

A History of Bailey Baptist Church from 1909—2026

“At the request of the Baptists near Bailey, NC, J.W. Nobles, J.H. Grice, and G.W. Finch met at Rock Springs School House about one mile from Bailey, NC, on the 26th day of September, 1909 for the purpose of organizing themselves into a Missionary Baptist Church. J.W. Nobles acted as moderator and clerk. The following brothers and sisters presented their letters: J.P. Underwood Sr., R.L. Underwood, L.R. Finch, B.L. Taylor and daughter, Mrs. Ellen Finch, and Miss Mary Underwood. They were duly enrolled and constituted into a Baptist Church to be known as the Missionary Baptist Church of Bailey, Nash County, N.C.



J.W. Nobles



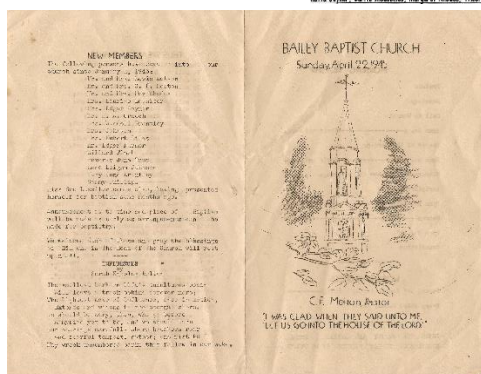
G.W. Finch

In a further review, we find that J.P. Underwood, Sr. was the first deacon, and R.L. Underwood, Sr. was the first church clerk. Rev. J.W. Nobles a Missionary of the State Mission Board, agreed to continue preaching for the new church to December, 1909. The first revival was held in October, 1909. Many were moved by the preaching of the Gospel during the revival, four being reserved for baptism and one by letter.

At the first church conference which was held on October 17, a building committee was appointed. Also a motion was passed that the church ask for membership in the Johnston County Association of which they have been a member since October, 1909. [The church moved to the Tar River Association.] The first church was completed before many months passed. Sunday School was started on January 1, 1913 with 63 enrolled. The first Sunday School Superintendent was J. P. Underwood.

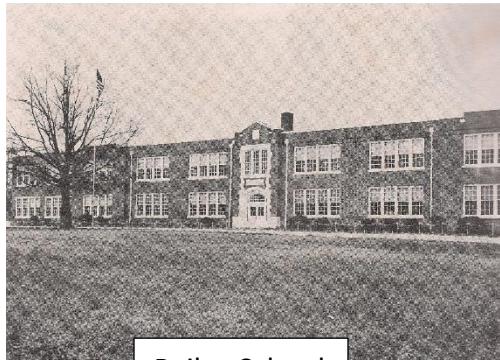


Abandoned apartments
The controversial Vance Street Gospel Apartment, built by Bailey, subject of numerous stories, was recently sold by its owners to a new owner. The building was built in 1947 and its location was unfortunate. The story on Page 5. (Historical photo by Winton.)

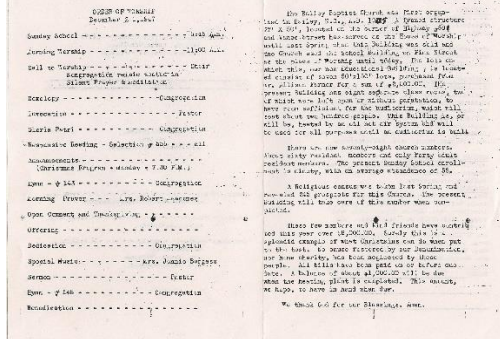
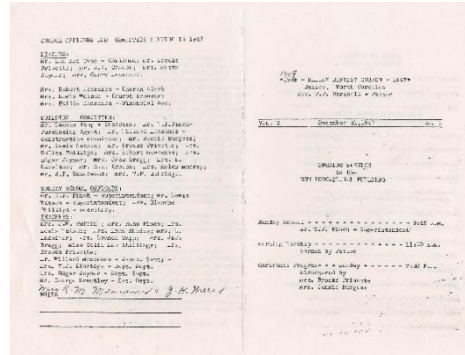


Church Bulletin, 1945

The first church built served the members until 1947, when it was sold to Mr. B.M. Farmer, who converted the building into modern apartments, generally known today as "Gospel Apartment." Back in the early day of World War II this church began realizing the need for a larger building. At that time they began making plans toward expanding the church building facilities. Early plans did not embrace the idea of a new building but only the addition of Sunday School rooms to the old building. A lot was purchased at the rear of the old building. It was later decided, however, that their plans were inadequate for the future growth of the church. It was then that the members began thinking of a new building at a different location. Thus, when P.P. Hartsell became pastor of the church in 1946 he was urged to lead the church in a building program. He launched the program, and rode miles in search of materials that might be purchased at a reasonable price, offered advice and suggestions as to possible means of financing the project. The old church sold at auction brought \$1,565.00. The building fund grew through various fund raising efforts by April, 1947 to \$6,014.74. The members felt they were now ready to purchase a building site. A lot was purchased from W.H. Farmer and Brothers at \$2500, on the west end of the town beside Highway 264. \$2,000 of this amount was given by this company as a gift to the church education building and the basement started the following month. While this portion of the building was under construction regular Worship services were held in the school building. The women of the church were instrumental in this effort.



Bailey School



Dedication of Education Building Bulletin

Women's Missionary Union

Work on the main auditorium started in July, 1950, and continued until the building fund gave out. Since this construction was decided by the church to be on the pay-as-you-go plan, work was suspended. When Rev J.W. Davis became pastor of the church March 1951 in the fourteen week drive to raise 2500 dollars to complete the auditorium. At the end of the 14 weeks the goal of \$2500 had been exceeded and work was resumed on the completion of the auditorium."

(From 1957-58 Yearbook of Bailey Baptist Church; pictures added)





Church in the 1950s



Interior of church 1950s, VBS



Sunday School Class - 1954

SS Class, 1954-Ages 5-7

On July 6, 1952, the first worship service was held in the sanctuary. The educational building contained six rooms. In 1952, Rev. Frank Zedick became pastor. During the time he served the church, a Training Union (BTU) was started with Elizabeth Burgess as the first director, the first G.A. Coronation and R.A. Recognition Service was held, and new memorial stain-glass windows were added to the church sanctuary.



The first resident pastor of the church, Rev Clyde Yates, Jr., was called in December, 1954. During this time, the church began its first full-time program, an assembly room and six new classrooms were completed in the basement, a steeple, bell, and new pews were added, a church library was begun with 700 books, a fulltime paid janitor was hired. The church was formally dedicated in November, 1956. During 1956, the membership was 168. In 1957, Rev. Yates resigned as pastor. After several months with no pastor, the church called Joe Monte Bishop who remained as our pastor until 1961. During the time of his pastorate, he was married to Miss Peggy Liles, a member of Bailey Baptist, and they became the first occupants of the newly-erected pastorium. The plans for the pastorium were begun in 1957 and the construction was completed in 1959. A large portion of the construction money was donated by Mrs. Mary High, one of the charter members of Bailey Baptist Church. Open house for the new pastorium was held May 31, 1959. Some of the outstanding events of our church while Mr. Bishop was pastor were the beginning of Sunday night services, installation of two air-conditioners,

beginning of a young marrieds Sunday School class, and the change from the Johnston Association to the Tar River Association.



In 1961, J. Charles Allard was called as pastor. On November 11, 1962 the mortgage of the pastorium was burned. Mrs. Mary High, Mr. Lewis Watson, Chairman of the building committee, and our pastor burned the note. In 1962, a cement walk was added to the church grounds and several improvements were made on the church buildings. The church kitchen, basement, church and pastorium were painted. In 1963, the church installed a new heating and air conditioning system and an outdoor bulletin board was donated to the church. On May 26, 1963, Mr. Kennon Stone announced his decision to enter the ministry. Our people rejoiced in his decision for he is the first member to enter the ministry in the history of the church. Pastors Todd Walter (1965-1968) and Charles Kratz (1968-70) served as the next two full time minister. During their time at Bailey, GA and RA programs continued to flourish. Study courses were held annually to better educate members in their understanding of the Bible.



Study Course:
Participants
and Dinner in
the Church
Basement



The 1970s began with Jerry Turner becoming the next minister. During Jerry's tenure, the first baby dedication was held with five babies and one toddler being dedicated to being raised in a Christian environment.



Baby dedication



GA Coronation

Shelby Stephens was pastor, 1977-80. He was followed by John Owings as Interim and then as pastor, 1980-83. John left Bailey Baptist to become a military chaplain.



Shelby Stephens



John Owings

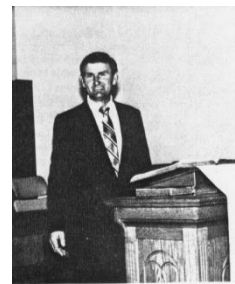
Jim Hales became pastor in 1983 and served in that capacity until 1988. During his pastorate, the church started the Sims Mission, observed the 75th Anniversary of BBC and, under the leadership of Jim's wife, Judy, started an active AIM mission group for younger women. In 1984, the church held an old fashioned ten revival. That same year, Louise Finch and several other women started the Mission Friends program for preschool children, with five classes meeting during worship hour.



AIM group



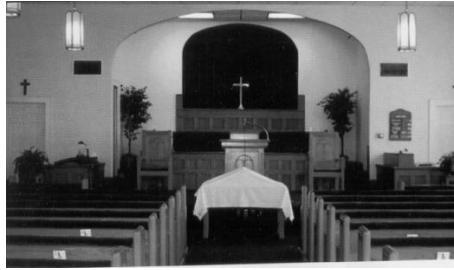
1st Sims Mission building



Jim Hales



VBS



Sanctuary in the 1980s



Live Nativity at Christmas, 1980s

Rev. Richard Smith served as Interim Pastor after Jim Hales and again after Bobby Trott. Bobby became pastor. Bobby served as pastor from 1988-90, followed by Jack Watson, 1991-1995. During Jack's pastorate, the church had an after-school day care for children.



Richard Smith



Bobby Trott & family



Jack Watson

Duane Caldwell, 1996-2001, was pastor at Bailey Baptist when the church made the decision of build a fellowship hall. The following is Duane's recounting of the events leading to that decision:

"In the 60's the basement fellowship area had provided recreation areas, in the 70's and 80's wedding receptions, bridal and baby showers were held--but the needs of our church family were changing-we were outgrowing the use of the basement facility. In Oct of 99 we requested input from the fellowship. We needed a vision of what the church needed to continue to teach God's word and reach out to our community. We then prayerfully considered the needs of the church family and arrived upon several priorities

1- classrooms 2.bathrooms and 3. Fellowship area

Decisions—decisions—discussions.

The lot adjacent to the church had become available earlier and purchased and paid for within a short time period. In April 2000 James Watson presented a plan from Mosley

Construction(datedApril6) for \$400,500. Church approved the plan, pledges were made to support the building vision and on June 4th groundbreaking took place. By June 12 earth moving began and site preparation was underway. How exciting to see things beginning to happen. Concrete was poured and by August metal beams—a building was forming!! September—interior walls, October—brick work was taking place and in Nov. and Dec. the trim work and painting was taking place. On April 8, 2001 (one year to the week of presenting the plans) we held a dedication of the building to God’s glory and guidance—that we would use this building to glorify Him and follow the command of the Great commission. Within 8 years—the building was paid for. In retrospect it was a learning and growing in faith experience as I realized God is sovereign—He reigns—He asks us to seek His will and direction and through Him all things are possible. Never underestimate the power of God—He is the creator. As we look to the future we should always be guided by His spirit and not our limitations. He will provide!”

Gerald Riggs, Interim



Youth at Ridgecreat



Seniors at Ft. Caswell



Duane’s children’s church time



Ground breaking for fellowship hall

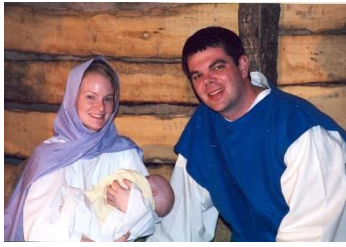


Construction



Dedication

In 2004, Scott McCullar became the next pastor at Bailey Baptist. After Scott returned to his home state of Alabama in 2007, Lee Peoples served briefly as Interim Pastor and, later, Billy Ruffin III. During Lee’s tenure, Bailey Baptist enjoyed a Night in Bethlehem in which Sunday School classes replicated various businesses in Bethlehem and “visitors” toured “the city” and were able to see a reproduction of the birth of Christ.



Lee Peoples

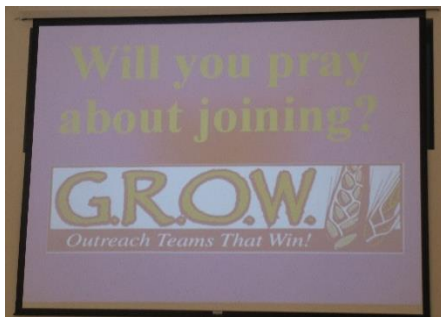


A Night in Bethlehem, 2007



In 2008, James and Tracey Watson – members at BBC - went on a mission trip to Kenya. Partly as a result of this trip, they felt the Holy Spirit leading them into full time ministry. What a joy to see two of our own become missionaries in East Asia.

Rev. Frank Duncan was pastor at Bailey Baptist from 2008-2011. During his tenure, several ministries were started including the GROW program – designed to reach out to church and non-church members, Mission Focus nights, an effort to focus on mission work both domestic and foreign and the churchwide adoption of three boys in Kitale, Kenya – providing funding for their educations. In 2010, Bailey Baptist hired Chris Gravning to be Youth Pastor for Bailey Baptist. The 100th Anniversary of Bailey Baptist Church was celebrated by the church all year in 2009 with three dinner theaters sharing the history of the fellowship.



GROW program



Mission Focus Nights



Youth Pastor Chris Gravning



First 100th Anniversary Dinner Theater

Pastor Darrel Davis came to Bailey Baptist in 2011 as Interim Pastor but subsequently hired as fulltime pastor. During his pastorate, the Wednesday night youth program was very active, with children's performance each Christmas, a van ministry to help with transportation, and meals by the church each week.



Wednesday Night Youth



Van Ministry



Spring Youth Retreat

Also, while Darrel was serving at Bailey Baptist, the church had a commissioning ceremony for Mike and Anne Mercer, Peggy Lamm and Robert Green, went to China on mission to share the Gospel message. Other ministries included hosting a Dental Bus, a Women's Expo, participation in a Horseshoe Ministry at the Kansas State Fair and participation in Operation Inasmuch.



Operation Inasmuch



Horseshoe Ministry, Kansas State Fair



Eddie Thompson, Interim, 2019-2020, was instrumental in obtaining Daniel Blackburn, Jr. as the next pastor at Bailey Baptist Church in April 2020. Daniel was the first bi-vocational pastor since the early years of the church's history. After preaching his first sermon, the following Sunday churches were closed due to the Covid 19 outbreak. Church was held via Zoom at first; later by gathering in cars in the parking lot with the pastor and musicians conducting service from a flatbed trailer. As things improved, church was held in the sanctuary with alternating rows blocked off, providing distance between members and their families. Under Daniel's leadership, Bailey Baptist has become more involved in town events – Halloween on Main Street, Christmas parades, and beginning a town Easter Sunrise Service on Main Street. Daniel's father has witnessed to our church through a horseback ministry. On July 12, 2026, Inglesia Bautista El Camino de Gracia was officially planted at Bailey Baptist, with Pastor Nathan Massey. The mission of Bailey Baptist Church is "to reach every home and every heart in our community with the gospel. The newly established Hispanic church is an effort to carry out that mission to an, otherwise, underserved population in this community. Under Pastor Daniel's leadership, the church yearly has taken trips to the Sight and Sound Theater in Pennsylvania and looks forward

to additional trips in the future to enrich the fellowship of the body. During Daniel's pastorate, the church began having singing services combined with Homecoming and also held a Gnat Fest.



Easter Service during Covid



Sunrise Service on Main Street

A history of BBC would not be complete without mentioning other events held regularly or annually. These would include Operation Christmas Child, VBS, Hanging of the Green/Poinsettia memorials, Easter/Christmas cantatas, Valentine Banquets, Baptist Children's Homes emphasis, Honoring our high school seniors, Senior Adult Sunday, Breakfast/Lunch for Bailey Elementary staff beginning school, Senior retreats to Caswell and the Rudy Theater, and Bible studies.

We pray that God will call forth more laborers into His harvest. In all endeavors, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ has been our focus. For all that has been accomplished, we give God the glory and praise.

Submitted by Louise Watson Lamm