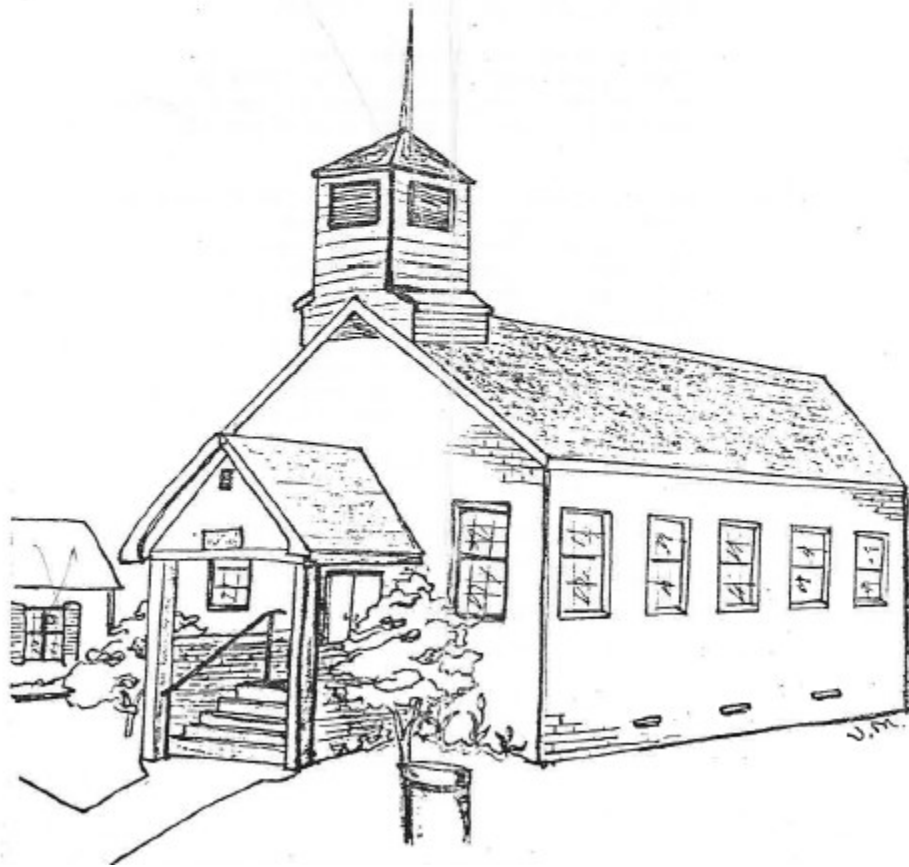


Little Rock Creek Baptist Church



Acknowledgement for Content

In the preparation of the history of Little Rock Creek Baptist Church, Tommie Edwards found information in “*A History of the French Broad Baptist Association*”, (the first name that Mitchell County Baptist Association was known by) compiled by Rev. Frank Parson in 1943.

Tommie prepared this in 1984 for Little Rock Creek Baptist Church’s 100th birthday celebration, dictating it to daughter Connie Edwards Buchanan who copied it for him.

Other sources were all the Church records from years back. Church Clerk Rosa Edwards searched these and compiled information also from the 100th birthday celebration in 1984. Recent happenings were added to complete this history as a remembrance from the dedication and ordination of Deacons Gordon Lovejoy and Ritchie Harrell, to serve the Lord at Little Rock Creek Baptist Church.

Secretary Kathy Harrell typed and copied the booklet.

Prayerfully hoping the contents are correctly copied by the clerk, from her sources, of diligent work of Church clerks who recorded years ago.

To God Be the Glory!

It was a crisp, September day, as the lone rider topped the ridge overlooking the Toe River Valley. Already the chilling breeze spoke of the soon coming winter. The man, Stephan Morgan, now in his 68th year, drew his horse to a stop at a point where the valleys below spread out in panoramic view. As the Baptist minister sat erect in his saddle and observed the beauty of the mountainous terrain that lay before him. His mind went back across those 39 years of preaching the gospel. For 39 years now he had crossed these ridges and rounded his way through the foothills to establish Churches in the Toe River area. There had been many wonderful things accomplished in this fast-growing area. His mind went back to the associational meeting held at the Bethel Meeting House in Burke County, NC, August 26th, 1815. He was then a young preacher of 10 years. The state of the Churches in that year was encouraging. There were 15 Churches represented, representing 586 members. As he sat and pondered, he also thought of that associational meeting of the French Broad Baptist Association, held at Cain Creek Meeting House in Buncombe County, August 22nd and 23rd, 1823. There were 23 Churches represented, representing 744 members. He remembers that year, Roan Mountain had 62 members and was the largest Church in the French Broad Association. He also remembered that Grassy Creek reported 34 members, baptized three, and received four by letter.

As he sat there and pondered, he also thought of the associational meeting of 1827, held that year in Waynesville, Haywood County. He remembered again the Roan Mountain Church had received seven by baptism that year, four by letter, and had grown to a membership of 84; that Grassy Creek had received four by letter and had grown to a membership of 46. He recalled that year, 23 Churches were represented, representing 997 members. That was indeed an encouraging year.

The reports showed the results of the fruitful activity on that part of the brethren who labored in that area. But all of his memories were not good. He also remembered that the 1830 associational meeting minutes showed a drop from those 23 Churches to 17 Churches, and the total membership had dropped from 997 to 568. He recalled that Roan Mountain had reported 84 in 1827, and reported only 21 in 1830, and Grassy Creek's membership had dropped from 46 to 28. Yes, there had been dissension and misunderstanding in those years.

But this was the year 1844, and new and wonderful things were beginning to happen. As he started his descent down the winding trail, his mind rushed ahead to think upon the things that were surely ahead. He was making his monthly visit to the Roan Mountain Church. Before he reached his destination, he spent the night with Brother Stephen Collis and his wife. These good folks lived in the Grassy Creek area. For many years now he had been a close friend. So close, indeed, that the Collis'es had named their son Stephen Morgan Collis. He was looking forward to seeing this young man who was now pastoring two new Churches that had started in the French Broad Association in this year of 1844. They were Rock Creek and Bear Creek. Because of the outstanding revivals in both Roan Mountain Church and Grassy Creek Church, these two new Churches were formed. Roan Mountain reported dismissing 50 members, 39 of which organized Rock Creek Baptist Church. They had sent delegates, George C. Hopson, Shadrach Greene, and Joseph Greene. All three of these men had been members of Roan Mountain Church that previous year. So, in this year, 1844, we mark the beginning of Rock Creek Baptist Church, presently known as Little Rock Creek Baptist Church. We can note that in 1849, the church had 35 members. By 1861, it had a total of 70 members. In 1869 it had grown to 78 members.

Our celebration of 100 years was based on our Church records at hand, dated March 1884 even though older records show Rock Creek Baptist Church being founded in 1844.

(Note: The largest membership to my knowledge was 222 members, in 1910. Stated Tommie Edwards)

The following pages highlight the organization and history of our Church, Little Rock Creek Baptist Church. As we read them let us be challenged to carry on the work of the Church to the Glory of God.

Little Rock Creek Baptist Church

I. Organization

The first record book contains records from March 1884-1890. There is not mention of an organizational service. The oldest actual record, a copy of the Minutes of the French Broad Association of 1830, states that “Rock Creek” was organized in 1844. Whether this was referring to Little Rock Creek Church we are not sure.

There is no mention of whether they were meeting in homes or a building in the community.

II. Buildings

Saturday, July 31st, 1886, a committee was appointed to locate a site for a Church house. In 1887, there was a building committee appointed.

March 1888, building a Church house was mentioned. *“We have selected a site for the house, also obtained a deed for the same We have also agreed upon the dimensions of the house, also taken a subscription and got about (there was a blank space). I think the next thing we need is a committee to get a workman to give a bill of the lumber.”* (A committee was appointed to meet with Roan Valley Church and a church named Baptist Chapel Church to request that they merge with Little Rock Creek Church. The committee reported that the Roan Valley Church voted against the consolidation of the Churches.)

January 1890, a building committee was appointed to build a Baptist Church House. There is no further record concerning this proposed building project. This is the building probably built and destroyed or damaged by the 1901 flood.

(Notes of interest)

James (Jim) Ledford, father of Stokes and Hobert Ledford was the coffin builder in the community.

There is mention in the business meeting of January 1889, of a Church rule that was adopted stating that the Church House shall not be used for any purpose except the use of the Church.

A building was built in the year 1916.

Record of a freight bill on lumber and those who contributed, Amount \$2.30. A list of labor, and the amount is recorded totaling \$121.76. The total cost of building to year 1916, \$549.56. A record continuing into 1920 is kept of work on the Church. There is additional information concerning the later sites and descriptions of Churches with school being held in some.

Furniture of the present Church House

Benches, pulpit, and communion table was purchased while Park Whitson was Pastor in the 1950's. The Organ was purchased during his pastorate.

Bricking, covering of steps by added porch was begun during the pastorate of Robert Seatz. It was completed and indebtedness paid off during the pastorage of Clarence Standfield.

Other projects and pastorates:

Classrooms – Robert Seatz

Bathrooms – Clarence Standfield

Carpeting, bench cushions and Choir loft – Lloyd Roberts

Lowering the ceiling remodeling project – Lloyd Roberts

Nursery facility – Jerry Lloyd

Doors separating foyer and auditorium – Jerry Lloyd

The Parsonage:

A former pastor's wife, Julie Lloyd, expressed it well. *“This was a milestone (if it did take 100 years to reach it)”*. (Clerk's comment: In the life of the Church, this came about after much talking, planning, and praying in 1982.) Rev. Lloyd Roberts and Mrs. Roberts were the first Pastor and wife to move into the parsonage in May 1983.

Names the Church has been called:

1844 – Rock Creek

1884 – The Baptist Church of Christ as Little Rock Creek

1885 – The Church at Little Rock Creek

October 15th, 1921 – Baptist Church at Little Rock Creek

January 4th, 1941 – The Little Rock Creek Baptist Church

Our Current name – Little Rock Creek Baptist Church

Common names found on the first Church Record:

Burleson

Buchanan

Hughes

Wilson

Freeman

Thomas

Sparks

Ledford

Ward

Turner

Twigs

Edwards

Randolph

Collis

Ponder

Holder

Jones

Green

Ayers

McKinney

Carroll

Miller

Young

Davis

English

Birchfield

Heaton

Woody

Reid

Biddix

McCoury

Huskins

Gouge

Patterson

Childers

Sellers

Watson

Pastors and years, they served:

- S. M. Collis (A memorial tells of S. M. Collis being our good pastor for many years lived among us for about 18 years. Died April 16th, 1890.)
- W. C. Parsons: 1884
- S. M. Greene (Steven): 1885 to 1908
- L. H. Green (Landon): 1908 then again in 1918
- C. H. McKinney: 1910 to 1922
- Julius Henline: 1923
- WM. Francum, C. J. Buchanan (Supplied): 1924
- Charles McKinney: 1925
- C. G. Ellis (Charlie): 1927
- J. M. Whitaker: 1930 to 1932
- Clarence Buchanan: 1932 to 1943
- Frank Hopkins: 1943 to 1946
- Park Whitson: 1946 to 1949
- Astor Buchanan: 1950 (Sunday night training union was organized)
- Park Whitson: 1950 to 1956
- Robert Seatz: 1956
- Earnest Canipe: 1956
- Ted Braswell: 1960
- Robert Seatz: 1962 to 1963
- Clarence Stanfield: 1963 to 1967
- Paul Billingsley: 1967 (pro-tem)
- Park Witson: 1968
- Clarence Buchanan: 1972 (pro-tem)
- Keith Gouge: 1973 (Father's Day dinners and 2nd Saturday night singings were started)
- Mack Hodge: 1975 (pro-tem)
- Lee Woody: 1976 to 1977
- Lloyd Roberts: 1978 to 1983 (Parsonage was built)
- Jerry Lloyd: 1984 to 1988
- Erby McKinney: 1988 to 1997
- Dallas: 1998-2015
- Toby Crowder: 2016-2017
- Keith Beck: 2018 to present

The church assisted in financing two mission trips that Deane Edwards (daughter of Tommie and Rose Lee Edwards) was a part of while a student at Liberty Baptist College, Lynchburg, VA. One trip was to Guatemala after the severe earthquake to help in rebuilding a Church. The other was a mission trip to Mexico.

Through the years the Church has participated in mission support and sponsorship. We are committed to continuing to help spread the gospel.

The Church Services:

The church had a monthly service on Saturday. Usually the business was conducted at the Saturday service. Many business meetings were held to bring charges of disorderly conduct against members. Someone would be appointed to go request those charged with such to be present in the next monthly meeting, at which time they were charged with what they were guilty of.

Most recorded were:

1. Intoxication
2. Fornication
3. Swearing
4. One young man had bought a gun contrary to the wishes of his father
5. Non-attendance
6. One man, for taking another man's corn
7. Selling fruit to a distillery
8. Going to a "frolick" and taking a fiddle and engaging in it

On Sunday following the business meeting on Saturday, they had a service. (Usually after being dismissed from fellowship in the Church it would be recorded in about a month that they came back and acknowledged their wrong conduct and be "seated" again in fellowship)

Revivals were held usually in November and December, lasting as long as two or three weeks. Many places record numbers in the 30's joining the Church for Baptism.

The Pastors were paid by "subscription" of members pledging what they would pay for the year. 10, 25, and sometimes 50 cents would be pledged.

August 9th, 1884 records a report of a Sabbath School with 104 enrolled and average attendance of 65. They also observed foot washings.

A collection from Home Missions is mentioned in 1910. (The Little Rock Creek Baptist Church made its greatest Mission endeavors up until that time during the pastorate of Clarence Stanfield supporting Missionaries John Gunter (Bolivia, South America), Converted Catholic Priest Angel Carreon, Dennis Biddison (Bolivia, South America), and Clyde Billingsley, Jr with Pioneer Evangelism, doing mission work in the Western States.

Our Church Bus:

The first (An old School Bus) was purchased during the pastorage of Robert Seatz.

The Second (A used Volkswagen) was purchased by a group of the Church men who went to Forest City

The Third (A nice Volkswagen) was purchased. Our bus ministry was run on a limited basis. During Rev. Lloyd Roberts' ministry, a group of young people used it extensively in visiting, which was a real blessing to those they visited.

Other Missionary Endeavors:

Rev. Jerry Lloyd had a unique opportunity to minister in some of the schools in Mitchell and Yancy Counties. The Church voted in the August 1984, business meeting to assist with \$75.00 monthly toward financing this ministry. During Rev. Lloyd's pastorate a "Junior Church" ministry was established to focus on the 5 to 9-year old's in the Church. A youth Bible Club called "IMPACT" was also started. The ladies of the Church began an active Fellowship which met monthly to carry out projects to help in progress within the Church. They also reached out to the community with some visitation, preparing meals and other food gifts, and special prayer efforts.

Deacons that were mentioned in the older Church records:

1885 – H. B. Buchanan, Cain Freeman, W. D. Wilson, L. F. Burleson, Pink L Greene, W. H. Biddix, Jack Blevins, Charlie Ward, Fate Holder

More Recently: W. O Gouge, Greene Ledford, Tarp Burleson, Luman Gouge, Bruce Perkins, William Ledford Jr, Tommie Edwards, and Merrell Harrell

Current: Bobbie Green, Richard Ledford, Ritchie Harrel and Gordon Lovejoy

Ordaining a Minister was recorded March 5th, 1887. Brother S. L. Buchanan "*who had been set apart to ordination to the Gospel Ministry and after due examination finding him sound in the faith and Orthodox in principal proceeded by prayers and laying on of hands.*"

Fred Ellis was also a missionary preacher starting in the Little Rock Creek Baptist Church. Mary Greene also prepared to do mission work.

In 1984 Little Rock Creek Baptist Church held a centennial celebration and honored some of the Senior members of the Church. These members, some of whom are living but are inactive because of health or age, some deceased, some now members of other Churches, are still very special to us and made many contributions to the work of the Church in days gone by. We would like to begin recognition of those members with a recollection from Francis Burleson (Mrs. Mae Randolph) ...

The Revival Meeting for the year 1910 commenced Monday night, October 31st, and was carried 8 days. Conducted by Rev. J. F. Black of Texas and assisted by the pastor. There were 8 joining the Church by confession awaiting baptism. At the top of this list was Francis Burleson (Sister Mae Randolph).

Older members recognized at the 100-year celebration: (Those in parentheses are oldest members still living at the time this document was created although inactive due to health and age)

“*” denotes those deceased at the printing of this History

“+” denotes no longer members, joining other Churches

+ Francis Mae Burleson Randolph: joined Church by confession of Faith in Christ, October 1910. Baptized May 13th, 1911.

(Mae Randolph Burleson): Baptized April 18th, 1925

(Nola Holder Edwards): Baptized April 18th, 1925

*Gracie (Mrs. Dewey) Burleson: Baptized April 18th, 1925

*Bertie Gouge Miller: Joined Church by letter, 1932

*Birdie Buchanan: Joined Church by letter, December 27th, 1941

*Norma Ledford: Joined Church by statement, May 12th, 1957

*Catherine Teague: Joined Church by letter, December 4th, 1964

(Etta Stevens): Joined Church by statement, May 11th, 1986

*Smith Greene: Baptized August 15th, 1942

+Benton McKinney: Joined Church by letter, August 31st, 1975

Since 1983.....

In Jerry Lloyd’s pastorage, 1983 to 1988, some of the proposed projects set forth at the 100th birthday celebration of the Church, were realized.

The nursery was built or enclosed from the auditorium, utilizing a classroom which was not being used. Double doors were installed separating the foyer from the sanctuary. The entrance steps were covered with outdoor carpet and the choir loft covered with carpet matching the auditorium. The small children’s classroom was carpeted as well as the classrooms downstairs along with stairway. Handrails were installed on the entrance steps.

Joshua David Lloyd was born September 25th, 1984. The Lloyd’s fourth child. They were the second pastor and family to live in the parsonage.

There were additions to the Church. Among Miller confessed Christ and was baptized into the Church fellowship. Juan Lopez was from Mexico. He was of the Catholic faith and spoke mostly Spanish. Juan lived and worked in this area, and he trusted Christ as Saviour but didn’t join the Church. There were several young people baptized: Luke and Spring Angel Lloyd, and Angie and Amy Edwards were some of them.

Ritchie Harrell comments that Rev. Jerry Lloyd’s ministry had an impact on his life.

Jerry’s ministry included a limited Bible Club in area schools, (He was also allowed to substitute as a teacher from time to time) a radio broadcast on Sunday afternoon, an extensive missionary endeavor (some of

which are still posted at the back of the church), a very concentrated visitation effort was carried out by pastor and Church members.

Area young people, some church members along with youth from other churches, became a part of the youth meetings called IMPACT.

Julie Lloyd also helped in home Bible studies with ladies in joining communities.

Three trips to Florida Bible College were made with young people from the Church taking part.

Jerry resigned his pastorate in the summer of 1988, going back to serve the Lord in their native state, Florida.

We have never granted a letter to sister Baptist Churches for them. Unless they have joined a church by statement and we were not notified, their membership is still at Little Rock Creek.

Rev. Erby McKinney started his ministry at Little Rock Creek Baptist Church as a supply pastor after Rev. Jerry Lloyd's pastorate, in the winter of 1988. The church called him as full-time pastor in March of 1989.

Rev. Erby is a Mitchell County, NC native and previously pastored Churches in the Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey County area. He now lives in Carter County, Tennessee where he has also served area Churches as pastor. Coincidentally (or not really so since God orders our steps) pastor Erby reminisces often that he and his wife, Louise Ward McKinney, came forward, in his early life, in response to an alter call, after the Holy Spirit deeply convicted him. They yielded their lives to the Lord. This was in the old Little Rock Creek Baptist Church building that the existing structure replaced.

Pastor Erby has been used of the Lord to see added to the Church 16 members by baptism, and his family members from Tennessee joined the Church by letter and attend regularly.

The church has experienced a renewal of love for each other and is in a growing process, physically, spiritually, and financially.

The Lords Supper is taken regularly on the first Sunday morning after a fifth Sunday in a month. Under Rev. Erby's pastorate, the indebtedness of the parsonage has been paid off and in 1996 a mortgage burning was celebrated. Stained windows were placed in the auditorium, and new windows in the entire Church building except for the basement classrooms. This project was funded by the sacrificial giving of church members, some giving in memory of and honor of loved ones.

A building fund was started to finance the renovation of the belfry and adding of a new fiber glass spire. Also new guttering and repairs to the guttering on the parsonage were done.

New church members Gordon and Virginia Lovejoy, moving to our area from Wilmington, NC were responsible for Jim and Jean Poteat hearing of this project. They are Virginia's parents. They lovingly matched funds raised by the church to finance the new spire, in memory of their son James A. Poteat, Jr, killed in an accident in 1993. Also, a plaque has been placed in the foyer of the church as a memorial to all the young people in the church along with deceased ones Randy Harrell and Connie Edwards Buchanan.

During the raising of funds for the steeple project, it was also decided to put a new metal roof on the main sanctuary structure. All this was financed by love gifts, mostly of church members, allowing the church to avoid incurring any debts on any of the projects.

Widely known evangelist Ed McAbee assisted in revival efforts in the Church. Several local pastors preached in revivals also. Former pastor Clarence Stanfield taught an adult Bible School class on year. Missionary Clarence Ledford also taught a class with Bethlehem Church and Fork Mtn. Baptist Church attending.

A 5th Saturday night fellowship meeting was started with Fork Mtn. Baptist Church and Bethlehem Baptist Church, and recently Victory Freewill Baptist Church participating. The pastors of these churches alternate preaching at these services.

The church, with Pastor Erby's leadership, has renewed assisting in the funding of Mitchell County Baptist Association's Ministry. Presently we have voted to contribute to the Blue Ridge Prisons Ministry, and to help fund the purchase of Spanish Bibles.

In January of 1996, Tommie Edwards, at the urging of new members Sherri and Ron Montgomery and their desire to learn the Bible, started a Thursday night Bible class. This has been attended regularly by a good representation of adult and young adult people, some not members of this church. An hour, plus, is totally

given to Bible study and following that, another hour, plus, is spent in fellowship and sharing refreshments. This has strengthened our new members and all who attend in learning from the Bible, as well as in our love for each other. Concern for members not attending church is always discussed with plans to reach out to them also. Sherri Montgomery was named Social Coordinator and is in the planning stage of a Newsletter.

On Sunday morning, January 7th, 1996, Merrell Harrell expressed his desire to see some young men set aside by the church to serve as deacons. Others felt this need also. Later in the year, different ones were approached by Pastor Erby, and deacons Tommie Edwards and Merrell Harrell. With William Ledford, Jr. having to be inactive because of chronic health problems that make it impossible from him to attend church, the need for additional deacons is greater. Tommie and Merrell also have health problems. Gordon Lovejoy and Ritchie Harrell were set aside as prospective deacons in the Autumn of 1996. An ordination service is scheduled for February 2nd, 1997.

Future projects in the planning stages:

- Assistance with the Blue Ridge Prison Ministry
- Praying for and working toward revival
- Covering with left over metal from the roof, the entrance to the church
- Re-covering the entrance steps
- Finish painting the trim on the church building
- Carpeting the auditorium, or partially carpeting aisles, rostrum and choir loft and refinishing the Oak flooring under the pews
- Padding the pews
- Remodeling classrooms to accommodate a fellowship area
- Cleaning up the property owned by the church including the area across the highway
- Paving and improving the parking area