

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH

On January 10, 1896 a group of Christian people interested in organizing a Baptist Church met at the home of Elder W. K. Cox. Elder Cox was elected as moderator and E. K. Cox as clerk. The Articles of Faith and Church Covenant as given in the Pendleton's Church Manual were read and adopted by the group. They voted to organize as a church and selected the name Beulah Baptist Church. The following were enrolled as charter members: E. F. Hall, W. K. Cox, J. M. Cox, E. D. Doan, L. F. Hall, C. A. Cox, W. P. Willes, and Lizzey J. Harr. Brethren J. M. Cox, E. D. Doan and E. F. Hall were elected to serve as trustees and to receive and hold the deed to church property.

The first reference to new members appears in minutes for October 7, 1896. On that date H. P. Cox and Mollie Cox joined by letter. The first members baptized into the fellowship of the church were baptized July 4, 1897. They were Aden Cox, Eugene Cox, Gracie Cox, and Estelle Kitzmiller.

In the early months different ones conducted the worship services. The first pastor, A. J. Watkins was called April 3, 1897. Services were to be held monthly with a worship service and business session on Saturday and a worship service on Sunday. It is of interest to note that Reverend Watkins "proposed to serve the church for \$2.50 a month."

The records do not indicate as to when the church building was erected but it was in use by September 4, 1897. On that date a motion was approved to install locks on the windows and an offering of \$0.50 received. It was reported on October 2, 1897 that locks had been installed at the cost of \$0.50.

From the beginning the church was interested in evangelism, growth of its members, and missions. Interest in evangelism is indicated by reports given in the minutes of revivals held and the listing of those professing faith in Christ and being baptized into the fellowship of the church. This interest continues today.

Interest in growth and faithfulness of the members is indicated in the minutes by the frequent request for reading of the church covenant in the sessions of the church. The minutes record many instances of committees appointed to investigate conduct of members, their absence from services, etc. Reports were received from the committees and persons involved were given an opportunity to acknowledge their sin and ask forgiveness of the church. If they were not willing to do so they were dismissed from the fellowship. Over the years opportunities for training and growth have been provided through Sunday School, Church Training, and Mission organizations.

Interest in missions and cooperation with other Baptist churches is indicated by the actions of the church. In the minutes of July 3, 1897, it is recorded that Elder W. K. Cox was elected as delegate (messenger) to the annual associational meeting to be held at Blountville, August 5, 1897. The church is a member of the Holston Baptist Association.

Interest in missions is further indicated by many references to offerings for missions. The earliest recorded being April 3, 1898 in the amount of \$2.54 which was sent to the Foreign Mission Board. On July 7, 1898 an offering of \$7.00 was given for missions. There are many other reports of money collected for pastor's salary and missions. On September 19, 1917 a motion was approved that a mission offering be received each Sunday.

On December 9, 1953 a motion was approved to give 10% of regular offerings to the Cooperative Program. A plan of percentage giving remains a priority for the church.

The first man to be called as full-time pastor was Reverend Calvin Edwards in 1949. On February 9, 1949 the offer of land on which to build a parsonage by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Rowland was accepted. Plans were completed and the parsonage was erected. Mr. L. L. Milhorn gave much assistance in construction of the parsonage and additions to and remodeling of the church building.

Reverend Leonard Evans came to the church as pastor in February 1950 and was the first to live in the parsonage. Reverend Evans died in June 1952 while he was serving as pastor.

Over the years improvements have been made to the church building. As early as July 7, 1939 there was a discussion of plans for classrooms to be added to the rear of the auditorium. Plans for this work were approved, funds raised, and work done in 1943.

May 10, 1950 the construction of classrooms to be added to the side of the auditorium was approved to be built when funds were available. On January 17, 1951 it was reported that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Deck had donated land on which to construct these classrooms. The classrooms were constructed in 1951.

For some years preceding 1957, members of Beulah Baptist Church had discussed remodeling and renovating the church building. A committee was appointed to study various suggestions and present plans. On May 11, 1955 the committee made their report and it was approved. On March 24, 1957 the committee was authorized to proceed with the work and in due time it was completed at a cost of \$23370. It was necessary to borrow \$16,000 for this work. By August 1961 this indebtedness had been reduced to \$5487. On April 2, 1961 approval was given to enlarge the parsonage by adding two rooms and to renovate the existing part. It was later approved that a well be dug. This work necessitated the borrowing of \$2663 or a new total indebtedness of \$8150. This debt was retired on July 2, 1963.

Since 1963, the following improvements have been made: on July 8, 1964 classroom walls were bricked and a new roof was installed. On March 13, 1966 the church approved the purchase of an organ, the remodeling of the area of the choir and pulpit, new carpet, and renovation of the basement area. On July 16, 1967 the church approved the paving of the parking area. On April 18, 1971 the church approved the installation of air conditioning for the church building. Remodeling and enlargement of the parsonage occurred in 1976. In the spring of 1977, 2.57 acres of land was purchased from the Stacy Deck Family. The kitchen, fellowship hall, and classrooms were constructed in 1980 adjacent to the sanctuary/main building. A picnic shelter was built in 1984. The church purchased a van in 1986 for ministry to those with no

transportation to services. In 2019, renovation and repairs to the parsonage were made both to the interior and exterior.