AND IN CHRIST'S NAME GO FORWARD TO BRING IN HIS KINGDOM IN THIS PLACE.

(THIS PART OF HISTORY ARRANGED BY MRS. L. N. COOK, SR., MRS. OLIN HUTCHINSON, AND MRS. HORACE OWINGS).

## APPENDED HISTORY 2004

As we begin to add to our church history, we feel that we have been exceptionally blessed by God. We are writing this as of September 2004. This makes our church 92 years old.

Our W.M.U. and the church members have continued to contribute to Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Janie Chapman Missions. We also participate church-wide with Connie Maxwell Orphanage, Super Bowl Sunday and the Crisis Center.

Easter Lilies are placed in the church, and poinsettias, given in honor or memory of loved ones. The W.M.U. ladies give Thanksgiving baskets to shut-ins and help Memorial Home, Safe Home and Camp LaVita. We also have a prayer chain.

Our church continues to enjoy 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday dinners and our Seniors at one time had a group called "The Primetimers" which met for a meal once a month.

On December 31, 1991 Reverend Rogers resigned and Jon Orcutt was interim from January 5, 1992 to March 1, 1992. The Reverend Rogers was asked to be the interim Pastor again which he accepted March 8, 1992. He served until Reverend Paul Turner was called June 28, 1992. The church bought the sound system at this time. His wife, Beth, served as our Minister of Music. He was very interested in the youth of the church and they had fun with water sliding and they took some trips during his tenure. As usual we had the Vacation Bible Schools and many children participated.

We had a beautiful Christmas tree decorated with christmons. The Choir did their beautiful Easter and Christmas Cantatas. The Choir members are very faithful, caring members that love their music.

Reverend Turner resigned September 25, 1994. Reverend Rogers was again persuaded to become our interim Pastor on October 3, 1994.

Mrs. Grace Babb presented beautiful white hymnals to the church in memory of her mother, Mrs. Gossett.

Our Pastor search committee found Dr. Kenneth Norris. The church called him and he preached his first sermon on May 21, 1995. Our W.M.U. received a certificate for being one of the top 50 resident member per capita giving.

Dr. Norris resigned October 27, 1996. The last sermon he preached he presented the church members with special witnessing Bibles.

Then, again, Reverend Henry Rogers was approached about serving as our interim and being the special person he is, he consented. He served from November 3, 1996 until he had to resign with health problems April 13, 1997. Then, Reverend Floyd Hellams came to be with us on April 20, 1997. On June 22, 1997 Reverend Hellams was given the Honor of Pastor Emeritus. He received a plaque from Davidson Street Baptist Church in Clinton, South Carolina.

Vinyl siding work was done on the parsonage, wood work, eaves, windows and carport was finished at the same time, June 13, 1997. Reverend Hellams resigned August 17, 1997 and Dr. Thomas Cartledge accepted the church call August 3, 1997.

In January, Dr. Cartledge started Bible Study on Wednesday nights. He also started and continues to have a Good Friday night service with a meal and special communion. We also have Sunrise Easter Service and breakfast. A cross was placed in front of the church with flowers on it on Easter Sunday. Very beautiful.

There was a ladies breakfast for Mother's Day, May 10, 1998. On August 22, 1998 our youth group took a trip to the mountains in lieu of Bible School.

A special meal was held on September 20, 1998 followed by a State Mission Video.

Someone gave a computer system as a gift. Many, many thanks. On Friday, October 30, 1998 we had a special Halloween Fun Time. The Social Hall was decorated by Reba Small and cooking was done by Jeff Moore. This was a great fun time for all.

At Christmas time, a beautiful Nativity Scene was placed in the vestibule in memory of Delbert Davison by Betty, Barbara and Delbert Jr. In January 1999 the group "Seeds of Love" Ministry for grade school children 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades met in our Social Hall. They were led by Christy Meetze and Malsca Merck. Grace Babb, from our church, also helped. We feel this was a wonderful Christian project.

Ladies breakfast was held on May 9, 1999 and men's breakfast June 18, 1999. A men's breakfast was also held on June 26, 1999, Father's Day.

A Whitney Norris fund was started for the granddaughter of Peggy and Wayne Leroy. She has serious eye problems. We thank God for her recovery. We were invited to a 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary for Margarite and Henry Rogers on May 16, 1999 at Friendship Church. We were so glad to celebrate with them.

Amanda Maycs became our Choir Director September 26, 1999. Everyone enjoyed her beautiful voice and great personality.

Our church participated in Gray Court Gospel Fest on Saturday, October 21, 2000. We provided hot dogs, cookies, cupcakes and paper products.

On January 2, 2000 a new gas furnace and air conditioner was installed in the parsonage.

An Easter egg hunt was held on Saturday, April 22, 2000 for children ages 3 through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; a tradition with Frances and Margie Hughes. We had a special prayer in church on July 2, 2000 for drought conditions. Our church members voted to pave a road to circle around back of the church. This was completed March 4, 2001. We find this to be a very helpful addition.

Construction was begun in August 2001 to waterproof the basement and guttering was added on both sides of the church.

A special remembrance day was held on September 16, 2001 for those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Special prayer was offered for safety in America.

Carrie Cartledge and Teresa Powell held Backyard Bible Club for our youth on June 17, 2001. Amanda Maycs, Minister of Music resigned April 2002. She left to work in Charleston, South Carolina. Betty Cook has graciously taken the job of Choir Director and is doing a really great job. Thank you, Betty.

Susan and Ray Chestein and Teresa and John Powell carried a group of young people to the "Bring a kid to the Race day." This was sponsored by Darlington International Speedway to watch the Winston Cup practice. That was a great day for them. Then, the younger people went to Carowinds.

A special day was held Sunday, February 23, 2002 for those who had worked in the Social Hall. A special remembrance was given to Betty Davison and a plaque for all who helped complete this great work in our church. It is greatly appreciated.

Gray Court First Baptist Church now has a new sign in front of the church to replace the one given in memory of Delbert Davison's mother. The foundation of the new sign was given by Betty Davison. We enjoy the things we read on the sign.

Joy boxes were sent by the youth group to the Ukraine Orphans as Christmas gifts in 2002. They also compiled a Son-Dee Paper which contained prayer needs and other interesting items. It was enjoyed by all. Very, very good.

On March 23, 2003 the members voted to accept bids for a new church organ. Contributions were given and we now have a beautiful new one. Gwen Cartledge, our Pastor's wife, is our musician and she does a great job on the organ and piano. We are so lucky to have her. The music committee did a great job. Thanks to Betty Cook, Mary Ann Meetze and Jeff Moore.

We are also in the process of getting a new heating and cooling system installed. Contributions for this project were made from church members. We give thanks to our members. They are always so generous to keep God's work going.

The first heating we had was a big coal stove. Coal had to be added during Sunday School and preaching hour. Then, when natural gas came to Gray Court, we went to the individual heaters in the 1940's and the furnace was installed in the 1950's. We are grateful God has blessed us so that we can improve our church home as needed.

On Sunday, August 29, 2004 a Sue Owings Day was held. She had joined the church in June 1939 when she came to Gray Court as the wife of Horace Owings. Sue has worked in most areas of the church and is very appreciative the church had this special day.

At this time our Historical Committee would like to record the donations given to the church over the years. These are things that have been given in memory of loved ones or in their honor. Some things were just given as gifts.

Reverend Baggott built and gave the first pulpit which is now in our Social Hall. Mr. T.M. Ball built the song racks on the back of the first pews. He also built the rails for the old steps. The bell was given by Mrs. Sallie Mae Wood's father, Mr. Zeph Ball. The lighting fixtures in the Sanctuary and on the porch were given by Wiltrice and Floyd Cook. The flower urn and collection plates were given by Mrs. Jewel Bobo in memory of Mr. Lucien Bobo. The first white robes were given by Grace and Eugene Babb and Sue and Horace Owings. The new white robes were given by Teresa and John Powell. The first church sign was given by Betty and Delbert Davison in memory of Delbert's mother. The foundation for the new sign was given by Betty Davison. The present pulpit was given by Mrs. John Bolt in memory of her mother, Mrs. Gaines. The communion tables and chairs were given in memory of Mr. Joel Babb. When our Sunday School Department was built, each of the members of the young adult class was asked to buy a chair. After remodeling the Sanctuary each family was asked to buy a pew; some members bought two pews. The outside concrete table and benches were given in memory of Mrs. W. T. Owings. The church Bibles were given in memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Owings. The cross and the candlesticks, in the vestibule, were given in memory of Horace Owings. Vina and Mary Ann Martin gave the beautiful table at the back of the Sanctuary. Nell Owings and Margaret Woods bought a desk, chairs and carpet for a Sunday School room that is dedicated to their father, Mr. John Owings. In 2003, Nell Owings had the room repainted, re-carpeted and bought a bulletin board for the room. The Adult Ladies class took the short pews and painted them white, bought a desk and dedicated their room "The Rebecca Ball Room." The permanent flower arrangements in the vestibule were given by Vina Martin, Mary Ann Martin, Betty Davison and Sue Owings. Carpet was added in the hall of the Sunday School Department and wallpaper was added in the nursery by Betty Davison and Mary Lee Hughes. Beautiful white hymnals were given by Brace Babb in memory of her mother, Mrs. Gossett. Vina Martin gave the trophy case in the hall. Sue and Horace Owings gave the desks in the hall. Silverware was given by Reba Small and William T. Ball.

Much work has been done in the kitchen and social hall; a display case, to show mementos of the church, painting, and new closets. A dishwasher was also given. The basement was also waterproofed.

The women and men of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina have been aware of the spiritual, social, and general welfare of other; including non-members of the congregation of the First Baptist Church.

Jesus Christ reached out to people when He lived on the earth many years ago. Some times, people whom The Lord healed did not even come back and thank Him personally for the love and grace that He bestowed on individuals.

People of all cultures and nationalities are welcomed in the fellowship of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina.

The members of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina are a close knit group of Christians who seek divine guidance in their individual lives as well as Divine guidance for the well being of their church.

A prayer chain was established in the late 1980's by the Christian women of the church. Many prayers have been answered as the people of the church sought God's will in the physical and spiritual well being of those in need of prayer. The prayer chain is a vital part of the ministry of the members of the First Baptist Church in 2006 as well as now in the 2008's. The needs of other Christians and non - Christians have been a focal point in the lives of the members of the church.

The ladies of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina have given much love and generosity to the young brides and expectant mothers of the church. Bridal and baby showers have given joy to the younger women of the church.

Many events have taken place within the fellowship of the church. A Halloween party was well attended in the late 1990's. Bobbing for apples and bingo and other games were enjoyed by the church members. Bill Ball was given a surprise 80th birthday dinner by the members of the church.

The younger members of the First Baptist Church enjoy the outdoor picnic table and a basketball globe that stays in the right side of the parking lot near the parsonage. Mexicans living near the parsonage also use the basketball globe. The Mexicans have their own pastor who speaks Spanish....they meet once a week in the downstairs basement which was renovated around 2003 by church members. As of 2007; the Spanish speaking congregation have moved to another location in Laurens.

Several ladies of the congregation have contributed flowers for the three gardens that enhance the beauty of the church grounds.

Dr. Thomas Cartledge brought his homing pigeons with his family when they moved in the parsonage in August, 1997. Some of the tiny houses of the homing pigeons remain in the exact spot behind the old one car garage. Lovely and abundant vines with tiny white blooms adorn "the once thriving homing pigeon houses".

Watermelons were planted by the children and teenagers during Vacation Bible School, 2000. The youth and adults of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina enjoyed watching the plants grow and yield some fruit.

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Gray Court, South Carolina

There are some fine exhibits in the church. The black and white photographs of most of the former pastors are on display in the hall leading to the Sunday School rooms. Mrs. Vina Martin and Miss Mary Martin were in charge of this project. The bulletin boards are on display in the long hall leading to the Sunday School rooms. A lovely quilt designed in delicately stitched colonial settings featuring a medium blue background is on display in an enclosed glass setting. Mrs. Grace Baob, who served the First Baptist Church as organist played a very important part in the design and hand stitching of the lovely quilt. Other ladies helped design and hand stitch the lovely colonial type of quilt. The second bulletin board is on the hall wall where thank you notes, photographs of activities of the church members and other memorabilia leaves the visitors and members of the church with the impression that there is much work and enjoyment in all of the social inter-actions of the members of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina.

Levely white choir robes with inter-changeable gold or burgandy removeable collars are worn by the choir members for special events such as Easter and Christmas. The white choir robes were a gift to the church by the Laurens Cap and Gown Company.

### Days of Recognition for Special Church Members:

A special day of recognition was given to several ladies of the First Baptist Church who contributed much to the well being of the church. Mrs. Betty Davison served as the Head of the Housekeeping Team. Mrs. Davison was given a day of honor in the history of the church for her loyal service to the First Baptist Church on May 26, 2002.

Mrs. Horace (Sue) Owings whose in-laws were charter members of the church was honored for her many years of faithfulness to the First Baptist Church, Gray Court, South Carolina.....on August 29, 2004. Some of Mrs. Sue Owings' descendants live in Florida and Alabama. Most of them attended the "Surprise Sue Owings Day" to honor her for her faithful services at the First Baptist Church. A lovely silk corsage of yellow and white roses was pinned on her before the choir sang several of Mrs. Owings' favorite songs. The "Church in the Wildwood" was one of the choir's songs that was sung on Mrs. Sue Owings Day.

A church actually does exist in another state by the name of "The Church in the Wildwood". Mr. Richard Taylor researched the story of the history of the church that is known as "The Church in the Wildwood" and found a photograph of the actual church. The story was written in the church bulletin on "Mrs. Sue Owings Day" about the history of "The Church in the Wildwood". The country church has a very interesting history.

The ladies of the First Baptist Church prepared a scrap book about Mrs. Sue Owings' life. Poems written by church members, Betty Cook and Margie Hughes, old photographs of her family, and the church family were in the Sue Owings book. The scrap book was presented to Mrs. Sue Owings before the Sunday dinner was served. Everybody enjoyed the beautiful meal that was prepared by the members of the church on Mrs. Sue Owings Day.

Church History 1997 - 2008  
Margie Hughes  
Richard Taylor  
Bill Ball

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Gray Court, South Carolina

Approximately twenty (20) members of the church met on a Saturday in the late spring of 2004 to paint the dining room and kitchen which is located in the basement of the First Baptist Church. By noon, the painting of the area was completed. Afterwards, a group of church members met to take down the old beige pleated curtains and replace them with new lovely yellow flowery valances. New venetian blinds were hung in each dining room window.

To enhance the new gold and yellow color theme, a 6 inch wide rolled tape with large yellow sunflowers and green leaves was added to the newly painted white walls. This added a new dimension of beauty to the dining and kitchen areas.

Mr. T. H. Douglas built the new storage closets with adjustable louver doors. This endeavor gave extra space for storing cleaning supplies, mops, brooms, silk flower arrangements, and other memorabilia connected with the up-keep of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina.

The fifty year old electric organ was re-placed with a new cathedral organ in 2006. Mrs. Tammy Herold serves as pianist for the First Baptist Church. Mrs. Jean Holston serves as organist. Previously, Mr. Everette Smith served the First Baptist Church as organist.

Mr. James Manning began his new duties as Choir Director in the winter of 2007. Rev. Sammie Godfrey, originally from our sister church, Friendship Baptist Church came to serve our church in the early spring of 2008. The First Baptist Church is his first church after his ordination to the ministry.

Twelve (12) new members have been added to the church membership during the years of 2007 and 2008.

The old bricked in sign with the church's name on it has now become obsolete. The First Baptist Church sign was re-placed with the new modern design sign like most Baptist and other denominational churches have now.

A lovely flower garden in the shape of the cross was built for flowers to be grown around the sign. An electric fluorescent light shows the church name and the monthly notices that are an important part of the new church sign.

Flower gardeners for the bricked in garden are: Pam and James Manning, Frances Hughes, and Margie Hughes. The beautiful flowers which are grown year round at the sign enhance the front of the church lawn.

Yard sales and food sales have become an important event in the raising of funds for different ministries of the church.

The fifth (5th) Sunday dinners are a tradition at the First Baptist Church.

There was no summer Vacation Bible School in the year of 2007. However, a Vacation Bible School will be in June, 2008.

Mrs. Gwen Cartledge, the late Mrs. Reba Ball, and Mrs. Margie Hughes sewed 3/4 length white shepherd robes for the Easter play in 2002. Mrs. Cartledge cut most of the cloth and the late Mrs. Reba Ball and Mrs. Margie Hughes carried their portable sewing machines to the Sunday School rooms where the hard work really began. The shepherd robes were finally completed and were used by the members of the church for the play. The robes are now stored in a clean, safe closet and can be used for future plays. It was hard work and all of the women enjoyed learning how to cut and sew shepherd 3/4 length robes. They worked for many hours on the sewing project.

Many church members have given their time, talents, and money for the continuation of the up-keep of the church and grounds. Mr. Jeffrey Moore volunteered to paint the lovely white church columns that support the front porch. It was a dangerous job to climb the step ladder and do the painting.

Mr. Richard Taylor types the church bulletin each week for the First Baptist Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rogers served the First Baptist Church for 27 years. Mrs. Rogers was honored on Mother's Day, 2007 for her role as the pastor's wife. The choir and congregation sang some of their favorite songs during the Mother's Day Sunday service. Their descendants were there to honor Rev. and Mrs. Henry Rogers for their faithful service not only for the First Baptist Church but also to our sister church, Friendship Baptist Church. Rev. Henry Rogers preached at both churches for 27 years.

The First Baptist Church enjoyed having a softball team in the late 1990's. The spirit of sports events in the social life of the church showed that young and old alike enjoyed the fellowship of meeting new friends through-out Laurens County. People from other denominations also competed in the sports events. Our church did not always win every sporting event; however, the sporting events gave the church members the opportunity to make new friends through-out the county.

The talents of many craftsmen, painters, and artists are greatly appreciated by church members and visitors at the First Baptist Church.

Lovely ruffled country curtains adorn the large windows in several of the Sunday School rooms. Soft gingham cushions are on the chairs; thus contributing to some comfort during the Sunday School hours and for business meetings.

Mrs. Ray Chastein and the young people created a lovely seaside scene on the wall of one of the Sunday School rooms. Our talented youth have done a splendid job with their talents of painting and creativity. Our young people are a great asset to our church. They also participate in their own singings and plays in our church. This is a good experience for them because they will be the leaders in the future of the First Baptist Church of Gray Court, South Carolina.

A beautiful Jordan River scene was recently completed in May, 2008. The Jordan River scene was hand painted by Mrs. Connie Hall and her daughter. The hand painted scene is located directly behind the choir loft. There is no dullness within the frame work of our church; thanks to the time, creative abilities, love, money, and interests of many Christians within our church membership.

Our present Housekeeper is Mrs. Christie Brewington who cleans the church twice a month. The kitchen and dining rooms are kept clean by the members of the Social committee.

Our church can also boast about a few pets who like to wander around the front lawn and porch. A yellow, black, and white female cat is seen quite often on the front porch. Also, several community dogs like to walk around the front lawn before and after church services.



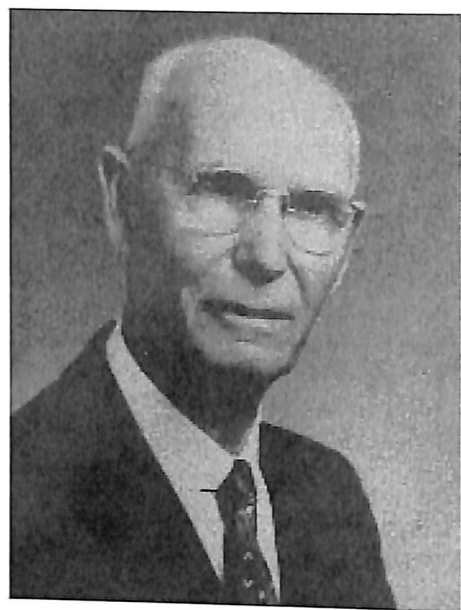
# CHURCH PASTORS



Rev. H. L. Baggott-1912-1915



Rev. John H. Washington-1916



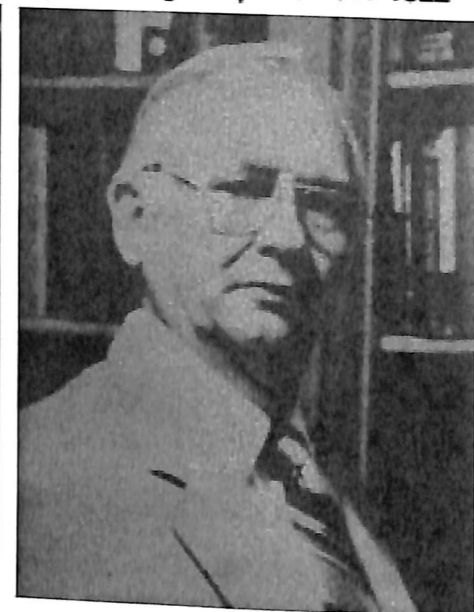
Rev. George Hopkins-1917-1922



Rev. B. F. Carson-1923-1932



Rev. Alve C. Langston-1933-1944



Rev. William B. Bolt-1944-1947



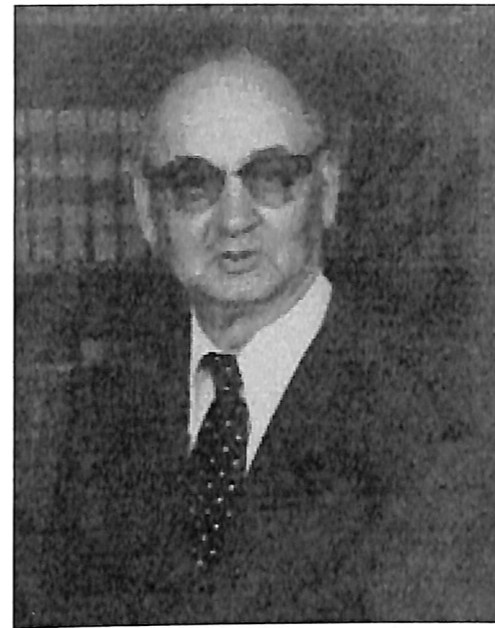
Rev Henry W. Long-1948



Rev. Norwood Davis-1949-1952



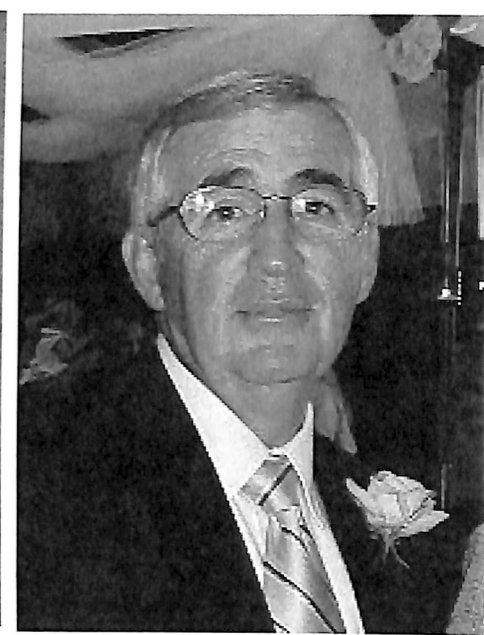
Rev S. P. Johnson-1952-1954



Rev. Olin F. Hutchinson-1954-1963



Rev Henry E. Rogers-1963-1991



DR. G. THOMAS CARTLEDGE - 1997-2006



SAMMY GODFREY - 2007-

NOT PICTURED:

REV. PAUL TURNER - 1992-1994

DR. KENNITH NORRIS - 1995-1996

PICTURES DONATED  
BY BETTY COOK