

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE DECADES

(A brief history of Cross Roads Baptist Church)

The stately brick church with its 'white steeple reaching heavenward can easily be spotted a short distance from the cross roads of Highway 135 and Jameson Road. The location gives the church a rightful name - Cross Roads Baptist Church. At the drive's entrance, a monument states that the church was founded in 1798.

Cross Roads was first organized by Rev. Elnathan Davis, a pioneer missionary from Chatham County, NC. He continued to work in Pickens County and died in 1828 while pastor of this church. He was buried in Griffin Church Cemetery. This information comes to us from the Griffin Church history.

The first known land grant for the building of a 'meeting house' was given by Needham Freeman to William Hunt and Jephtha Freeman who were chosen commissioners for Cross Roads Baptist Church. The Cross Roads Baptist Meeting House was built on the three acres of land around one of the three head branches of Dody's Creek. This information was recorded in the Pendleton District, October 24, 1814 and is on file in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia, SC.

The church records reflect through a deed from John Fendley in August 1875 acreage purchased for a total of \$18.00 for 6 1/2 acres of land on which the church is located today.

What happened from 1798 when Elnathan Davis Organized the church to the building of the first church building, we have no record.

In our earliest records beginning as early as 1838, the church was referred to as Cross Roads Church of Christ. During the years from 1838 to 1868 our records reflect these ministers: Brother Burrows, Tyre L. Roper, S. Powell, Thomas Looper, T.R. Gury and W. B. Singleton.

In 1872, a petition was sent to the legislature to incorporate Cross Roads Baptist Church giving her regulation of her own affairs. In 1874 the bylaws of the church were adopted and a church council was appointed to be in charge of internal affairs.

In 1896, 1/2 acre of land was cleared for burial ground and a committee negotiated to buy land adjoining the church property for \$10.00 per acre. Ministers from 1869 - 1902 were: William B. Singleton, S. Powell, Thomas Looper, E.T. Stone, D.C. Freeman, E.J. Mullinax, L.C. Holtz, Joseph Looper, W.L. Anderson, W.C. Sebourn and Lem Freeman.

Records were lost from August 1899 to May 1902. The first baptismal pool was constructed by the members in 1909. Records reflected their pride as stated "We now have a nice baptismal pool".

In 1910 Fulton Childress was licensed to preach and was ordained at Cross Roads in 1912. He was elected as pastor of this church for the first time in 1915. The following served as pastors from 1902 - 1921: Lem Freeman, B.E. Grandy, J.E. Ashmore, D.W. Hiott, F.S. Childress, I.E. McDavid, J.L. Willis and T.E. Seago.

In 1922 the small frame church stood in what is now the main parking area. From that year to 1943 interesting growth took place. January 1924 the church voted to build a new church building. In December 1925 the new bilding was dedicated and note of the debt was burned at the service. The ministers during the period 1922 - 1940 were: D.W. Hiott, A.E. Howard, B.M. Wynn, J.A. Anderson and F.S. Childress.

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During the period of 1943 - 1960 Cross Roads continued to grow. In 1944 Rev. F.S. Childress was elected to an un-expiring term and the regular yearly election was discontinued. The first parsonage was built in 1947 for the cost of \$3,845.87. Rev. R.D. Gregg was the first full-time pastor beginning in 1947 with a salary of \$35.00 per week. It was during Rev. Gregg's ministry that the first Bible School was held in the summer of 1948. In 1950 Jackie Freeman dedicated her life to mission work. Jackie served in foreign missions in France along with her husband, Gene Phillips. In 1956 a new gas furnace was installed in the church and the next year a new entrance to the church was constructed. The ministers during the period of 1943 - 1960 were: Fulton S. Childress, R.D. Gregg, J.D. Jeffcoat, N.J. Kimbrell, W.L. Freeman, Jr. and George Case.

The period from 1960 - 1967 began with plans for a new parsonage to be built across Highway 135 from the church at an approximate cost of \$20,000.00. Down through the years, as the need arose, Mr. John Finley and Mr. Jim Fendley deeded additional lands to be used for making the cemetery adequate. Church records were microfilmed at Furman University in 1966 and the next year Church Trustees were elected. The budget for Cross Roads Church was \$17,452.12 for 1965. During the period of 1963 - 1967 the following pastors were at Cross Roads: George Case, John Lockaby and Dr. S.H. Jones, Interim. Beginning in 1968 - 1975 major renovations for the church building began. New windows were installed, the steeple and ceiling were repaired, new pews, furniture and carpet were purchased and the building was completely air conditioned.

Music continued to be an integral part of Cross Roads. In February 1970, Lynn Lowery became the first "paid" choir director. He was followed in 1972 by Alan Raines. It was during Alan's years of service that the first grand piano was purchased. In 1974, Traett Brock became Choir Director. In March of 1982 Dick Hughes became Choir Director until June of 2003. Keela Jameson served as Interim Choir Director from June of 2003 to August of 2005. From August of 2005 until July of 2008 Dr. Chris Mathews was the Minister of Music.

During the period around 1970-1972 the first bus was purchased and the first Children's Church was organized. Bruce Riggins was its first director.

Active deacons and church council updated the by-laws and the Constitution. The first honorary deacons were designated. They were Mr. Johnny Capell, Mr. Jim Fendley, Mr. Henry Jones, Mr. Matthew Looper and Mr. Delmar Williams. Pastors during the period of 1968 - 1975 were: John Lockaby, Dr. S.H. Jones, Interim, J.C. Barrell, Coman Brown, Interim and Joe Gardner. During the period from 1975 - 2003 the following have served as pastors: Rev. Joe Gardner, Rev. John Tollison, Interim, Rev. Frank Barnes, Rev. David Anderson (Interim), Rev. Richard Spearman, Pastor Tom Jones (Interim).

In 1999 the new Children's Building was completed.

In May of 2000 Cross Roads Baptist Church lost its sanctuary with the attached education building to a fire that was later determined started in the basement of the church. Due to the efforts of the local Dacusville Volunteer Fire Department the Fellowship Building and the Children's Building were saved. Undaunted, the membership moved Sunday services to the Fellowship Building and a mobile home was moved onto the property to help with Sunday School classes for the adults.

In December of 2002 the new Sanctuary was completed and the first service was held. In November of 2003 the church membership called Pastor Mark B. Ford to serve as our pastor. In May of 2004 we celebrated our homecoming by burning the mortgage note that was paid in full.

As we reflect on the dreams and efforts of our forefathers, we can see that it was their determination, perception and faith that laid the foundation for reaching out to the community around us. Cross Roads has come a long way but ahead there are many possibilities - challenges for every one of us as we continue to fulfill the great commission that Jesus commanded us to do.