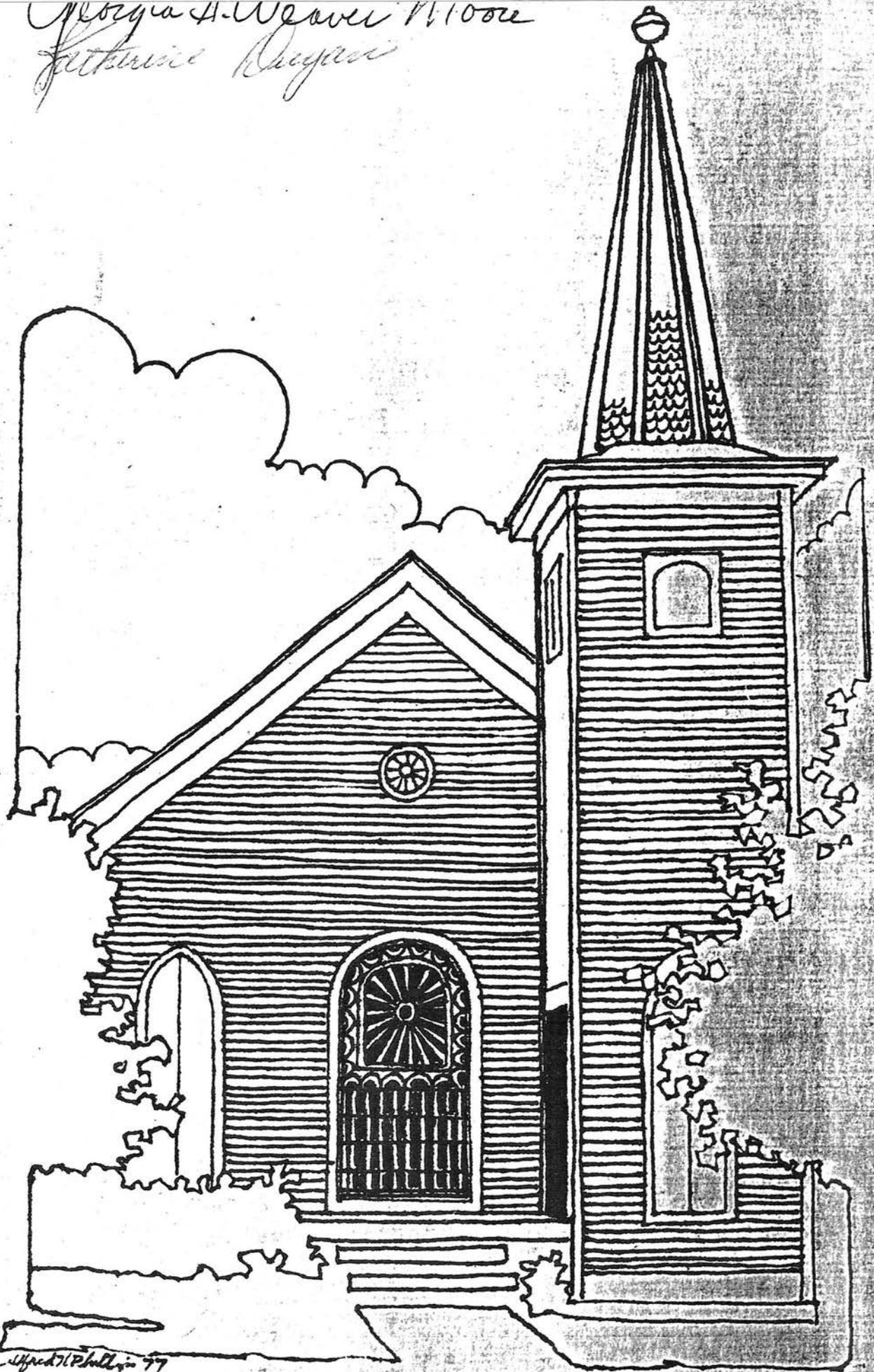


Georgia H. Weaver Moore  
Fitzhugh Bayard



March 71 P. Bullin 77

To— *Georgia A. Moore*  
*10805 Laurel Rd*  
*267-7786*

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# **Church History of First Baptist**

## **1833 - 1982**

**First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown**  
10600 Watterson Trail  
Jeffersontown, Kentucky

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## Acknowledgements

*Our first acknowledgements and thanks are to God who without his guidance throughout all these many years there would be no need for this history book.*

*Also, we the committee especially thank Him for his guidance in this endeavor. None of us were experienced in this type project. We had no idea how to undertake or even begin, so truly God directed our minds, and he also opened your hearts to provide us with personal articles, items, and information necessary for compiling our data.*

*There is a terrible risk of omission in trying to name each and everyone who contributed in anyway to this book. So we will say to all collectively and individually, thank you for your help.*

*A special thanks to those of you who also allowed us into your homes for personal interviews.*

*May God bless you all.  
—The Committee*

## A Message To Rev. and Mrs. Coleman

Thank you, Rev. Coleman  
For listening to our many problems  
Sharing in our happiness  
Sharing in our sorrows  
Laughing with us  
Shedding tears  
Praying together  
As God wills.

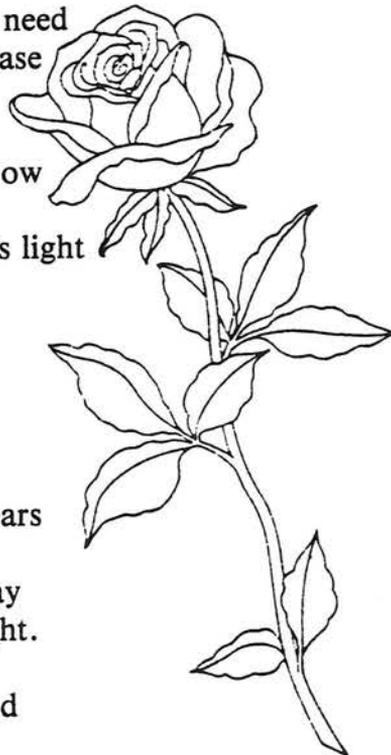
Thank you, Mrs. Coleman  
For being by our leader's side  
With spiritual strength serving as your guide  
Always sacrificing and understanding  
Caring for your family  
And never complaining  
Your faith and kindness  
Can be clearly seen  
Keep forever that Christian gleam.

Untiring  
Always finding time for others  
Years of service to all  
Never saying "no" to those in need  
Always trying to spiritually please

Love serves as your guide  
And paints the sky like a rainbow  
Brilliant colors of love  
Colors - glowing, glaring God's light  
That removes all self-doubt  
Within and throughout life.

Growing always  
In Christian faith  
Listening to God's will  
Realistically looking at your fears  
Keep happy in your holy light  
As you both make that one-way  
Heavenly supreme utopian flight.

—Earlene Hilliard



## Our Pastor



Reverend Thurmond Coleman, Sr. was born September 19, 1926 in Logan, West Virginia, where he attended the public schools. Later he came to Kentucky and attended Lincoln Institute and graduated from Central High School in Louisville. He also attended Indiana University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He acknowledged his calling to the Ministry at The St. Paul Baptist of Logan, West Virginia, where he was converted and licensed to preach. After coming to Kentucky, he united with the Clay Street Baptist Church of Shelbyville where he was ordained and served as Associate Pastor.

In November, 1955 he was called to his first pastorate, the First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown, Kentucky, where he is in his 26th year as Under-shepherd. In addition to his pastoral duties at First

Baptist, he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Louisville Urban League; President of the Jeffersontown Association of Christian Congregations; Chairman of the Joint Boards of the Central District and Long Run Baptist Fellowship Center; Member of the Louisville Lutheran Home/Wittenburg Village Board of Directors; and Member of the Ministers' Coalition of the N.A.A.C.P. Rev. Coleman is the former Manager of the American Baptist Newspaper and Printing House; Ex-president of the former State Musical Convention; has served as the Eastern Regional Organizer of the State Musical Convention; Board Member of the Central District Sunday School and B.T.U. Convention; Chorister of the Central District Association and the Young Peoples Department of the Baptist State Women's Missionary Convention; and Sunday School lecturer in the Tri-County Ministers and Deacons Union.

Rev. Thurmond Coleman, Sr., a "Kentucky Colonel", received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Simmons University Bible College in 1972; received the "Fleur de Lis" Award in 1973; received the "Distinguished Citizen" Award in 1974 and in 1981; was presented a Plaque and Key to the City of Jeffersontown in 1977; and for his outstanding community service, he was awarded the "1980 Harmony Award" by the Society for Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America Incorporated, Louisville Chapter, Kentucky No. 1, Home of the International Champions — The Thoroughbred Chorus.

During the twenty-six years Reverend Coleman has been at First Baptist much has been accomplished under his leadership, of which we are truly thankful. The membership has increased tremendously, which made the building of our present edifice mandatory. It was completed in 1977.

Reverend Coleman is married to the former Cora E. Todd of Shelbyville, Kentucky. They are the parents of five children and nine grandchildren.

## Sister Cora



Beauty is the inherent quality in an object or person pleasing the eye, ear, or mind; a particular grace or excellence; a beautiful woman.

A Christian is a follower and learner of Christ; a professed adherent to the New Testament teachings of the Church.

Modesty is the absence of all tendency to overestimate one's self.

Courage is bravery, fearlessness, and daring; to keep on keeping on in the face of seemingly unsurmountable tasks.

A friend is one attached to another by esteem and affection; a supporter.

A wife is a married woman.

A mother is a woman who has borne children having the responsibility and authority of those children.

A first lady is the wife of our Pastor.

None of the above quite adequately describe Sister Cora (as we affectionately address her). She was born in Shelbyville, Kentucky and attended to schools there. She also attended the Clay Street Baptist Church. She met and married our Pastor while they both attended Lincoln Ridge School and he served as Associate Pastor at Clay Street. They have been married for over thirty years. Sister Cora has found her place in serving through many facets of church life as well as with the Kentucky Baptist General Association bodies. At First Baptist, where she joined with her husband some twenty-six years ago, she serves in the Sunday School, the Music Department, and the Ladies Sewing Circle. In the community she serves whenever called upon.

She has served as secretary for the American Baptist Newspaper, and has the envious pleasure of knowing nearly every pastor and his pastorate in the State of Kentucky among Black Baptists.

Sister Cora has borne five children. We here at First Baptist can never thank God or Sister Cora enough for her quiet influence on the many souls that have come this way. We love her and pray God's continued blessings upon her and her family.

*"Others may do a greater work, but you have your part to do;  
and no one in all God's heritage can do it so well as you."*

## The First Family

**Jane Carol Coleman** was born January 18, 1948 in Shelbyville. She received her education at Jeffersontown Colored School, Eastern High School, and graduated from Shawnee High School. She also attended Jefferson County Vocational School of Practical Nursing and Jefferson Community College. She was a long-time employee of Norton Children's Hospital where she worked with the critically ill premature infants. Jane departed this life in November, 1978.

**Thurmond Coleman, Jr.** and **Thelma Coleman Calbert** were born January 23, 1949 in Shelbyville, Kentucky. Both received their education at Jeffersontown Colored School, Eastern High School; and graduated from Shawnee High School. Upon completion of high school Thurmond Jr. enlisted in the Air Force, doing one year tour of duty in Vietnam. Thelma attended Eastern University.

Thurmond acknowledged his calling to the ministry in February 1976 at the age of 27, and is in his final year of studies at Simmons Bible College.



THE COLEMAN FAMILY IN THE BEGINNING — (left to right: Charles, Thurmond, Jr., Donald, Thelma, Jane. Back Row: Rev. and Mrs. Coleman)



**THE COLEMAN FAMILY IN LATER YEARS** — (left to right: Charles, Donald; second row: Jane, Thelma, Thurmond, Jr.; back row: Rev. and Mrs. Coleman)

He is married to the former Linda Darnell Randle of Mobile, Alabama. They are the parents of one daughter, Tonya Lachell, and two sons, Thurmond III and Charles Edward.

Thelma is an administrative secretary at Commonwealth Life Insurance Company where she has been employed for eight years.

She is married to Robert W. Calbert, Jr. They are the parents of twin daughters, Robin Lynn and Robin Lynnette.

**Charles Edward Coleman** was born April 19, 1950. He received his education at Jeffersontown Colored School, Eastern High School, and graduated from Shawnee High School.

Upon completion of high school, Charles enlisted in the Air Force, doing a one year tour of duty in Vietnam. Making a career as an airman, he is now serving his thirteenth year and is currently stationed in Germany.

Charles is married to the former Alice Rushing of Phoenix, Arizona. They are the parents of two children, Lisa and Larry.

**Donald Coleman** was born October 24, 1951 in Shelbyville. He received his education at Jeffersontown Colored School and Shawnee High School where he graduated. Upon completion of high school he enlisted in the Air Force, serving four years.

Following his discharge from the service he enrolled in Prima Junior College in Tucson, Arizona where he began a track career. Receiving his Associate Degree from Prima College, he enrolled in the University of Oregon, where he graduated with sports honor.

Donald is married to the former Luvernia Autry, of Phoenix, Arizona. He is the father of two daughters, Donnette Judell and Decora Denise.

# WHAT WE BELIEVE

## **One True God**

We believe that there is one living and true God, an intelligent, spiritual and personal being, the Creator, and ruler of the heavens and the earth. He is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## **The Holy Scriptures**

We believe in the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and practice of our church and for our lives. We believe that the Bible was written by men divinely inspired.

## **Salvation**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through Jesus Christ. This blessing is given, not because of any works or goodness on our part, but because we accept the good gift of a good God. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner except his own voluntary refusal to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

## **Conversion and Regeneration**

We believe that the new birth is a change of heart brought about by the Holy Spirit.

## **Repentance and Faith**

We believe repentance and faith are sacred duties. Without them we cannot please God.

## **Sanctification**

We believe every Christian is "sanctified," meaning that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and has set us apart for God's use.

## **Congregational Policy**

We believe that the local congregation has the power and competency to govern its own affairs and that interdependence is recognized in the voluntary association with denominational and interdenominational religious bodies. The scriptural officers of the church are Pastor and Deacons. The Pastor is the Shepherd and General Overseer of the flock. The Deacons are his helpers.

## **Separation of Church and State**

We believe that the Church should be free from interference by civil government.

## **Church Ordinances**

The two ordinances celebrated by the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper, also called Communion, is observed on the first Sunday morning. Baptism can be held any Sunday at the discretion of the pastor.

### **Baptism**

In baptism a person signifies his repentance toward God, his trust in God's mercy, and his surrender to God's will. As the baptism of Jesus was a public acknowledgment of his submission to the judgment and will of God. This repentance and faith are expressed to God, but take place in the presence of the church and the world. Baptism is done by immersion, thereby symbolizing death, burial and resurrection. The old man dies, and is raised to walk in the newness of life.

### **Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is intended to be repeated frequently, and symbolizes the sustaining of that life by Christ. The elements of bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Christ. Every member is expected to attend and support this most important service of fellowship and remembrance. 1 Cor. 11:26.

### **Social Concerns**

We believe that the church, like Christ, must be involved in the political and economic affairs of life. Like Christ, the church must minister to the whole man wherever he is and whenever he needs it. The Church, like the Prophets, must speak out against injustice in all segments of life.

### **Stewardship**

We believe that God is the source of all blessings; all that we have and are we owe to Him. We are therefore under obligation to serve Him with our time, talents, and money. We also believe that every Christian ought to tithe, giving 1/10 of his earning back to God, as taught in Malachi 3:7-10, Luke 11:42. Christians should cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally contribute of their means to the church in advancing the work of Christ. Our Church Covenant outlines further the high standard that we seek to maintain as a fellowship of believers.

### **Evangelism and Missions**

We believe that it is the duty of every Christian man and woman as well as Christ's church to seek the salvation of those who are lost.

### **Resurrection**

We believe that the scriptures clearly teach that Jesus rose from the dead. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. The bodies of the righteous will be like unto the body of the Lord, in the world to come; that the wicked will be judged to endless punishment, the righteous to eternal life.

—Baptist Faith & Message

# INTRODUCTION

The first pioneers that came to America from England were seeking freedom from a King who was using his powers to suppress the people by heavy taxation and religious persecution.

It was not long before they realized their dreams were not being fulfilled and that it would take a war to free them from the Mother Country. After the war and the Constitution to govern them, they found freedom. Then came the Amendments that gave the same rights to all.

Amendment I guaranteed freedom of religion, speech, and the press.

This freedom was not necessarily the heritage of the blacks brought from Africa as slaves. They had no freedom, no heritage, no rights and were ranked a little better than the mules they drove in the fields.

It took another war (Civil War 1861-1865) to gain freedom for the slaves and the self-sacrificing bravery and determination of men like Frederick Douglas, Carter Woodson, George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington to bring us where we are today, as far as our education and religious freedom are concerned.

Without God's guidance and protection over them, and His plan for our destiny we may not be enjoying the freedom we now have to worship as we choose without fear of persecution and danger.

Kentucky joined the Union in 1792 as a slave state. Louisville was its largest city and growing rich fast. Being on the Ohio River made the slave market accessible and profitable. As Louisville grew so did the surrounding area. There were slave owners, plantations, and free blacks and some poor whites without slaves or plantations.

While the whites of Louisville and the surrounding areas were busy getting rich, there was a small group of blacks who were just as busy. They were quiet about it but were working hard to get education for blacks, to have schools and churches. As a result of their efforts Fifth Street Baptist Church was formed. First Baptist is not a product of this church, but profited from its ministry.

Then Mary took her Babe  
And sat him on her knee  
Saying, My Dear Son tell me  
Just what this world will be.

O, I shall be as dead, Mother  
As the stones in the wall  
O, the stones in the street, Mother  
Shall moan for me all.

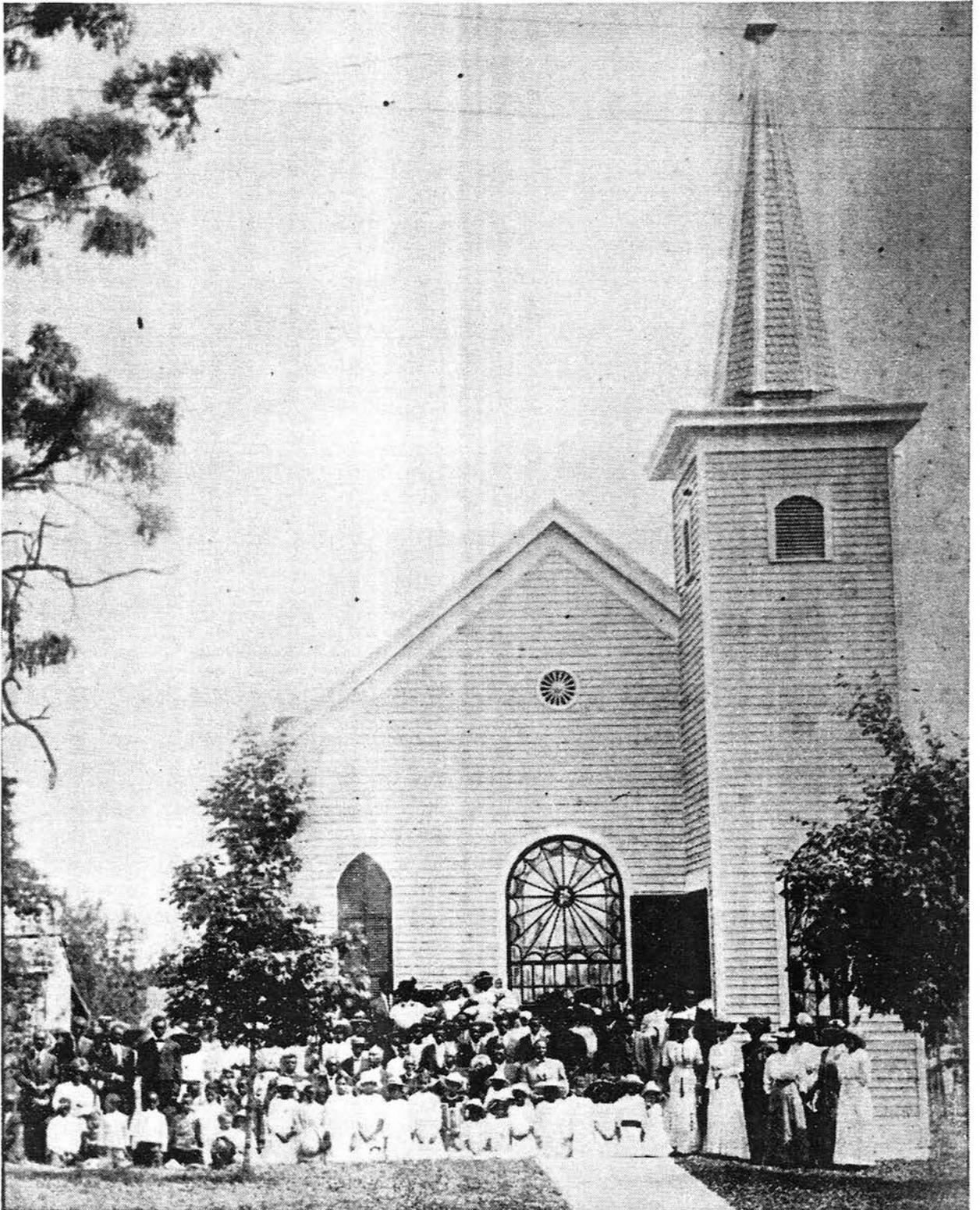
Upon Easter Day, Mother  
My uprising shall be;  
O, the sun and the moon, Mother  
Shall both rise up with me.

Because of the promise in these words we now have a hope, our freedom, a heritage, and rights. We now have dignity as men, rather than as mules. We can now fulfill our original destiny for being created in the image of God, which is to love and serve Him and to help our fellow man.

This is the purpose and true spirit of First Baptist and the reason for the prosperity and growth God has permitted us as a body.

For all these blessings we are thankful and try to compensate in our own individual lives by working for more faith, hope and charity, through our prayers, worship and love for God and one another.

As the body of Christ, with God as our head, we are thankful for a victorious past, a harmonious present, and pray for a promising Christ-like future.



*Chapter I*

*The First One Hundred Years  
1833 - 1933*

# The First One Hundred Years

1833 - 1933

Abraham Bruner was the first proprietor and settler of Jeffersontown, Kentucky, a small town twelve miles from Louisville. Jeffersontown was originally known as Brunerstown or Brunersville. Records of this settlement date back as far as 1802. This was the era of slavery; wherever there were settlers, there were a number of blacks. It was common practice for a white to own 50 to 400 slaves.

In 1816 a log cabin church was erected in Brunerstown. It was given the name of Union Church, and was located at Shelby and Main Streets. It was deeded to Adam Holk and Daniel Omar. A contract signed in 1819 provided four denominations a week each to worship in the church. They were the German and English Presbyterians, German and English Methodists, German and English Lutherans, and Baptists. The blacks were assigned to the loft. This plot of land is said to be still owned jointly by three of these denominations.

In 1829 eighteen slave members of the now Walnut Street Baptist Church were given letters of "dismissal" and were granted the privilege of worshipping under their own "vine and fig tree". They formed the Fifth Street Baptist Church in 1825, at Fifth and York Streets in Louisville. This was the first church owned by blacks in Louisville.

By the year 1833 blacks could select their own pastors; thus the late Reverend Henry Adams, Pastor of Fifth Street Baptist Church, came to Jeffersontown and organized the blacks in the Union Church loft and left the late Reverend Summerfield as the pastor.

According to the records and the deed book in Jefferson County Courthouse, the other white Baptist church came out of the black Baptist church. In deed book 70, page 447, is recorded:

"On May 16, 1848, Peter Funk sold, for ten dollars (\$10.00) to the trustees of the Presbyterians, the old Baptists, and the Methodists, a lot for the worship by slaves."

From the deed log and from the accounts given by older blacks in Jeffersontown, it is almost certain that the Union Church stood on a lot toward Taylorsville Road, and the lot bought later is the site of the present church.

With Reverend Summerfield as Pastor, and

dedicated men like Lewis Ender, Isaac Lackey, Harrison Taylor, and George Lewis, a plot of ground was purchased from John Tucker for \$175.00 to build a church where the present structure is now located.

It is not known when the actual structure for worship was built, or when the slaves began to actually worship in it, but if it was the same year when the lot was purchased by Reverend Summerfield and the men mentioned above, the Baptist slaves were not allowed to worship separately; thus the whites went with them to their new church. There was a rule which designated that blacks had to wait two years after requesting permission to worship separately before they could do so. Also, they must have been in good standing and formerly dismissed from their old church.

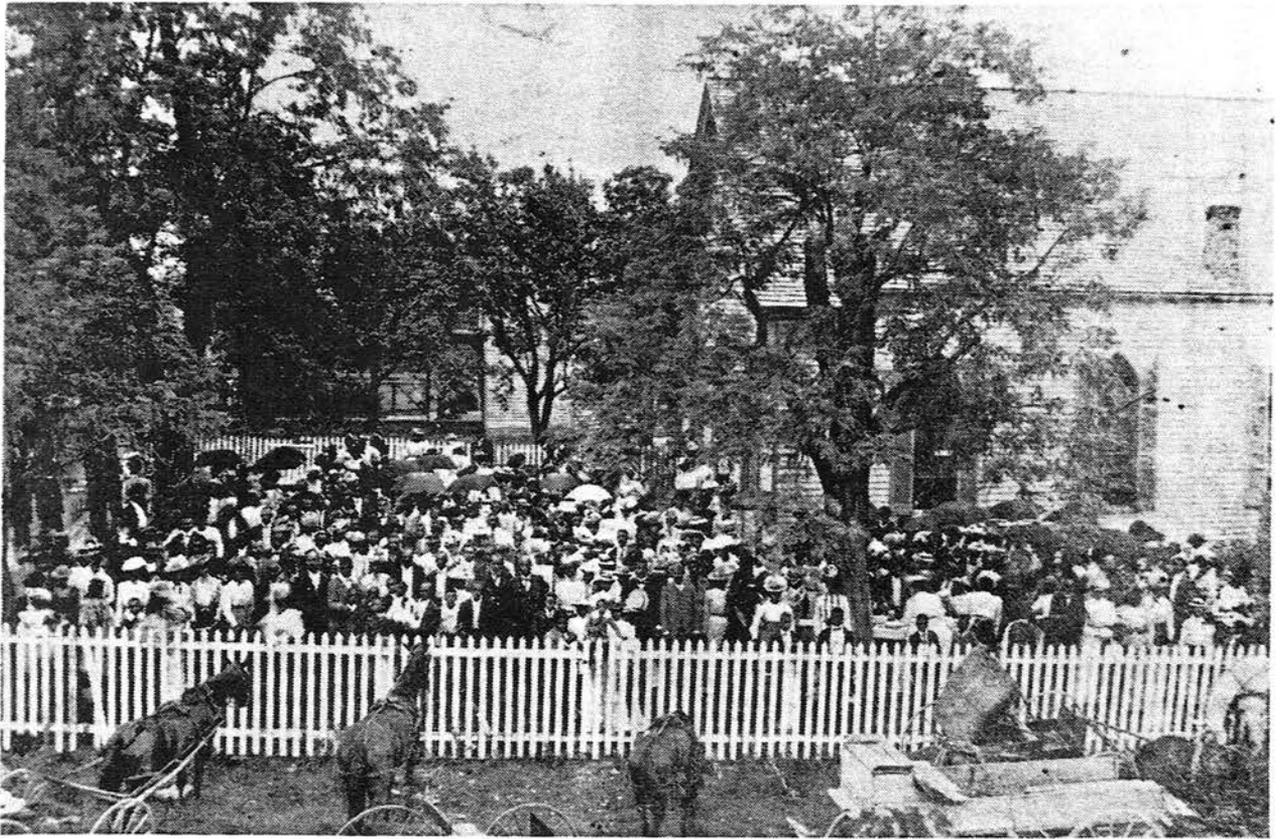
According to black Baptists in this area, First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown is 146 years old, and was formed during slavery in 1833. It had white trustees (so that they could watch over the blacks) who closely supervised all activities.

In December 1850, it was voted by the whites that the blacks be dismissed and allowed to worship separately, but still under watch care. A log cabin was erected on the plot of ground previously purchased. By this time, all the other denominations had abandoned the Union Church site and erected buildings of their own. The Baptists continued financial support and close supervision of the black Baptist slaves.

The building was burned shortly after its erection. It was said that it was burned by the Klu Klux Klan. This supposition was never proven, because there were many other groups of questionable character that could have been responsible. It was not uncommon during inclement weather for transient preachers, gypsies, or carpet-baggers to take shelter at night in any facility not occupied or securely locked.

The slaves all remained members of other churches until the emancipation of 1865. It was recorded in a white church minutes book in 1860 that a committee be appointed to meet with the colored brothers as they held their meetings to assure order was maintained, and to collect the names and register them in their white church record book.

After the emancipation, the needs of black people could scarcely be imagined today. They had been in bondage for two centuries; suddenly they



THE EARLY CHURCH DAYS IN JEFFERSONTOWN

found themselves a free people. Most of them were illiterate, unable to care for themselves and their families. Neither were they capable of maintaining a church.

Due to the burning of their first church, along with its records, coupled with the inability of the members to keep proper records, there is very little history of the first hundred years.

Because of the need for schools and churches, the General Association (formerly the State Baptist Association) was organized. It was comprised of twelve churches. They visited various small towns and helped to organize churches and schools.

As schools became more prevalent and the newly freed blacks learned to care for themselves and gain formal knowledge, they became conscious of the need to record and preserve important events in the church and in their own lives. It was this awareness also which has led us to the compilation of this history.

First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown, as it came to be known, has been fortunate in having had only ten pastors: Reverend Summerfield (10 years); Reverend Elias Anderson (5 years); Reverend James Ender (16 years); Reverend James Wilson; Reverend Phillip Alexander (11 years);

Reverend Richard Reynolds (46 years); Reverend J. H. Lewis (3 years); Reverend Arvel Carroll (13 years); Reverend Richardson (7 years); and the present pastor, Reverend Thurmond Coleman, Sr. (24 years). Reverend Melvin Morrow, Associate Minister, served various times as interim pastor.

Often after the installation of a new pastor, the church would spring alive with new interest and renewed fortitude. There would be house-cleaning of the building, and with much prayer and revivals, a "house-cleaning" of the souls.

As the country advanced into the early 1900's the state of the nation from 1920-40 was in an economic crunch due to the stock market crash of 1929. This was mirrored with the struggles of First Baptist.

This financial state was also world wide. In the U.S. every state, city, church and school was still feeling the poverty that was a result of World War I. Much of the situation was due to the over-zealous stock market speculations and man's greed for "get-rich-quick" gimmicks that added to the impending disaster. This resulted in failure of purchasing power to keep pace with productivity. Banks closed, productivity was not needed, because there was no job market. Many of First Baptist

members were either sharecroppers, farmers or domestic workers, with little or no income.

During this time keeping food on the tables was a major accomplishment. It was not uncommon for members to bring scuttles of coal along as they walked to church. They would bank their fires at home at night so the coal saved could be taken to the church.

The records and minute books of this era in the church's history indicate that Josh Williams was the first church clerk. Even though he had been deprived of formal education and training, as most blacks of that time were, he still managed to do a good job of recording the minutes and simplifying the English language to get the events in the church's history records: "meatn" (meeting); "roomer" (rumor); "lir" (liar); "phornication" (fornication). A quote from the church records reads: "The deconbord will meat to discus the sex dudes of the church." What was meant was the deacon board will meet to discuss the sexton duties of the church.

Josh Williams only missed personally recording the church minutes one time in eleven years, the reason being that he had to appear before the board for playing ball on a Sunday. After he confessed and was forgiven, he was given back his notebook and pencil at the next church meeting.

The monthly church meeting was on the last Friday night before the first Sunday. After devotion the first order of business was a report of the sick, the number of visits made to them, and what their needs were. Then a report on the condition of the church, grievances against fellow members, etc. The last items on the agenda was a report from the committee on the social or unchristian behavior of members. This portion of the meeting took three-fourths of the entire meeting. The church forgave and reinstated the offending members if they acknowledged their transgressions. If not, the offense would be tabled until more proof of guilt or innocence could be obtained, or the accused had a change of heart. Sometimes members were excluded, other times they had the right hand of fellowship withdrawn from them, or were removed from any office they held in the church. The degree of penalty matched the degree of the sin. At one meeting, five members were expelled for being absent from church for a period of two years.

The case of one deacon was tabled at each meeting for one whole year. On December 31, 1920, the Pastor asked if anyone had sinned and wanted to start the new year with a clean heart; if so, the party could stand, along with the rest of the church, close their eyes, pray, and God would forgive. The

entire church stood (who has not sinned). As a result, the deacon in question never made an admission of guilt, and the church was forced to reinstate him.

On another occasion a member was brought before the church after having been arrested for fighting. The matter was tabled because the member happened to still be in jail. It took four months for the courts to process the case and file the charge away. When the member came back to church meeting and reported that he had been cleared, the church decided that God would want them to be at least as fair as the court, so the member was reinstated.

During the period between 1920 and 1925 the following charges were levied against various members:

- Adultery — 136
- Babies born out of wedlock — 37
- Drinking — 462
- Rebellion against the church — 14
- Playing ball on Sunday — 16
- Stealing — 13
- Assault with knife on church grounds — 1
- Profanity — 4
- Gambling — 4
- Delinquent in financial church obligations — 172
- Dancing — 190

All of the above charges were forgiven except the cases of the unwed mothers, who were required to name the father of their child before they could be forgiven. Those delinquent in their financial obligations to the church were required to pay up to be reinstated.

Most of those brought up before the church were repeat violators, i.e. the four gamblers and four members accused of profanity were the same in each case. The assault with a knife was a female member.

Also during the period 1920-1925, five deacons were ordained. Only three members were added to the church roll.

The Ladies Missionaries of Central District came to meet and worship with First Baptist on May 18, 1922.

In 1922 it was agreed to have a church Christmas party. The children were admitted for free since they were rendering the program. Adults had to pay an admission price of ten cents for refreshments.

In 1925 the Board voted to pay the pastor one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollars a year, but he had to



REV. RICHARD REYNOLDS, D.D.

return to the church one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of this. At the end of the year the church owed the Pastor the sum of \$838.65 in back wages.

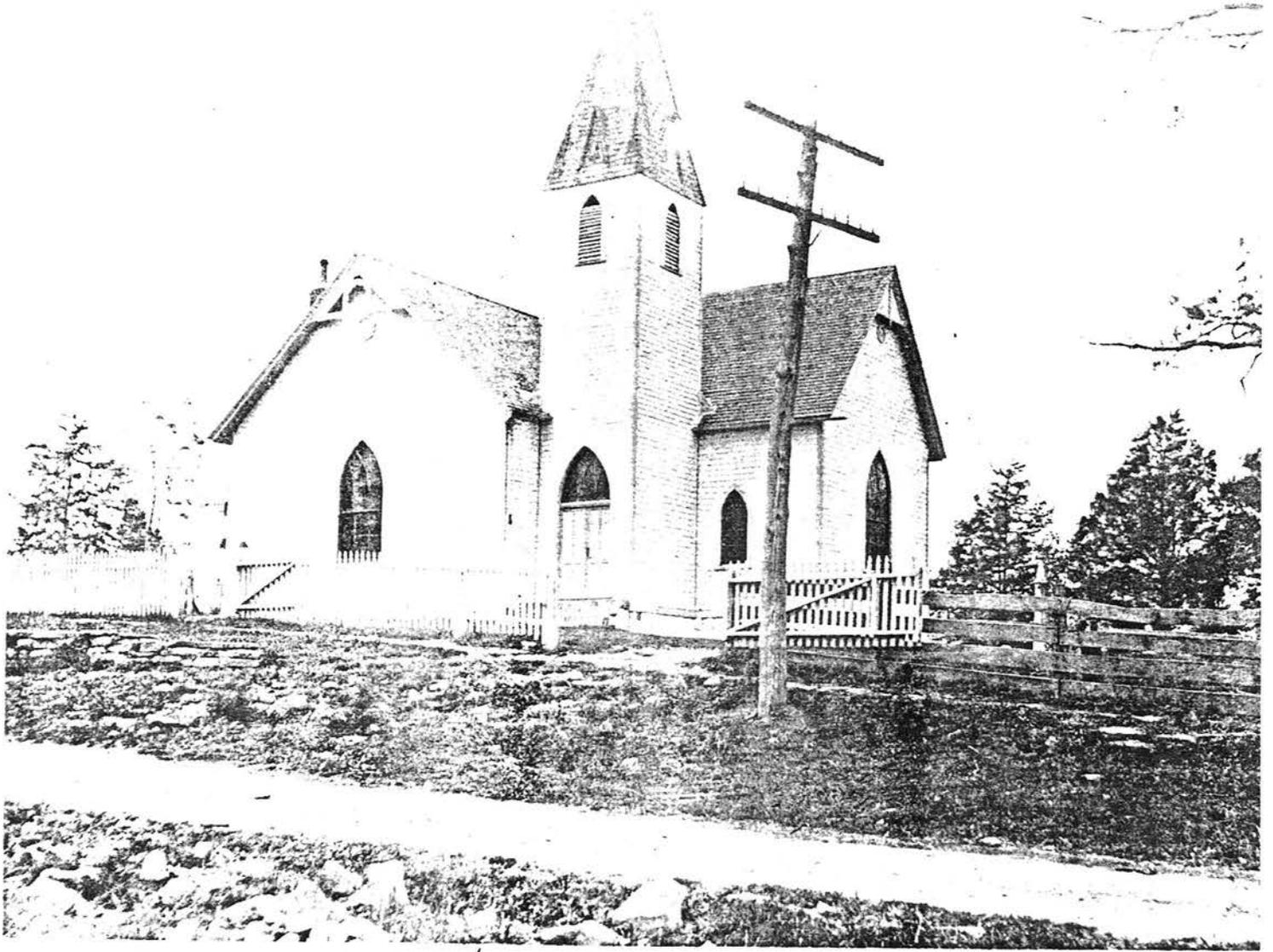
For most of the first decade, all of the officers were unanimously re-elected to their same offices.

Almost half of the first one hundred years of First Baptist was under the leadership of Reverend Richard Reynolds. In his declining years, the church had problems meeting its financial obligations. The records show that in 1932 the year ended with a deficit of \$838.65, which represented the balance owed the pastor for his salary.

Reverend Reynolds passed during the church's one hundredth anniversary in June 1933. He had been pastor for forty-six years and was 76 years old. At the time of his death, the church owed him \$987.07, and agreed to pay his widow this balance at the amount of \$10.00 per month.

The church mourned the passing of Reverend Reynolds for sixty days with a veiled pulpit.





*In 1816 a log cabin church was constructed in Brunerstown (now Jeffersontown) and was given the name Union church. A contract signed on August 26, 1819 gave use of the structure "On the first Thursday of the month and the six days thereafter to the German and English Presbyterians: on the second . . . to the Germans and English Lutherans: on the third . . . Methodists: on the fourth . . . Baptists." First Baptist Church now occupies the location. The Church of Christ, pictured above, an early neighbor across Watterson Trail, was built in 1890.*



## *Chapter II*

*Two Decades of Steadfastness*  
*1934 - 1955*

# Two Decades of Steadfastness

1934 - 1955

## 1934 - 1941

After Pastor Reynold's death, the church continued in a state of decline financially and reached a low ebb spiritually. God, though, in his infinite wisdom never makes a mistake. He knew that the church needed tender loving care in this transitional period, and He sent his messenger in the person of Reverend Arvel Carroll in 1935. Reverend Carroll, a mild-mannered, humble, easy-going man of God, came to pastor a people who needed such at a time like this. Under Reverend Carroll's leadership, the church worked very hard to get ahead financially by having box socials, rummage sales, personal drives, rallies, fish suppers, etc. The annual financial report for 1935 recorded receipts of \$502.82, with expenditures of \$499.16.

First Baptist over these lean years poorly, but steadily hung on, as the report for 1939 showed total receipts of \$1,312.01 with a deficit of \$77.96. Even so, the church managed to give six Christmas baskets at the cost of \$6.25 each.

In the business meeting of February 1940, the church voted to give the young people every third Sunday for conducting youth services, to have communion in the A.M. rather than the customary P.M. During this year some much needed repairs were made on the church building and the sidewalks were replaced.

## 1942 - 1944

These years, under the leadership of Reverend Carroll, found the church in somewhat of a calm stable state. The transitional period following pastor Reynolds' death was over and the church went about the business of carrying on the Master's work and continued repairing of the old church structure.

During this time the nation was also recovering from its economic transition of the twenties. America was using foreign imports and exports to get the federal government financially stable. This resulted in their not looking close enough at their allies before forming allegiance with them. The end results of this was World War II.

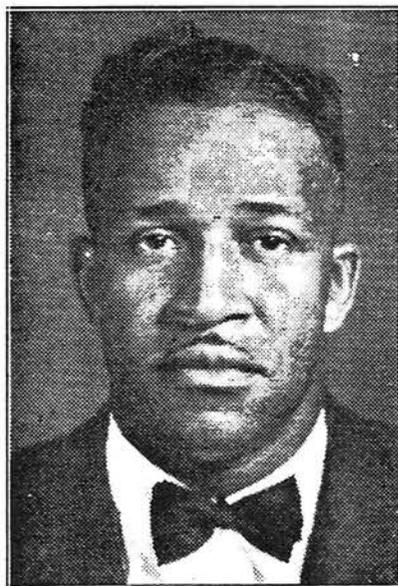
By 1941 the country was at war. Sad as this was it was the turning point in the economic condition of America. Men were going to war and those left behind were employed in defense work. Money was more plentiful and existence had gone beyond food, clothes and warmth.

The church's finances improved greatly. The 1941 year-end report recorded \$1,296.60 income with a surplus of \$24.52, and the 1944 year-end report recorded \$3,297.75 income with a surplus of \$561.72. The pastor was sent to the General Association with \$25.00 to represent the church instead of the customary amount of \$5.00.

In January 1942, the first Trustees were recommended to take care of church business. They were Joshua Williams, Harry Ray, Arthur Harris, and William Brown. In July the church voted that prayer meeting would be permanently held on Wednesday nights. In April of 1943 a checking account was opened and all monies were to be paid out by check, the checks were to be signed by the church clerk, the treasurer, and the pastor. The auxiliaries kept their monies separately, paid their own bills, and made annual reports at the end of each year.

In 1943 the Brotherhood was organized.

The Jeffersontown Baptist Church agreed on the 3rd day of September 1943, to purchase the property of John Kean (formerly the Brown Home) located on Shelby Street. The church also agreed to raise six hundred dollars (\$600.00) on or before October 1st to make the first payment. The trustees of Jeffersontown Baptist Church; William Brown, Arthur Harris, Harry Ray, and Joshua Williams; agreed to meet Thursday, September 9, 1943, with



REV. ARVEL CARROLL

Mr. Johnson at the Jeffersontown Bank to draw up final plans for agreement. It was also voted by the church to make an option on the property to hold the property.

It was moved by Joshua Williams and seconded by George Lewis to adopt the above statement.

In the summer of 1944, the church held its first vacation bible school under the direction of Sister Sadie Abstain. Prior to this, they had worked jointly with the Methodist Church. The increasing number of children of the Baptist families in the community contributed to the cessation of this joint endeavor.

Of course there was one item of a brother whose name was brought before the church each regular business meeting for drinking and causing the church embarrassment. He was also a member of the choir. Finally after about a year and a half, the brother showed up to answer the charge and to ask the church's forgiveness and restoration to the choir. The request was granted with the stipulation that if he ever caused the church any further embarrassment, he would never be restored to the choir again. Two months later the brother was permanently removed from the choir.

#### 1945-1947

On February 4, 1945 Sister Mildred Green was granted permission to organize an Usher Board.

On March 2, 1945 the church voted to sell a parcel of land that had been willed to it by Brother James Adams. The land was sold for the sum of \$175.00. The church also voted to put in city water at a cost of \$50.00. The church continued to upgrade, the bills were being paid, the pastor was receiving his salary regularly, and the church exterior was painted in 1946. In August of that year the property that was willed to the church was sold for almost double the sum requested, about \$300.00.

In September, Sisters Hattie Harris, Pearl Williams, Brothers Stan Taylor and Tom Moore purchased kitchen and lavatory equipment.

In May of 1947 Pastor Carroll accepted the position of sexton at the same rate of pay as the former sexton. The remainder of the year was spent fixing and decorating the basement and kitchen, and getting the building in readiness for a Musical Convention that was to meet soon.

#### 1948 - 1949

On July 29, 1948 with Reverend J. W. Adams as advisor, the church voted to accept the resignation of Pastor Carroll. There were eighteen in attendance with fourteen voting yes, three voting no, and



REV. W. RICHARDSON

one abstaining. A pulpit committee was appointed to help the congregation secure leadership. The committee members were: Brothers Andrew Johnson, William Brown, and John H. Williams.

With the help of Reverend Melvin Morrow, who filled the chair as an affiliate, the deacons, who at that time were: William Brown, Elijah Hughes, George Lewis, Oscar Abstain, John H. Williams, Ray Hughes, James Barbour, and Joshua Williams, the church continued to maintain a degree of togetherness until leadership was found.

On December 3, the church voted to call Reverend William M. Richardson as pastor for one year and to offer him a salary of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars a week. In February the pastor was installed at said salary and the Usher Board assumed the task of preparing the parsonage for him. On April 1 Reverend Richardson's call was extended indefinitely and his salary raised to \$35.00 a week. The remainder of the year was spent discussing and eliminating the many maintenance problems of the church building and parsonage, some of which included sewer connections at the church and extending the ceilings in the annex building for heating and badly needed fireproofing, and the installation of a baptismal pool.

In March of that year, the Trustees were empowered to look into the matter of purchasing the property next door to the church. On April 1, the Trustees recommended that the church not rush into securing said property.

Reverend Richardson was also given permission that month to organize a missionary society.

## 1950 - 1954

The church goals were tremendous. The new pastor, deacons, trustees, and faithful sisters were working diligently. Efforts were made to help clean up the lives of many church members; to get the building physically presentable; and to get the pastor settled in his new home. A number of the members' names were stricken from the church roll; many repented and were restored to full fellowship. Some requested letters of dismissal. The goal was to obtain a new church roll, one that had members that were active physically, financially, and were living examples in the community as Christians.

In February 1950, the Pastor was given permission to organize the Sisterhood, and in May he was given permission to organize the Junior Choir. There was also concern expressed by the deacons that the church collect and try to preserve the records of the church.

In August the Deacon Board gave Deacon Roy Hughes permission to purchase the church's first visitor cards. In September the Deacons gave Reverend Richardson permission to draw up a formed letter for the purpose of better communication with sister churches, in the event one of their members would seek membership with First Baptist.

The first church meeting of 1951 was moderated by Pastor Richardson. He stressed the need of the church to finalize all of the old business and to move on into the new year.

In March, Brother Frank Lewis presented the church with a check for \$25.00 which represented the balance owed on a house the church had sold to him.

In May the church voted that all watchcare members would have to renew their membership within ninety days or their names would be dropped from the church roll.

On June 10 there was a special call meeting of the deacons by Chairman William Brown to alert the church of a shortage of funds in the treasury. The church decided that it would borrow two hundred dollars (\$200.00) from the bank for ninety days. The motion was made by Brother John H. Williams and seconded by Brother Elijah Hughes. The signatures on the note were Brothers John H. Williams and William Brown.

Though sometimes up and sometimes down, the church found time and spirit to fellowship with its neighbors. It would get together with other churches and have special community worship

services. It shared in numerous services with St. Paul Methodist. On December 25, 1951 it shared an early morning Christmas service at St. Paul Methodist, whose pastor at the time was Reverend W. V. Henderson.

On December 31 at the Deacon Board meeting the discussion arose as to allowing women full rights as to offering motions in the business meetings. After a thorough discussion, the matter was put to a vote. The vote was unanimous that women would not have full rights. They then discussed a motion previously made that Sister Beotha Abstain had seconded. The action had already become a matter of church record. The conclusion was, "recommend to the church that the sister's name be stricken from the records and a man's name be inserted instead." The motion was made by Brother John H. Williams and seconded by Brother George Lewis.

On January 4, 1952 the church in its regular business meeting discussed the matter of women's rights. It was moved then by Brother William Brown and seconded by Brother Andrew Johnson that "the women of this church would have all rights and privileges of any member". The church really meant business in the year of 1952. With the great new awakening of women's rights, it adopted the following articles at that same meeting:

Article 1. That all officers be elected in time for installation at the first of the year.

Article 2. That the church membership be divided into four parts and deacons be assigned to each part making monthly reports to the church body.

Article 3. That the main auditorium be redecorated and that the money would be provided in this way:

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Senior Choir..... | \$ 500.00 |
| Brotherhood ..... | 500.00    |
| Usher Board.....  | 200.00    |
| Sisterhood .....  | 1,000.00  |

The motives for allowing the sisters full rights appear rather obvious!

In the Deacon Board meeting of April the brothers accepted a proposal from the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Brother Charles Gurnell, that a nursery be situated in the basement of the church off the kitchen.

Early in the year Brother George Lewis offered his resignation as Sunday School Superintendent. He had served for about fifty years. He was voted emeritus.

On July 3, Sister Emma Neal was granted permission to organize the Willing Workers Club. The remainder of the year the church worked hard trying to raise the money in order that the goals of the church might be reached. Falling short financially, it was agreed to borrow \$1,500.00 from the bank at 4% interest. In February 1953 the redecorating was completed. In August 1954 the church entertained the District Association.

## 1955

On January 11, Brother Donald Kyle was hired as church organist for \$25.00 a month, with the following stipulations: (a) he or she would be under the jurisdiction of the church; (b) he or she shall be required to play for all church services, unless otherwise excused; (c) he or she shall report to the church fifteen minutes before services; (d) he or she shall have to rehearse at least once a week; (e) he or she shall forfeit a day's pay for absence or failure to serve; (f) he or she shall be given one week's notice in the event of unsatisfactory service.

The first six months of the year was spent taking care of the seemingly endless task of repairing church properties and raising money to pay off debts. There also seemed to be a growing rift between the Pastor and the congregation. On February 28, the deacons met in secret to discuss the matter and to ask the Pastor to resign. On August 5 matters came to a climax and with many accusations being hurled at Pastor Richardson, a motion was made by Brother John H. Williams that the pulpit be declared vacant, seconded by Brother James Brown. Thus six years of service by Reverend William Richardson came to an end. The church



**REV. MELVIN H. MORROW**  
**ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

then continued with a lengthy business meeting, including the appointment of Sister Faye Mayes as temporary janitor at the same rate of pay as the former janitor, Reverend Richardson. Reverend Melvin Morrow was appointed Associate acting Pastor and Brother Roy Hughes was appointed to represent the church at the General Association with Reverend Morrow.

On October 25, Brother Roy Hughes presented recommendations from the Deacon Board to the church body.

That the church consider Reverend Thurmond Coleman, Sr. for Pastor. Each member is to write their choice of ministers on a piece of paper.

Everyone chose Reverend Coleman. The Board then gave these statements from Reverend Coleman.

1. He will accept \$35.00 a week salary.
2. He is not coming for the money, but to serve God.
3. If he got the church, he would move his letter here.

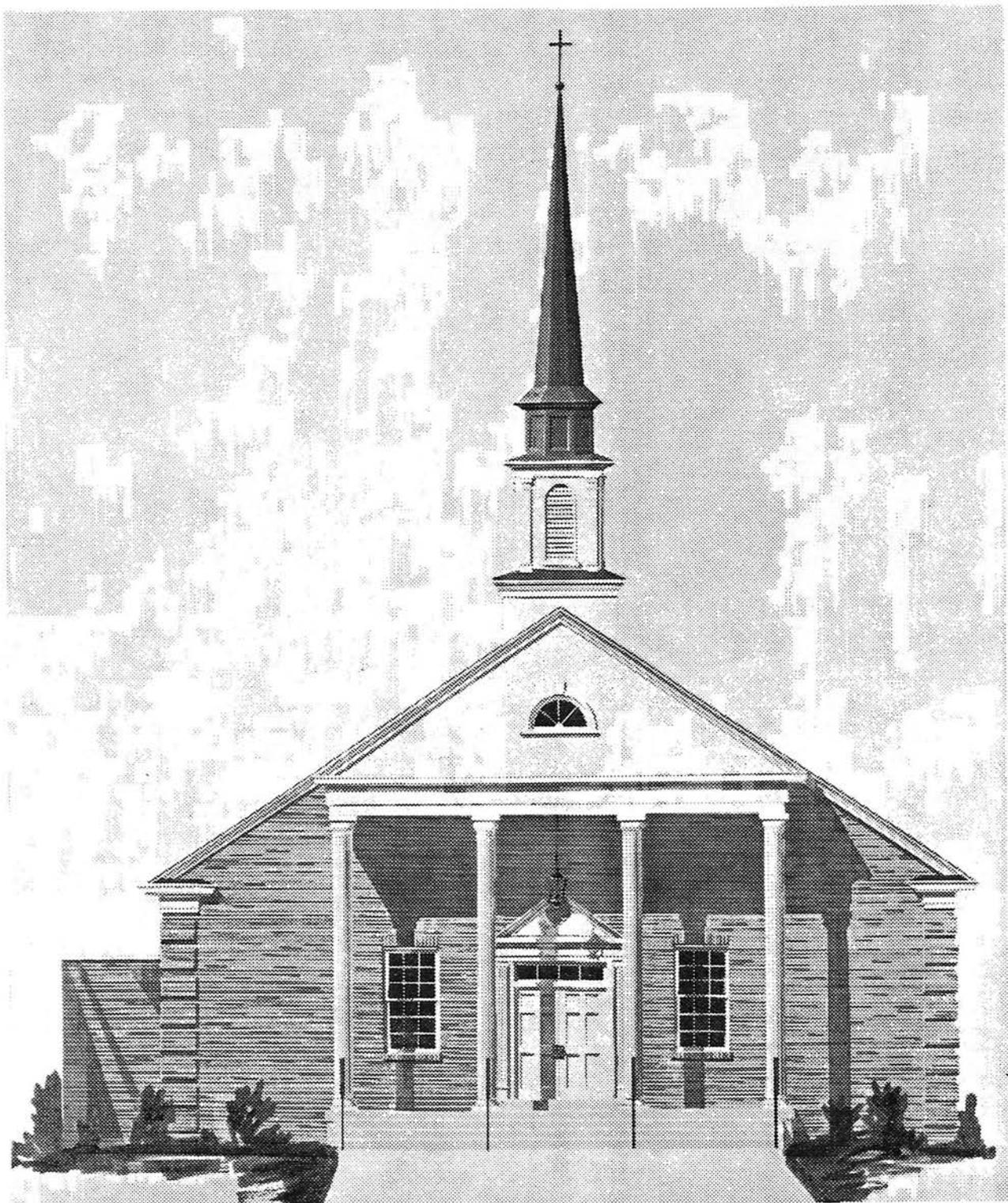
It was moved by Brother Irvin Williams and seconded by Sister Emma Neal that Reverend Coleman become pastor of Jeffersontown, First Baptist Church, upon recommendation of the board. It was moved by Brother Charles Gurnell and seconded by Brother Elijah Hughes that the pastor be paid \$30.00 a week with a parsonage.

The remainder of the year was spent working frantically to get the parsonage vacated by the former pastor and ready for the new pastor.

*Rev. Melvin H. Morrow has served the First Baptist Church for the past sixteen years as Assistant Pastor. For a number of years he served under Rev. William Richardson. When the church was without a pastor, Rev. Morrow served as acting pastor until Rev. Thurmond Coleman was called. He then continued to serve as Assistant Pastor and has always been a great asset to the church, also having been very generous with gifts to the church as the Lord so prospered him. He has in his own modest way proclaimed God's wrath on a sinful world.*



**REV. THURMOND COLEMAN**



### *Chapter III*

*The Next Twenty-Seven Years  
1956 - 1982*

# The Next 27 Years

## 1956 - 1982

### 1956-1959

The next three years were a beehive of activity. For the first time the minutes recorded the spiritual success of the revivals; the pastor's salary was raised from thirty to forty to fifty dollars; new church furniture was purchased, including an organ and communion table; equipment for getting out church publications and communication was purchased; a safety deposit box was secured; the treasurer was bonded; conventions were attended and entertained; contributions to charitable organizations and Simmons University building fund were given. There was talk of major remodeling on the church building and parsonage.

Rev. Frank Shelby, Sr. was licensed to preach and ordained that he might accept pastoral duties.

We were forging ahead, perhaps too fast for an older conservative Board of Deacons and the eager swiftness of youth (our Pastor) that brought about change through new ideas and ways of progressing with the Lord's work. Therefore, all was not well with the new pastor and the Board. But progress was being made in spite of difficulty with communication and differences of opinion. The finance continued to grow and so did the church membership and outreach. Rev. Coleman seemed to put planning in everyone's mind and running in everyone's feet.

In October, 1959, on the consideration of the position of janitor, the Boards agreed to accept the resignation of Sister Faye Mayes and attempted to hire Brother William Wooten for \$40.00 a month. However, if that failed, the Board would attempt to hire Sister Willie M. Patterson for only \$30.00 a month. (But in January 1952 women were voted full rights!?)

### Those 1960's!

No one could have predicted half the tragedies, triumphs and excitement of this decade which we must now relegate to the historians.

The 60's were great years of almost unbelievable steps in space and of men whose faces appeared in giant proportions in our lives. There was the shock of three assassinations, two Kennedys and a King. These assassinations of prominent figures epitomized the nation's deepening involvement with violence. John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States was shot and killed in Dallas (1963). Kennedy's death brought an unprecedented outpouring of public grief. Civil

Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the apostle of non-violence, was shot to death in Memphis, Tennessee (1968) and the act set off a wave of violence that touched several cities. In the same year, Robert F. Kennedy had just won the California presidential primary to bolster his bid in the presidency when he was assassinated in Los Angeles, California.

Man was no longer bound to his own planet as human feet trod upon the moon.

Blacks made unprecedented progress from legislation to the courts.

We learned to live with many new sights and sounds. The twist was the forerunner of the dances to follow and the hippies appeared and multiplied. We had to worry about drugs, the pill, about affluence and poverty, about violence and the new frontier of brotherhood.

Somebody revolted against nearly everything notably the "dirty little war" in Vietnam, which moved quickly to the forefront as a national issue.

As went the nation, so went the church and its affairs. First Baptist experienced it's triumphs, upheavals, discontent and pangs of immorality.

### 1960

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the foundation and brick veneering of the exterior of the auditorium took place during the 127th Anniversary Celebration. It was by the guidance of God's hand that the hands of the members of the church found something to do and proceeded to do it with all might. After the decision was made to renovate the exterior of the church building, the hand of God was seen working in the minds of the members, when two of the older deacons presented a plan to defray the cost of the project. Brother Andrew Johnson and Brother William Brown proposed that as many members that could would pledge to give a certain number of bricks. Brothers Brown and Johnson gave the first one thousand bricks at the cost of \$44.00 a thousand. They also secured donations, varying from one to two thousand bricks. Each auxiliary would give each year one to two hundred dollars. Sister Faye Reynolds donated the cornerstone. The total cost of contractors was \$2,722.13. Thus, on September 11, a cornerstone ceremony was held. Mt. Calvary Lodge No. 126 F and AM of Jeffersontown officiated, after observing their Central District Prince Hall Day. The



**GROUNDBREAKING SERVICE**

Lodge and congregation proceeded outside and the stone was placed in the corner of the building. Much faith had been manifested in God, in the Pastor, Reverend Coleman, and in each other during this effort. The Trustees worked untiringly, Brothers Oliver Sanders, Irvin Young, James Cook, Joe Williams, William Brown, William Wooten, and John R. Williams.

### 1961-1964

Early in 1961 the church was shaken by a series of unusual occurrences in high places. A committee was appointed to deliver a letter to one of our sons in the ministry informing him of charges being brought against him by the church for actions unbecoming a Christian. Also, three deacons resigned because of circumstances in their private lives that contradicted the New Testament standards of qualifications of a deacon and the church covenant. On March 31, the right hand of fellowship was withdrawn from a son in the ministry and his license to preach was revoked. This action was a first in the history of the church.

The church morale sank to a low ebb. There was at this time trouble between the Boards and the Pastor, trouble with the church organist, and prayer meetings were so poorly attended that there was talk of discontinuing them. But through it all, God's grace prevailed.

On September 1, the final payment of \$481.73 was made on the renovation project. Thus, one year later after the laying of the cornerstone, on October 15, 1961, the mortgage burning services were held. The officers of the church at that time were: Trustees James Cook, William Brown, Carl Fulton, Oliver Sanders, Joseph Williams, Irvin Young, Walter Wilson, William Wooten, John R.



**CORNERSTONE CEREMONY**

Williams; Deacons Elijah Hughes, John H. Williams, Andrew Johnson, Edward Jessup, Irvin Young, James Burks, and Oliver Sanders.

The next three years we struggled within ourselves in the community to regain our dignity and to present a united front. We voted to abolish the practice of accepting members by watchcare. During a 1963 regular church meeting, it was apparent that the harmony between the Boards and the Pastor was on the mend. Pastor Coleman was thanking the Deacons and Trustees for their support and continued prayers. There was a round table discussion concerning a new baptistry and the purchasing of new church pews. Sometime in October 1963 the pews were purchased.

### 1965

On July 2 the church voted to purchase new carpeting for the sanctuary. The offering realized on Family Day, the 3rd Sunday of July, would be used to defray this expense. Reverend Coleman brought to the church's attention the fact that the property next door to the church could be purchased for \$18,000 if the church could see the wisdom of moving in that direction. The Trustees agreed to accompany the Pastor on an investigative mission of said property and to report their findings to the church.

Seemingly endless repairing and sprucing up of the church continued. Walls were painted, windows and screens were mended, and the crowded conditions of the Pastor and his family in the parsonage was discussed. On July 30 it was moved by Brother John R. Williams and seconded by Sister Millie Burks that the Pastor's salary be raised to \$75.00 a week so that he could purchase his own home and maintain his own utilities.

On September 30 it was voted to sell the parsonage and plans were discussed to renovate or add to the back of the church, to increase educational space. The church learned that a new baptismal could be installed for \$1,600. The new carpeting was installed just prior to this meeting.

On December 3, due to the slow but definite pattern of growth in the church and the surrounding community, and the spiritual insight of the congregation to follow the leadership of Pastor Coleman, it was voted to purchase property next door to the church for the sum of \$18,900, and to borrow the above amount from the Crestwood State Bank. It was moved by Brother John R. Williams and seconded by Brother Oliver Sanders. The voting was seventy-four in favor and none against. The Deacons and Trustees were: James

Cook, James W. Burks, Edward Jessup, Oliver Sanders, John H. Williams, Joseph Williams, Irvin Young.

### 1966-1969

On January 30, 1966, the minutes recorded that an amplifier was purchased for the church by Brother Irvin A. Williams and Brother John R. Williams at a total cost of \$325.00. Brother Irvin Williams also donated \$255.75 to the building fund. A friend of Sister Faye Reynolds willed the church \$100. Also in January, it was voted to accept \$6,500 for the church parsonage because of the inability of the buyers to secure a loan for \$7,000. The Trustees were empowered to accept one of two bids (\$425 or \$485) to repair the cracked furnace.

On March 30, an Appreciation Service was held for Reverend Melvin Morrow.

On June 3, Deacon Edward Jessup reported that perfect peace was existing with the Boards and the Pastor.

The United States was defending the peace abroad in the Vietnam conflict, and cookies, cakes, and other goodies were forthcoming from the ladies that they might be sent to our members who had been called to duty.

During the month of July some needy repairs were completed on the parsonage in preparation for its sale to Mr. Ford. The newly acquired property next door was being rented to the former tenants, and the parking lot was being extended behind said property to accommodate the growing membership.

On September 25, 1966, a proposal regarding the sale of the parsonage was presented. Mr. Ford would pay down \$1,000, and in one year's time pick up the balance paying \$58.06 a month. At the end of one year, he would only have the contract, not the deed. If he could not meet the obligation, the church could foreclose if necessary or seek another buyer.

It was voted 75 to 1 for the church to grant power to the Trustees to carry this out. The transaction for the sale of the parsonage was completed on November 12. Also in November the church hosted the World Community Day service of prayer and dedication, sponsored by the United Church Women Jeffersonstown Council.

In the first half of 1967, new rock was put on the newly expanded parking lot with plans to blacktop when the funds were available. A search was made for a buyer for the organ so that space would be available for the baptistry. On May 10, the Trustees reported that the baptistry would cost

\$1,600 installed, and the rock for the parking lot would cost \$700.40.

On May 24, Appreciation Service was held for Miss Sadie Abstain's contribution to the church and community.

At the June business meeting, the membership was encouraged by the Finance Committee's report of a substantial increase in offerings. The Trustees also reported that the new baptistry had arrived and would be installed sometime after July 3rd. The minutes do not record the date in July the installation actually took place. Prior to the installation, the very old organ was dismantled and carried away as a gift from First Baptist for the moving.

On November 3, Brother George Anderson donated a four-way light for the parking lot and volunteered to dig the post hold himself.

At a special meeting on Sunday, January 14, 1968, it was moved by Brother Edward Jessup and seconded by Brother John H. Williams that the Trustees be given the power to look around and find a place that would be suitable for a church parsonage so that if there was ever a need, the church's pastor would have a place to reside in the Jeffersontown area.

On March 15, the Trustees reported that a file cabinet had been purchased to house church records. The balance due on the property next door was \$6,884.79.

On June 4, the Male Chorus was voted into the church and Brother George Anderson gave the first report of same. It was also voted to reserve a table for the church to attend the Baptists' 100 Years Centennial Banquet at Stouffers, and to buy space in the Centennial Book. The Senior Choir would participate as part of the Centennial Mass Choir. Pastor Coleman was given \$30.00 a month for visitation expenses.

On Sunday, August 25, Sister Odessa Anderson was given permission to organize the Sunbeams with the help of Sister Jane Eddleman of Jeffersontown Baptist Church on Taylorsville Road.

Pastor and Mrs. Coleman were sent to the Progressive National Baptist Convention in Washington, D.C., September 4-8 with all expenses paid. It was moved by Brother Hughes and seconded by Brother Irvin Williams to do so.

On October 31, the church granted Brother Frank Shelby, Jr. a license to preach.

## February 23, 1969

In a special call meeting of the First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown, Kentucky, immediately following morning service, the following took place: It was motioned by Jerry Williams and seconded by James Cook that the property of the late Mrs. Mamie Dorsey, located at 3508 College Drive, Jeffersontown, Kentucky, be purchased for the sum of six thousand dollars. It was motioned by Jerry Williams and seconded by James Cook that the Deacons and Trustees be empowered to make purchase of said property, being 330 feet deep and 66 feet wide. The vote cast was 153 in favor and none against.

Early in the year, the need to have Pastor Coleman return to the Jeffersontown area and our growing concern for educational space brought about numerous round table discussions. There was talk of purchasing more property, of building a four-room, concrete block addition to the rear of the building, of financing avenues such as pledges, building fund, incorporating the church, etc. Plans were presented for the parsonage and the promise of money to finance was secured from the bank. However, despite the talk and planning, it was determined that both needs could not be met.

On May 2, the church voted to contribute \$50.00 toward the building of a town library, and the Pastor's salary was increased \$60.00 per week. On March 27 it was agreed to evacuate the property next door and move some of the Sunday School classes there.

At the regular business meeting in September, Pastor Coleman informed the church that he needed to take his vacation and to do some prayerful thinking as to buying or building a parsonage or building an educational area. He stated his understanding of the need for him to return to the Jeffersontown area, and felt he could do so within a year if the church would agree to building the educational area needed. At the same meeting it was voted to redecorate the sanctuary. It was also voted to have dinner for families of deceased members at the church. Sister Emmer Jean Kinnard was appointed chairperson.

On December 5, the Pastor's Choir was made an official singing group of the church.

At a special meeting Sunday, December 7, it was voted to build the educational building on the rear of the church. The vote was 94 in favor and 4 abstaining. Later this idea was abandoned.

## 1970-1974

The church was peeping into the future with excitement at the idea of building a new educational

building. Reverend Coleman submitted a letter from the building contractor stating that the cost would be approximately \$65,000.

In February a special meeting was held, and it was agreed to contribute \$25.00 to the building fund of the N.A.A.C.P. and \$50.00 toward a life membership.

On June 5, the Trustees reported that the church property on College Street was for sale for \$9,000.

### July 15, 1970

The church met for Mr. Mock to explain the plans, and the construction of the new Education Building. It was moved by Brother Oliver Sanders and seconded by Brother Irvin Young that the church accept Mr. Trice's bid on the building of the structure, provided Mr. Mock would oversee the work and the materials used, and that Mr. Trice would accept and agree on a performance bond. On July 19 it was motioned by Brother Irvin Williams and seconded by Brother James Burks that Mr. Trice be awarded the contract to erect the new building. The vote was 70 in favor and none against. It was moved by Brother Carl Fulton to empower the Board to borrow up to \$50,000 to construct the building. The vote was 68 in favor and none against.

In August, by common consent, \$25.00 was contributed to the Red Cross Hospital for its fund-raising drive.

On September 4, Mr. Mock was present with the church and presented the performance bond and contract, a joint contract with Mr. Trice and Mr. Rie. They agreed to build the facility for \$61,900. Mr. Mock requested that the church appoint a liaison, and Brothers Irvin Young and Oliver Sanders were appointed. Pastor Coleman read a paper from Liberty National Bank stating that the church had been granted a loan of \$48,000.

The first three months of the new year saw the routine tasks of taking care of spiritual and physical needs of the church being done. The church was painted and decorated; spring revival was held; \$50.00 was contributed to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Drive; and \$100.00 was given to Reverend Fraizer that he might bring his wife from Jamaica. Reverend Fraizer was a student at Southern Baptist Seminary, on leave from his pastorate in Jamaica, who had affiliated with First Baptist during his stay in Kentucky. Everyone worked hard on their pledges for financing the new construction, and discussed and planned for what would be needed to occupy the new facility. The Trustees were authorized to sell the property on College Street and a tentative date for the first

Sunday in June was set for dedication of the new building. The church approved the meeting of the Eastern Area Council to be held here in September. It was voted to have the Lord's Supper each first Sunday morning, to contribute \$50.00 to the N.A.A.C.P., and to cancel the church's contract with the Baptist Book Store for Sunday School literature because of the action of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Publishing Board as to the destruction of \$8,000 worth of material because of its integrated nature. The church year was closed on December 31, with anticipation for greater works for the Lord in response to his blessings in the years passed.

On April 9, an Appreciation Service was held for Sister Cassandra Robinson in recognition of her long and dedicated service to the music department of the church.

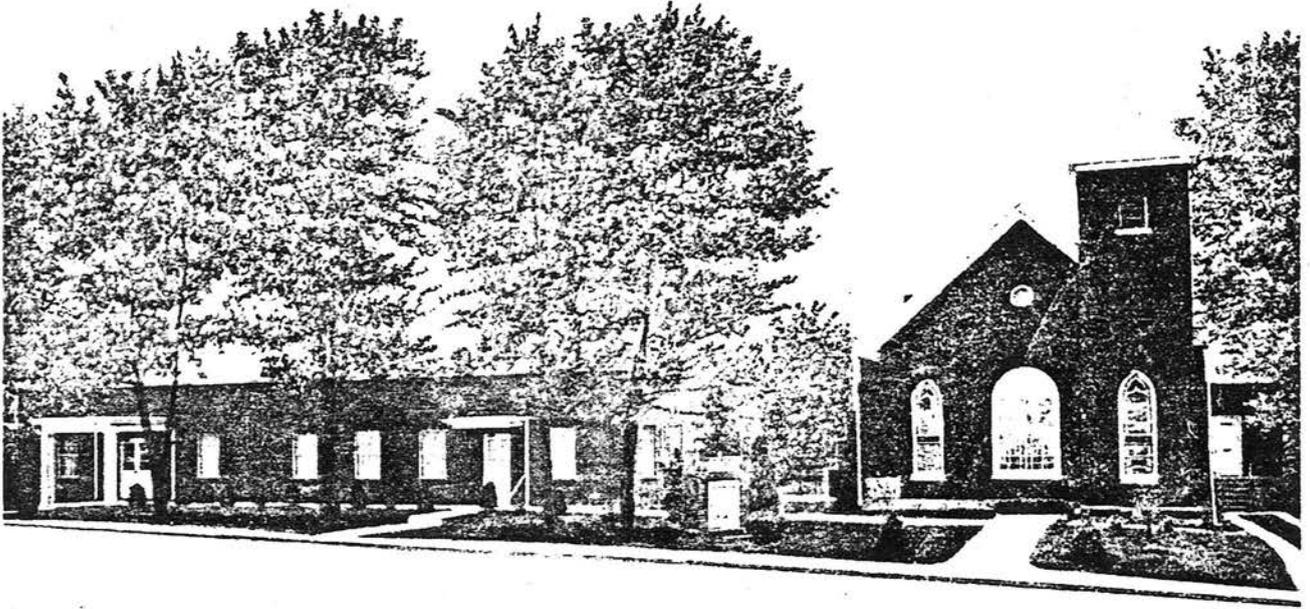
The State Leadership Conference convened at First Baptist May 1-3, 1972. The welcome greetings were given by Mayor Frank Chambers for the City of Jeffersonton, and Viola Fulton for the members of First Baptist Church. Watson Memorial Baptist Church, Pilgrim Baptist Church, First Baptist and Bethel Baptist of Anchorage furnished the music. On Tuesday night, Mrs. Georgia Carter, President of the Convention, and President of South District, presided over the program. Mrs. Lillian Chenault, Second Vice-President, was in charge of the afternoon program. Tuesday evening Miss Clara Anderson presided, Reverend W. H. Goatley, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Eminence, Kentucky, gave the sermon. Wednesday morning Mrs. Eva Jackson, President of West Kentucky Green Valley, led the meeting. The conference's final session was chaired by Mrs. Johnnie Duncan, Presiding Director of Central District Youth.

In May the church also granted the Henry Watterson Flower Garden Club the use of the Educational Building for their annual show, and contributed \$30.00 to the Eastern Area Council.

In July a contract was approved to air condition the church:

To remove present furnace and install two 125,000 B.T.U. air gas furnaces, two central air conditioner units, seven day time clocks, that the units be located between the buildings at the cost of \$3,481. Sister Odessa Anderson moved that the Trustees and Deacons move forward for installation of heating and air cooling systems. It was seconded by Brother Roy Hughes. Ninety-five members voted their approval.

On August 8, the deacons recommended that the pastor's salary be increased so that he could quit



**FIRST BAPTIST WITH NEWLY CONSTRUCTED EDUCATIONAL BUILDING**

his job at J.C. Penney Company and devote full time to First Baptist. There was no action on the recommendation.

On August 20, the Jeffersontown Centennial Service was held at First Baptist. Brother Phillip Robinson gave the history of the church at that meeting.

On November 26, Brothers Kyle and Ewell Shelby were set aside as protem deacons.

Licensee Frank Shelby, Jr. would be ordained on December 16.

On December 1, the Young Adult Choir asked permission to change its name to the Angelics. The church sent \$50.00 to the First Baptist Church of Glasgow, Kentucky to help rebuild their edifice after it was destroyed by fire. The adult art class of Jeffersontown was granted permission to hold classes in the Educational Building for ten weeks.

In 1973, mission outreach was increased, and the salaries and benefits of the pastor and church employees were increased. Reverend Coleman's resignation from the J.C. Penney Company was anticipated. A new piano was purchased and new carpeting was installed in the sanctuary. Sidewalks were replaced around the church property, and the parking area was black-topped.

In 1974, Brother Junior Molett was granted a license to preach. Sister Odessa Anderson, Superintendent of the Sunday School, brought to

the church's attention that the new facility was fully occupied for teaching purposes, and requested more classroom space. A contribution of \$100.00 was made to the N.A.A.C.P. telethon. On November 29, it was agreed that the Pastor's Choir and the Senior Choir would merge.

#### **1975-1976**

On January 3, 1975 at the regular church meeting, the oldest singing group of the church closed its record books. Sister Millie Burks made the final treasury report and Brother Oliver Sanders turned in the record books of the Senior Choir. The merged bodies of the Pastor's Choir and the Senior Choir would be known as the Church Choir, and would rehearse on Monday nights at 8 P.M. At that same meeting, Pastor Coleman recommended Brothers Ewell Shelby, Ronald Cooke, and Robert Bell for Deacons Protem. They were accepted unanimously.

The new year began with much enthusiasm for the work to be accomplished for Kingdom building, and cautiously with a gnawing down inside that the church was definitely experiencing severe growing pains. The membership continued to grow at such a rapid pace that the previously small town country church was literally bulging at every wall. Each Sunday rows of folding chairs had to be placed down the aisles, in the vestibule, and every place

that would accommodate seating. Warnings of safety code violations were forthcoming from the Fire Marshall. The city was allowing parking regulations to be broken and often voiced their concern and sense of urgency that the church try harder to comply. As the invitation to discipleship was extended each Sunday, it would be like a "mini" altar call. Persons from every direction in the crowded sanctuary would converge to the front. There would be a great spiritual outpouring and uplifting as testimonies were given and requests for prayer, forgiveness, and memberships were witnessed. It seemed that everyone was coming this way. There was a hesitancy to build, but there seemed no other way out.

Late in the year, Reverend Coleman received a message from "somebody bigger than you or I" that the church should build. A building and expansion committee was appointed, chaired by Deacon Oliver Sanders. The first report from this committee was forthcoming at the next regular business meeting on December 5. Deacon Sanders reported that the committee had worked hard and long, and that the report would be given by Brothers Rufus May and Sammie Brooks. Brother May reported as follows:

Purpose: To make the most economical and feasible recommendations to the church in regard to solving the problem of overcrowdedness of our present church sanctuary, fellowship hall, Sunday School classrooms, and parking.

1. Criteria - we now had 550 on church roll.
2. In the last 3½ years we have had 250 new members and still having rapid growth.
3. Sunday School rooms were overcrowded to the extent that there was no where else to go.

Brother Sammie Brooks showed slides of the state of disrepair of the present building. The condition was such that he stated the building could fall at any time and he warned that it was a very dangerous situation. The committee unanimously recommended that a new structure be built because alternatives would not be economically feasible. Pastor Coleman entertained a notion to build a new structure. It was motioned by Sister Mary Williams and seconded by Sister Odessa Anderson. The vote was 63 in favor, 3 opposed, and 4 abstaining. The committee was then instructed by Pastor Coleman to bring a subsequent report as to the building of the new structure.

On January 2, 1976, Reverend Coleman

explained that he and some of the officers had been in touch with the bank and had a tentative approval of a loan of \$170,000. A planning meeting would be held January 24.

On Sunday, January 25, it was motioned by Deacon Edward Jessup and seconded by Brother Buford Ezell to ordain Brothers Donald and Ronald Holder on February 6 in the ministry. The motion was carried.

Brother Sammie Brooks, a trustee, an engineer by profession, chaired the building committee. It was not an enviable job. There were many tears, moments of discouragement, delays, and disappointments that accompanied this noncovetous position. However, he was not alone. The Deacons: Irvin Young, Joseph Williams, James Burks, Cecil Turner, Edward Jessup, Oliver Sanders; and the Trustees: Jerry Williams, Rufus May, James Cook, Robert Bell, Buford Ezell, Davis Butler, Elmer Pride, Johnnie Bald, Cecil Kinnard, Walter Tytus, and Roger Williams, gave their untiring support. The idea began to catch on in the minds of the people. Much planning was underway. Many committees were formed. On December 30, Brother Brooks reported the cost of the building, including the architect's fee, was approximately \$189,190. It was voted to receive the report. The vote was 56 in favor and 16 abstaining.

Thurmond Coleman, Jr. announced his call to the ministry that same date and we were so filled with joy and thanksgiving for him and our Pastor that the church meeting turned into an old-fashioned testimony and prayer service. Thurmond Jr. asked to be baptized and it was a glorious site to see he and his father standing in the baptistry and to hear the refrain, "Wade in the Water." There was singing, shouting, and preaching. It was heaven come down.

Finally all transactions were finished and a date was set for razing the old building. Sunday, May 16, 1976, the Sewing Circle, the oldest auxiliary of the church, held its sixty-ninth Annual Sermon at 3 P.M. This was the last service to be held in the old church structure. Rev. J. C. Pyles and Pleasant View Baptist Church were the guests. The feeling of awe and excitement filled the sanctuary as the membership and guests gathered for the last time within these walls. The many years of tears, heartache, joy, fears, loving, growing, dying, being born again and some feelings that were unexplainable were all evident in the responses of amens and shouting as Rev. Pyles spoke on the subject "If These Walls Could Talk." The prayers and songs echoed that day seemed to take on a new and deeper meaning than ever before.

## **Letter Shared by Pastor Coleman During Last Sunday in the Old Church**

Dear Member:

After years of dutifully, expectingly, energetically and spiritually assembling together at First Baptist Church situated at 10600 Watterson Trail, GOD in HIS divine and miraculous wisdom has blessed us to outgrow our present structure by adding tremendously to our membership. PRAISE GOD!

We are going to remain united while the new edifice is being constructed. Where there is unity, strength is inevitable. We will be worshipping at Cochrane Elementary School, located at 2511 Tregaron Avenue, Jeffersontown.

Don't you let GOD's work stop while construction is in progress and during the summer months. While you are reading this letter thousands of sinners have passed into judgment. Christ's program is serious business. While the architect and builders are working, let's pray together and stay together so we can march to the new First Baptist singing "ON CHRIST THE SOLID ROCK I STAND, ALL OTHER GROUND IS SINKING SAND."

As the lesson of today (May 16) speaks to us from the Book of Romans, let us offer ourselves, our everyday lives seven days a week as that "Living Sacrifice" that will continue to say to those persons who look at us and to us as Christians. As Christians, First Baptist is alive and well, carrying on a warm, friendly, personal "Our Church" atmosphere from one place to another and back again. People don't care how much we know, until they find out how much we care.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Thurmond Coleman, Sr.  
Pastor

TC:jb

June 4 the Ladies Sewing Circle reported that new drapes had been made and hung in the Educational Building. Brother Brooks reported that the normal cost of architect fees was 6% of the cost of the building. But First Baptist's warm outgoing spirit had so impressed Mr. Mock, the architect, that he stated that he had gained so many friends in our congregation, he would donate \$4,000 of the fee in full of \$4,350. Praise the Lord! Brother Jerry Williams, Chairman of the Trustee Board, gave a list of items for sale from the old building, including the pews which were to be sold for \$3,500.00. He also reported that the Deacons and Trustees had voted 14 to 4 to recommend that the church draw up a constitution and by-laws to govern as to secular dealings outside the church. It was motioned by Sister Patricia Williams and seconded by Brother Sammie Brooks to receive the recommendation. The constitution committee would consist of Sisters Sadie Abstain (Chairperson), Sonda Berry, Cherry Brooks, Brothers Robert Bell, Theodore Hughes, Walter Tytus, and Jerry Williams. Pastor Coleman recommended the ordination of Brother Robert Bell as deacon on Sunday, June 6, and that Brother Geno Noble be allowed to preach his initial sermon the same day.

July 30 at the regular business meeting it was apparent that there was trouble between the Pastor and the Boards, and some trouble with the building schedule and construction. The building problems were left in the hands of the Joint Boards and the building committee. The internal problems were prayed over and hopefully left in the hands of God.

On October 1, Brother Brooks reported that the building was on schedule and the Joint Boards recommended that a sound system be purchased, total cost not to exceed \$3,500. The recommendation was accepted. The new pews were to be delivered December 1. Members could purchase a pew and have their names applied to same on a gold plate for the price of \$358.69. It was decided that \$390.00 would be spent to refinish some pulpit and altar furniture to match the new pews. At this same meeting it was very apparent that some fears, lack of communication, distrust and a power struggle had emerged between the Pastor, the Joint Boards and the building committee. The fellowship of peace and the spirit of togetherness was greatly threatened. There were many harsh words of accusation and rash recommendations. After much discussion there was a motion to adjourn. At that time, Sister Bobbie Jo Green stated that the church was in such confusion, she would suggest that we hold hands and pray, for we all needed prayer. After a very inspiring and tearful testimonial and prayer service, fellowship was mended and the membership went home joyful and praising God.

On November 4, the Trustees gave an update on their labors of securing proper parking space for the new facility. Included was the purchase of two lots at a total cost of \$11,550, and the leasing of another from Sister Frances Bullit for \$180.00 yearly. Brother Brooks reported some problem with the time schedule for the new building and some concern as to protecting the very old stained glass windows that would be incorporated into the new structure. At that same meeting Pastor Coleman was granted a 15% salary increase and Brothers Frank Simpson and Gregory Downs were recommended as protem deacons.

#### 1977-1978

In retrospect this writer remembers the day the old building stood like a great ghost without eyes, after the beautiful stained glass windows had been removed. The wrecking crew strung a giant cord and pulled it through the thin brick veneered walls and the structure came tumbling down as in slow motion with a huge cloud of dust and a soft swish. The end of an era had come. We watched impatiently as the new structure began to take on form. We would wander inside the great hull from time-to-time and imagine ourselves at worship service. Sometimes we would try to imagine the pews in place and the great choirs standing behind the huge pulpit with Reverend Coleman officiating. The cold day that the steeple was raised atop the building, the whole of Jeffersontown came as to a great small town carnival. There were shouts of joy and praises to the Almighty. The Pastor's chuckles could be heard all the way to the town square. There was much picture taking as every eye was lifted to the sky, and the majesty of that great steeple seemed to reach directly into heaven.

Services were held in the Garland Cochrane Elementary School. A certain amount of tensions and anxiety began as the congregation wondered what this new experience would bring. It was everyone's prayer that things would not change; only the temporary location. The spirit continued and it was realized that the church on the corner of Watterson Trail was a body of witnessing saints who kept reaching out in the community, attending to the physical and spiritual needs of people. Souls were still being won to Christ. As Christ added to the church daily, the proclaiming of God's word persevered. Weekly Bible Study and Prayer Meeting increased in attendance. Several young men announced their call to "go preach the Gospel."

The stay at the school had been so spiritually rewarding that there were pangs of sadness when the time came to leave. But the time did come, the endeavor had been accomplished. The weather was cold, the snow was deep, the highways were slick, fuel was low and many weather records were

broken. It was the coldest winter some had ever experienced. But Sunday, February 20, 1977, after a short period of about nine months, the membership entered the new church. There was an Entry and Dedication Service. After the ribbon-cutting by Sister Sadie Abstain and others, the long procession began with singing "We've Come This Far By Faith." The new church was filled to capacity - over 600. The musicians and choirs were at their best. Reverend Coleman was a swirl of activity as he conducted the affairs in his charismatic fashion. He, like Titus, had been on the Island of Crete for a long time. A solo was offered at the dedication service, "He Lives."

Because "He Lives", our church will be kept alive. Any criticism of our church is also a criticism of ourselves. Yes, we are the church. It is what we are. "Let the church stand up. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

This was Dr. Emmanuel McCall's proclamation on that glorious hallelujah morning.

The rest of the year found the membership working hard to get established in the new church and tie up loose ends. On March 4, Trustee Jerry Williams thanked the church for the help in moving "home" and thanked God for being "home". Trustee Walter Tytus, in charge of insurance, informed that coverage was for one million dollars. All parking facilities had been paid for in full. Reverend Coleman asked permission to grant Reverend and Sister Walter Sullivan, close friends of First Baptist and loved as parents by Rev. & Sis. Coleman, permission to hold their 50th wedding anniversary here. At the August meeting, some new year projections were made which included furniture for the pastor's study, and equipping of the unfinished kitchen. The annual Thanksgiving Community Service would be held at the church for 1977. Additional parking space was purchased, and the Brotherhood erected a marquee. A lump sum payment of \$11,661.68 was made on the principal balance of the building loan, in addition to the regular payments. Brother Ronald Green was accepted as a protem deacon and Lic. Ronald Moore and Sister Yvette Downs would serve as Youth Directors. Income from pledges for the year totaled \$13,759.57. The Lord was continuing to bless as the church moved toward the year of 1978. Brother Scott Todd made and donated thirteen podiums for the Sunday School classrooms. The stained glass windows were installed in the front of the church. New hymnals were purchased for the pews, a 400 watt street light was purchased from Louisville Gas and Electric for the rear parking lot. The finance committee reported on February 3 that the balance owed on the new building was

\$170,644.59.

First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown had the honor of hosting the General Association of Kentucky Baptists, beginning August 15 and lasting through August 19, 1978. It was an experience for the church, as well as a challenge. Hard work went into installing the new kitchen equipment, cleaning, securing hotel rooms and other accommodations (homes) for the guests. Everyone was tuned in for a smoothly run and well-organized week with the General Association and looking forward to a spiritually-filled fellowship. Unfortunately, things that can go wrong often do, and Sunday prior to the Tuesday opening of the session, the air conditioning broke down. Repairs could not be made until the middle of the following week. Somehow, however, the good old days were remembered (before air conditioning), and windows were opened, fans were given out, jackets removed, and business was continued as usual. God was present and a glorious time was had by all. Despite the heat, the church was filled to capacity each night.

On December 8, at the regular church meeting, another year was climaxed with the Church Clerk's Report:

To the Pastor, Officers, and Members, the Church Clerk prayerfully reports that in the year 1978 ninety-four persons united with First Baptist. Forty-two by baptism, fifty-one by letter, and one by Christian experience. There were 140 requests for prayer, seventeen re-dedications, and one restoration, forty testimonies, twelve requests for forgiveness, and five confessions during Sunday morning worship services. Five persons requested letters of dismissal and five were called to their final resting place.

At that same meeting, the Historical Committee reported its desire to have the history of First Baptist finished by April 1979.

#### 1979

January 2, the first church meeting of the new year, found the following letter coming from the finance committee:

*Financial Report for 1978*

**First Baptist of Jeffersontown**

10600 Watterson Trail — Jeffersontown, Ky. 40299

To All Members and Christian Friends:

Giving honor to God, from whom all blessings flow, we are very thankful for His innumerable blessings of 1978. It proved to be a very good year for First Baptist, not only spiritually but financially as well.

We—the Pastor, Joint Boards, Deacons and Trustees and the Financial Committee wish to commend the members of First Baptist for their wonderful support, and we pledge to continue our work in whatever capacity the church needs us.

We have developed a budget in order to get the utmost out of the money spent. Meetings have been held with the head of each auxiliary to get an idea of their projected expenditures. Due to the increased fellowship projects and plans for next year, it will be necessary for each member to increase their offering by 25 percent in order to meet our projections.

This increase asked is only in support of our church based on the budgetary projections attached.

For the first time in our history, and with the support and patience of our Lord and Savior, we have moved to the budgetary form of accountability of God's resources and blessings to us, his church.

This 25 percent increase we ask of you represents an even greater opportunity for you to assist directly in the promotion and advancement of God's work.

In closing, we thank God for all blessings, past, present and future, among these being you, the members of First Baptist.

Love ya!

REV. THURMOND COLEMAN, PASTOR  
THE JOINT BOARDS  
THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Also at that meeting Bro. Wesley Hutchen was accepted as deacon protem.

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## *Day Of Thanksgiving*

Two years ago First Baptist's new sanctuary became a reality.  
A reality in the midst of the cold and snow.  
A reality of God's light warmed us so deep within our souls.  
It brought the epitome of gratitude and praise.  
A Day of Thanksgiving to the Lord's holy name.

For Rev. Coleman's dream was fulfilled.  
The Lord's will preserved through tasks, details, and perplexing facts.  
With the help of willing workers a Church was built,  
Erected and dedicated in less than a year.

With Christ being the foundation, the cornerstone.  
The Lord blessed First Baptist in a trying time.  
A time the news media called "an energy crisis."  
A time when layoffs were rising.  
A time when people died not having money for heat bills.  
A time when people could not even get their car gas tanks filled.

It is not the builder's skill, the stained glass windows or wood veneer,  
Not the reflections of interior colors in harmony,  
Nor the architecture's floor plan and design.  
All of those things are fine,  
But, the most important material of all  
is the spirit of holiness, truth and love within these walls.  
A spirit that reaches and touches souls.

So, First Baptist is blessed two-fold.  
We have a beautiful church to worship in,  
and souls keep coming being born again.  
Confessions, baptisms, teaching and preaching,  
Singing and playing songs of praise.  
Let us First Baptist fill the air with praise and joy.  
Let us give thanks to God above  
For such abundant, overflowing divine love.

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Earlene Hilliard

Our first celebration of re-entry was 1978. It was such a forceful event that the church decided to make it an annual celebration. "A Day of Thanksgiving," by Joyce Higgins was written for our second celebration.

## A Day of Thanksgiving

*"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." (Psalm 118:23)*

February 18, 1979

Our thoughts move back to February 1977. It was a day met with great anticipation. There was clarity, a feeling of excitement all around. All the long hours of prayers and preparation had truly paid off. The day had finally come when we could leave the school and return to our rightful place at 10600 Watterson Trail. We could sit here in beauty and comfort and remember "except the Lord build a house the laborers work in vain." We strongly believe our church was erected by the divine will of God.

In the old structure there had been a feeling of much warmth, love, and friendship, and the membership prided itself on being a close family unity. We wondered if we would carry that same spirit with us as we entered the new sanctuary. As we stand here today, it is evident by our constant growth that we have maintained that same spirit. The First Baptist family is alive and well.

We have seen a small country town, Jeffersontown, grow into an industrial city. We thank God as our town grew, He saw fit to bless us with the means that our church could grow also.

We thank God for our pastor and all those who worked so hard to see a dream become a reality; and for each of you who keep the reality going.

We thank God First Baptist is a beacon light on this corner. People from all over these United States have found our church to have its doors and its heart open to them, always ready and willing to be a friendly church. Always there to attend to the spiritual, physical, emotional and even the economical needs of the people in our community and surrounding areas. We have continued to be the church that reaches out and proclaims that God is love. We proclaim it by doing what God would have us do.

Some might say, "Why have a Day of Thanksgiving?" If that question has crossed your mind, I challenge you to look at your life and ask why should I say thanks? Certainly our gratitude can extend in many ways.

We can say thanks because First Baptist has stood as a soul winning, soul-saving station proclaiming God's word and saying whosoever will let him come.

We can say thanks for the fellowship and concern of the members one for another, in times of sickness, death, or tragedy.

We can say thanks that after a week of the world, we can come here, inside these walls, feel God's presence, hear His word, and gain strength to face another week.

I had the privilege of meeting the architect Mr. Kenneth Mock who designed our church. It was a cold, dark night about a month ago, and the wind chill factor was 23 degrees below zero. I had car trouble and I got out and began to walk. The logical thing would have been to walk toward Jefferson-town, but God chose to direct my path another way. I knocked at one door and there was no response. I knocked at another and a kind faced lady opened the door. She saw that I was shaking from fear and the chill, and she invited me in. (It was the architect and his wife.)

The architect designed our church to be a beautiful building, and I found he and his wife to be beautiful people. I would just like to draw a parallel between the person who designed our church and who it was really designed for.

1. They invited me in out the cold dark night and into the warmth and light of their home.

Our church was designed to bring sinners in out of the cold dark world of sin, to the warmth of Jesus' arms and into His marvelous light.

2. They began to talk to me and tell me about all the fine people they knew and loved at First Baptist.

Our church is designed as a place where we can all come together and talk and share through testimonies about our friend Jesus whom we all know and love.

3. They invited me to make a call as I could let my family know where I was.

Our church is designed as a place where we can call on the name of our Lord and Saviour in song, in prayer, or any way we see fit.

4. The wife of the architect made me coffee to warm me, and offered me a snack to nourish me.

Our church is designed as a place where we can come and receive spiritual food that can nourish us with strength and warm our hearts.

I thank God for our pastor and all the members of First Baptist who have left such a strong impression on the minds and hearts of these people. It is gratifying to know as we sit here on Sunday mornings that we are First Baptist (the church) together, but the rest of the week we still represent First Baptist (the church) in our daily living.

When we say this is a day of thanksgiving, every member of the church should be ready to celebrate.

As we look back, we can see we have so much to be grateful for. God has truly been working in the lives of individuals in First Baptist. We have learned to wait and depend on God, and there is nothing He will not do for us.

We know this is only a small portion of the history of First Baptist, but we are all part of it. We should all be rejoicing.

"This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24)

Joyce Higgins

March the 11th, we dedicated a new piano that was a gift from Pastor Coleman and family in memory of their deceased daughter, Jane.

April 25, Lic. Ronald Moore was ordained with a unanimous recommendation of the council.

May 6-11 we held Spring Revival under the leadership of the Brotherhood. Also during the year of 1979 we held joint services with Jeffersonstown Baptist Church and Rev. Straney. The Pastor and church employees insurance and benefits were undated at the cost of \$285.82 per month. Pastor Coleman and several members were sent to the National Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

August the 31st, Pastor Coleman's salary, including benefits was increased from \$17,032.52 to \$20,076.63 on recommendation of the deacon board and vote of the congregation. There were one hundred and twelve new members added to the church roll.

## 1980

It ended as it had begun, as a kids action tale. The Hardy Boys were down to their last clue. Fat Albert was running through parking lots and junkyards to return the stolen jellybeans before the store closed.

The University of Louisville basketball team needed clutch baskets and miracles Monday night

to erase a five point deficit late in the game against UCLA. It got both. It had needed them just as much in its opener against South Alabama a few lifetimes ago. Remember? Coach Denny Crum's Cardinals were down 71-69 with 3½ minutes to go and, having lost a 14 point lead, had to have a bucket. Darrell Griffith delivered it, as heroes are supposed to do, by sinking a 23 foot jump shot.

Scooter McCray's free throws produced the final 75-73 score. Griffith clinched a not-very-imposing victory by stealing an inbounds pass while Louisville was — hey, what is this? — still running that crazy press. Jerry Eaves scored 18 points that night. Remember? Thirty-two victories and 115 nights later, Eaves would score the two biggest field goals of his career. He would erase a 54-50 deficit late in the game by drilling UCLA with a long jumper and then chilling the Bruins with a driving circus flip-in. And the team with the outlandish dream would turn 16,637 Market Square Arena spectators into kids. It would finish off UCLA 59-54. It would finish as the monarch of college basketball, champion of the 42nd National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament. (Borrowed from the Courier Journal Magazine Section, March 30, 1980, entitled, "1980 Year of the Cardinals" by Mike Sullivan.)

Many of the champs came to First Baptist's worship services and fellowship hours. The Sunday morning following the "Big Win" many of the First Baptist members were "Wearin' the Red." The year of 1980 was fruitful for First Baptist sports also. The women's volleyball team claimed the number one spot. The bowling season ended with the first place team being none other than Captain Thurmond Coleman Sr.'s team. The men's softball team did not fair as well. The sports events were fun and important in the fellowship of the members but did not hinder the progress of the building of God's Kingdom.

A spirit filled spring revival was held under the leadership of the Brotherhood. The prison ministries were continued at LaGrange Reformatory and the Women's Correction Center at PeeWee Valley. A church budget of \$125,207.00 was recommended by the joint boards and finance committee and accepted by the church. In early April the congregation celebrated its 147th Anniversary in glorious fellowship with a sister church, Second Baptist of Battle Creek Michigan. Food, games, shopping, and worship were shared by all during that two-day weekend. The parting consisted of laughter, tears, hugs, handshakes and promises of future fellowship. The spiritual and monetary gains topped what most could remember in years past. Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Chatman donated a

larger organ at the cost of \$1,200.00. Excitement mounted as the pastor and his wife made preparations to visit the Holy Land. Rev. Ronald Moore, First Baptist's first Assistant to the Pastor, would be in charge in the pastor's absence.

The blessings of membership enlargement continues. Once again the church was thrust into a building program. There was anticipation and preparations for constructing an approximate \$100,000.00 addition to the educational facility. The mass choir sang with spiritual fervor on August 17th, their annual musical, in brand new robes to the tune of \$5000.00.

We shall always be encouraged by the words of the songs sang by the choir that day. "One Day At A Time, Sweet Jesus," "All The Way My Savior Leads Me," "Take Time Out To Praise The Lord," "Prepare To Meet Him," "In God's Own Time," "Work On, Pray On," "Victory."

The year 1981 brought about more physical changes due to the rapid growth of our family at

First Baptist. Additional parking space was secured and we dedicated and entered the second floor addition of our Educational Building. PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!

With Christian Education "top priority", our Church School enrollment reached the 4 mark and Baptist Training Union was reorganized.

We were also faced with sadness and sorrow as two of our steadfast deacons, both serving many years as chairman of the deacons, Oliver Sande and Edward Jessup, passed. Their presence will truly be missed. Two other deacons resigned for personal reasons. However God still blessed First Baptist with three deacons. Bros. Wesley Hutche Frank Weaver, and Marcel Buckner were ordained and accepted by the church. Three other members were also licensed to preach His word, William Abernathy, Delbert Williams, and Danny Kinnar.

God is still blessing First Baptist with 70 new members in 1981 and in 1982, our family grows through learning, sharing, caring and loving, for LOVE IS THE FIRST BAPTIST WAY!





## *Chapter IV*

### *Ministers, Officers, Organizations and Auxiliaries*

## Others Who Served As Pastor

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Reverend James Enders .....       | 16 years |
| Reverend Phillip Alexander .....  | 11 years |
| Reverend Anderson .....           | 5 years  |
| Reverend James Wilson .....       | .....    |
| Reverend J. H. Lewis .....        | 3 years  |
| Reverend William Richardson ..... | 7 years  |

## SONS AND ASSOCIATES

Reverend J. W. Adams  
Reverend R. L. Carson  
Reverend Oliver Fraser  
Reverend Stephen Garrett  
Reverend Donald Holder  
Reverend Ronald Holder  
Reverend Anton Matthews  
Reverend Junior Molett  
Reverend Ronald Moore  
Reverend Melvin Morrow  
Reverend Frank Shelby, Sr.  
Reverend Frank Shelby, Jr.  
Reverend Donald Thompson

Lic. William Abernathy  
Lic. Darrell Burks  
Lic. Robert Calbert  
Lic. Thurmond Coleman, Jr.  
Lic. Ronald Cooke  
Lic. Geno DeNoble  
Lic. Gerald Dotson  
Lic. Theodore Hughes  
Lic. Danny Kinnard  
Lic. James Kinnard  
Lic. Alfonzo Morrow  
Lic. Ewell Shelby  
Lic. Delvert Williams  
James Hazel

## DEACONS

From time memorial, the deacons have been the pastor's support.

They are to support and assist the pastor in caring for the spiritual needs of the church.

Devotionals and prayers are one of their major roles during worship service; and they are to visit the sick as well as watch over the widows and orphans in the church.

They are to be spiritual minded men and have excellent knowledge of the scriptures.

They are to be capable of teaching.

The deacons stand with the pastor to welcome newcomers to the church.

They meet monthly with the pastor and jointly with the Trustees to assist with problems and recommendations to the church body.

From the beginning our deacons are to be commended for their love of the church and their tenacity. Today they are holding up the banner well, with their moral clean conduct. We pray they will continue to be such shining lights for God and good examples for all.

## TRUSTEES

In January, 1942, four trustees were recommended to take care of the church business: Joshua Williams; Harry Ray; Arthur Harris; and, William Brown. They were given power to sell a plot of land and to borrow money for the church.

Trustees are elected annually. These officers are necessary only because state law requires them for holding titles for the property of the church. They must execute legal papers in the name of the church when a purchase, transfer, or sale has been ordered by the church body. They are the custodians of the church papers and titles, but can only exercise the power vested in them by vote of the church body. They are also empowered to employ the building custodian and to dismiss him or her if necessary. They shall be held responsible for the physical condition of all church property, and equipment. They are charged with the upkeep and maintenance of the building and equipment; and, the Trustees can make emergency repairs upon their own authority up to a maximum sum set by the church body. Expenditures in excess of this amount must be approved by the Pastor and Joint Board, and presented to the church upon the recommendation of the Joint Board and Pastor.

The Trustees meet when called together by the Pastor or by the Chairman of the Trustee Board.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Methodist and Baptist Sunday Schools were first combined at the birth of First Baptist. The Baptist portion of the Sunday School so grew that they were soon able to branch out and organize their own classes.

First Baptist Sunday School was later organized under the late Reverend Richard Reynolds, in the auditorium of the old sanctuary. In those days, the Sunday School was primarily for the children. Classes were held in four corners of the building — small children, juniors, intermediates, and larger boys and girls with four teachers.

With the growth of the neighborhood and more children attending, the annex was added and the church moved to the new addition where it was able to divide the groups.

The late Brother George Lewis was Superintendent for over fifty years. Under the leadership of Brother Lewis the Sunday School was a very effective branch of the church. Brother Lewis, though small in stature and soft-spoken, led the Sunday School with fortitude; with Dr. Reynolds as his counselor, the accomplishments were many.

Dr. Reynolds, an educator and teacher, desired his Sunday School to be a place of learning. Thus, he insisted that Bro. Lewis direct his teachers to study the word and to be prepared to teach.

The main social events of the Sunday School were the annual picnic and the Christmas tree. Christmas tree night was a time of great excitement in the life of First Baptist. The members brought their own gifts from home and gifts for friends. They placed them under the huge tree, more often than not, just to hear their names called. Each young person of the Sunday School spoke a recitation or sang a song on the program.

Under the late Reverend Richard Reynolds the Sunday School was graded. With the continuous growth more teachers were added. The chapel was divided into individual classrooms under Reverend Arvel Carroll. A continuation of the fine work was carried on by the best teachers and leaders in the neighborhood. Institutes were held and teachers were encouraged to take accredited courses and receive certificates.

After the health of Brother Lewis began to fail, he was assisted by Miss Sadie Abstain, Mrs. Mamie Williams, Mrs. Dollie Taylor, Miss Beatha Abstain, and others. During the church's revival services, each teacher was required to attend a week of prayer meeting and hold prayer services in their classes. A number of children were converted through the Sunday School. Following the passing of Brother George Lewis, Miss Sadie Abstain was elected superintendent. At the end of her service in 1962, the enrollment was 130 and there were graded Sunday School classes with a faculty of twelve teachers, two secretaries and four departmental superintendents.

The Sunday School has taken part in all local and state organizations with members holding positions as president of the Central District, corresponding secretary, class clinic teachers, and others. A number of teachers hold certificates.

The Sunday School department kept the picnic until it was changed to the Church Picnic under the leadership of Reverend Coleman. Under Pastor Coleman's leadership, the Sunday School has continued to stand for high Christian principles and soul-saving.

Activities initiated under the leadership of the Sunday School include: food pantry; "Go To Sunday School Day"; Halloween Social; witnessing team; Worker Council Meeting;

“Promotion Day”; tutoring program; “Dawn Sunday School”; updated record system; and, Drama Department.

Sister Oddessa Anderson was elected superintendent in 1962. When first taking office, all classes were housed in one building, consisting of five classes, two in the annex of the church, one in the main auditorium, and two in the basement. As time went on, seven more classes were formed. The basement was divided, and the Young Adult Class was formed. In 1960 a lot next to the church was purchased, and the house on the lot was divided into classrooms which housed five classes. In 1970 the ground was broke for the new Educational Building, and thus more classroom space which was badly needed became available.

The Sunday School has a very updated record system. Under the supervision of the present secretary, Sister Dorothy Sterrett, and her very able assistants Sister Barbara Scrivener and Sister Eunice Stoner, records as far back as 10 years can now be located.

The qualifications of the teaching staff go beyond religious certificates. They are hard-working, conscientious, morally upright, professional people.

The goals of the Sunday School department are never-ending. As long as there are people to teach and reach, the Sunday School will continue to move and grow.

## **BAPTIST TRAINING UNION**

From 1926 to 1936 the B.T.U. was known as the B.Y.P.U. (Baptist Young People's Union). Mrs. Mamie Williams was the president throughout this period. The Union was divided into eleven captains, with each group collecting and reporting their own dues.

Their service was conducted as follows:

- Opening Song
- Prayer
- Song
- Scripture Reading
- Quotations by all members
- Topic Discussion
- Entertainment (Biblical discussion, solo, remarks by visitor)
- Offering
- Remarks by the Pastor

From 1943 to 1947 the B.Y.P.U. played an important role in the life of First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown. The congregation was small, yet a faithful group of members gave untiring support to the Union. They met on Sunday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 in the church sanctuary in an attitude of prayer, seeking to learn more about Jesus and His directions for living.

The Union under the leadership of Reverend Arvel Carroll had a staff of officers: President, Vice-President; Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Organist, Assistant Organist, and four to six group leaders who were the teachers of the classes. Each group presented a program one Sunday night a month. Guests were invited to appear on these programs, thus exposing non-members to the activities of the church.

The Union desired to reach more young people and on several occasions sponsored social events to aid in creating the interest of young people in the work of the church.

The Union contributed spiritually, financially, and socially to the growth of the church. In 1943 the country was engaged in World War II, and many young men of the church and community were in the Armed Services. The B.Y.P.U. sent packages to these servicemen.

Easter Sunday night, 1944, the Union presented the drama, "Voluntary and Public Service." On December 2, 1945, the reknown blind soprano, Miss Gladys Watts, gave a concert.

On June 15, 1947 the B.Y.P.U. agreed to purchase food, prepare, cook, and serve at the State Musical Convention. The Convention convened on Thursday at First Baptist in the annual session. On May 15, 1947, the Union invited Mr. James Wilson to show the film "The Faith of a Man."

To enhance the treasury, the B.Y.P.U. held baby contests, fish and chili dinners, and "Penny-a-Meal" rallies. On Thanksgiving Day in 1947 a Hostess Dinner was given by the Junior girls of the Sunday School, sponsored by the Union. This was both a financial and social event. By inviting the girls to act as hostesses, the Union hoped the girls would become active members of the B.Y.P.U.

Hiking was an important social event in the 1940's. On November 28, 1943, the members of the Union hiked to the home of Deacon Joshua and Sister Mamie Williams. On November 28, 1944 another hike was made to the home of Deacon Will and Sister Mattie Brown.

The Union sponsored a Touch Social on December 29, 1944, hoping to encourage more young people to become members. The committee for the affair was Sisters Jeannette Brown, Beatha Abstain, Dora Carroll, Elmaven Wordlow (Carroll), and Brother Joshua Williams.

The B.Y.P.U. purchased a flag and a clock for the sanctuary, a light to place on the piano, two dozen Gospel Pearl songbooks, to be used at all services. A committee headed by Sister Dora Carroll purchased curtain material for the windows in the Sunday School classrooms.

The Union represented the church at Fact Finding conferences, and other local and state meetings. Some of the delegates to these meetings were: Sisters Narcissus Talbott (Haines), Willie Mae Patterson, Mildred Green, Beulah Bowen (Hughes), Mamie Williams, Elmaven Wordlow (Carroll), and Brothers Paul Williams and George Reynolds.

The average attendance during this period at B.Y.P.U. meetings was 20, and the average offering was \$1.22.

The B.Y.P.U. for almost a half century held on as the Bible study facility of the church. It served also to prepare Sunday School teachers for their classes.

# MUSIC DEPARTMENT

During the 148 years of First Baptist's existence, music has always been a very important part of the worship experience.

There are presently five music groups: the Church Choir; the Brotherhood; the Angelics; the Young Voices (Intermediate Choir); and the Shining Stars (Youth Choir).

Annually these groups sponsor a combined concert and share the choir stand as a combined choir each first Sunday and on numerous special occasions.

Note: The Angelics are the product of the Junior Choir that grew up.

Note: The Inspiration Choir organized in 1982, Janice Horton and Virginia Adams.

## SENIOR CHOIR

The Senior Choir was organized about 1900 with Miss Nannie Caldwell as the first organist. It gave continuous service until 1974. Though at times the ranks were thin, the service remained constant.

The choir was not slack in its financial support of the church. It sponsored some of the major improvements. All monies raised were turned over to the church treasury.

The Senior Choir was served by a number of the most outstanding organists and directors in the Louisville area:

*Sadie Abstain*

*Carolyn Stewart Blanton*

*Ollie Keane Boone*

*Cassandra Robinson*

*William Prather*

*Freda Gatlin*

*Carolyn Weathers*

*Gwendolyn Pride*

*Mamie Summers*

*Donald Kyle*

*Lucy Lewis*

*Lottie Long*

*Ralph Carson*

*Jimmy Goodall*

*Ruby King*

*Virginia Adams*

The members of the Senior Choir were among the most active and sincere Christians in the church and community. One of the past presidents, Brother Joshua Williams, served 35 consecutive years. On the roster there were ministers, deacons, trustees, members of the Usher Board, Sewing Circle, missionary workers, Sunday School and B.T.U. workers. The Senior Choir had members who have given close to 50 years of steadfast service.

Over the years the choir tried to keep abreast of the highest possible standards in music in order that they "Give of their Best to the Master." The Senior Choir prepared and presented music for every occasion and holy day. It had the honor of representing in the National Baptist Convention, Union of Choirs, numerous state Baptist conventions, and the Community Fellowship Chorus. The Senior Choir supported every pastor of the church as they would go about with an evangelistic appeal.

In 1949 the Jubilee Service was observed. Many choir members and organists who had moved from the church were present and honored for their service. It was a day of true jubilation, joyous and triumphant praise.

In 1961 with Mrs. Freda Gatlin as director and Cassandra Robinson as pianist, the choir initiated a service which became an annual event — “The Harvest Sing.” Originally with all church choirs in the Jeffersontown area participating, but for the last several years being an effort of our choir.

In 1964 Reverend Ralph Carson accepted the post of Minister of Music inspiring the choir to new heights. His entry into the field of mission work severed his body ties with us, but the memory of his faith, sincerity, dedication and great tenor voice kept him tied to our heart forever.

In May 1967, the Choir sponsored a service called “Reflections,” honoring Miss Sadie Abstain, one of the long-time members of the Senior Choir. A love offering given by her many friends throughout Kentucky and other states purchased a silver service engraved “Reflections” which was presented to her on that day.

In June 1967, the Senior and Youth Choirs joined forces and were presented along with Reverend Coleman on “Sing Ye Praise Ye” on a WAVE television program.

In 1974 the Senior Choir and the Pastor’s Choir were combined to form the Church Choir.

The Pastor’s Choir was organized in 1974 under the leadership of Reverend Donald Thompson and Sister Katherine Dugan as the organist. The choir worked hard and served well under these presidents: Sisters Evelyn Battle and Mary A. Williams until its merger with the Senior Choir in 1974 to form the Church Choir.

## JUNIOR CHOIR

The Junior Choir was organized by Reverend Coleman in August of 1959. The pianist was Miss Cassandra Robinson and the organist was Miss Senora Ballard (Weathers).

Past presidents were Miss Joyce Shelby, Mr. Robert Shelby, Miss Senora Ballard, and Miss Patsy Helm.

There were 16 members in the Junior Choir when it was first organized. The enrollment grew to 20 active members.

The theme of the Junior Choir was, “Cast Thy Burden Upon The Lord.”

# THE SEWING CIRCLE

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. He made man to dwell on the face of the earth. He saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He made woman for a help-mate.

May 24, 1907, the Ladies Sewing Circle was organized by Sister Luthia Smith. They were to work with the pastor and deacons in the physical care of the church structure and the sick and needy of the community.

They met in one another's homes, often having to walk several miles. At other times, they traveled by horse-drawn wagons.

This organization has contributed much to the spiritual, physical, and financial well-being of First Baptist and the community. The art glass windows were purchased in 1919. During financial stress, the organization has paid bills with monies earned by making quilts, dresses, shirts, pillow cases, aprons and pot holders. The work was hard, but there was fun and fellowship at box socials, dinners, picnics, tours, the annual church cleaning day each spring, and the annual sermon that was shared with a sister church.

Old church records indicated that in 1918 the officers were: Mrs. Dollie Taylor, President; Mrs. Nannie Reynolds, Vice-President; Mrs. Carrie Wilson, Secretary; Mrs. Jennie Lewis, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Mary Abstain, Treasurer.

On May 14, 1920, the ladies of the Sewing Circle voted to wear white dresses and black hats to funerals of members in the summer, and dark skirts and white waist in the winter. On June 11, they voted to pay the balance on the art glass window; which was \$45.00. On July 22, 1921, church records indicate that Martha Hobbs, Lucy Lewis and Nannie Reynolds made chair covers for the church chairs, and the other members gave five cents each as their portion.

On January 5, 1923 the ladies voted to give Reverend Richard Reynolds a check for back salary amounting to \$50.00.

On July 18, 1923 the ladies voted to pay \$50.00 on the electric motor for the church organ.

On January 30, 1925 they voted to pay \$32.00 for the balance on the organ motor.

On July 31, 1925, the ladies voted to buy badges instead of making them.

The Sewing Circle is the oldest organization in the church. Sister Sadie Abstain, the present president and long-time member, believes that the spirit of love and fellowship has endured all these years.

Recent activities of the Circle include visits to nursing homes, the annual Mother and Daughter Banquet, and the annual Christmas party. The Circle is also responsible for preparing dinner for the families of deceased members after funeral services. Also on many occasions meals are prepared for various groups that are spending long hours at the church, working on special assignments.

The Ladies Sewing Circle, as it broadens its horizons, has become increasingly popular among the younger women of the church.

*The founder of the Sewing Circle is seen at the beginning of this chapter, on the left in the photo.*

## USHER BOARD

“I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (Psalm 84:10)

In 1945 Mrs. Mildred Green called together a group of young people to form an usher board for First Baptist. This invitation was extended to all who were interested in this department of the church. Those accepting the invitation and thus becoming the first ushers of the church were Lucille and Anna Burks, Dovie Craft, and Mrs. Frances Bullitt.

One of the first and major accomplishments during the beginning years was to secure printed offering envelopes for the church. This effort was designed to help make the service go along in a more orderly fashion during offertory time.

Many of the children wanted to help, thus initiating the Junior Ushers. Its first members were Mary K. Abstain, Jewelene Fulton, Nora Owens, Barbara Rudy, Charles Rudy, and Lester Clarkson.

In 1948 the Usher Board began to operate under the leadership of a president.

One of the most beneficial programs presented by the usher board was in 1962, “The Future Church Tomorrow.”

In 1962 the Board purchased copies of the church usher’s manual. This helped to make them more knowledgeable on the procedures, the mechanics of ushering during service, and the need to maintain the proper atmosphere within the sanctuary, by themselves being an example of decorum, and reverence during worship services.

The men went into uniform in 1970, and the women wore black skirts and white blouses.

In 1970 the Board purchased umbrellas for senior citizens.

In 1971 the Board opened the Nursery in the Educational Building. In 1971 and 1979, new uniforms were also purchased.

The Junior Ushers were merged with the adult Usher Board, and all now work together as one united board of “doorkeepers.”

## THE SISTERHOOD

The Sisterhood was organized February 9, 1950. It was borne out of the desire of Sister Hattie Lewis, wife of Brother George Lewis, an “old timer” of the church and community.

Reverend William Richardson was pastor and appointed Sister Lewis president of the Sisterhood.

Sister Lewis was gifted with a beautiful voice and great talent for the piano. She was well in her senior years at this time, but wanted to teach the women of the church to sing and care for the needy, and to raise extra money for church missions.

The Sisterhood sang for a short time, with Sister Fay Reynolds helping Sister Lewis with the music.

The membership was twelve, but by 1956 climbed to twenty-four. Dues were fifteen cents a month.

Visiting the sick, giving socials, dinners, baby contests, and church cleaning were among the activities of the Sisterhood. At the end of each year two or three hundred dollars would be given to the church for missions.

The Sisterhood closed its books in 1956.

## BROTHERHOOD

*Rise up, O Men of God!  
The church for you doth wait,  
Her strength unequal to the task;  
Rise up, and make her great!*

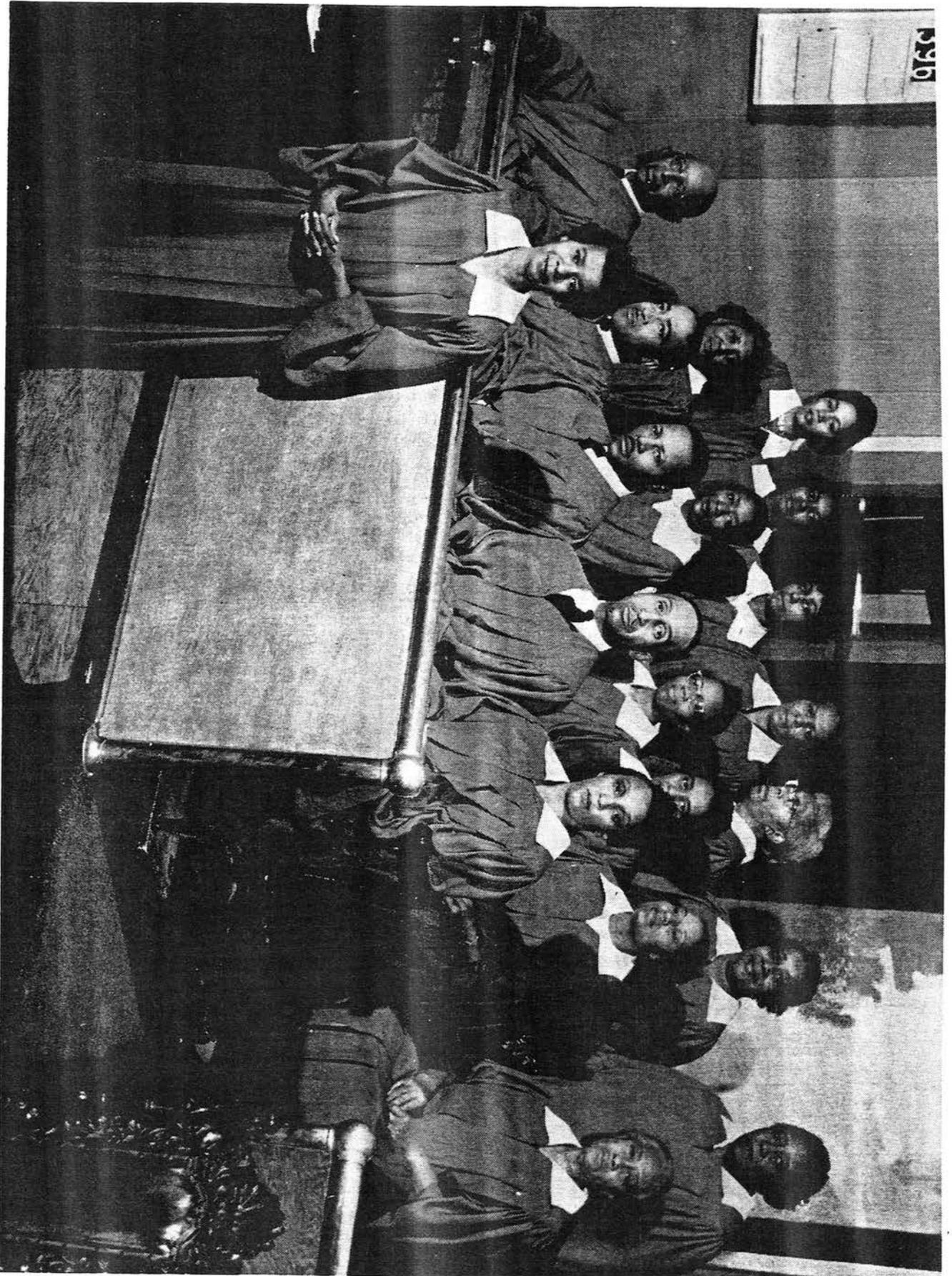
In the increasingly complex life of American society, it is necessary that Baptist churches have an organization that will attract and mobilize the men of the church and channel their influence for a larger Kingdom service.

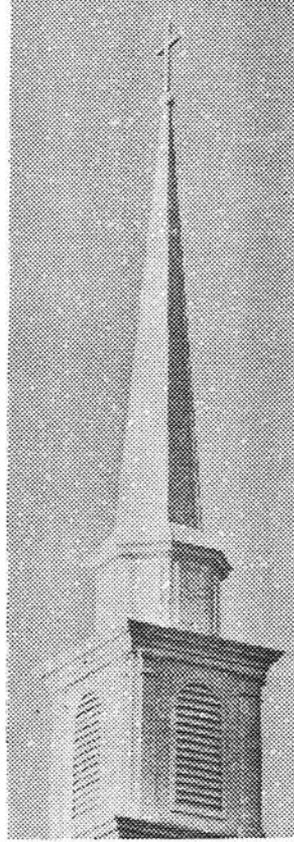
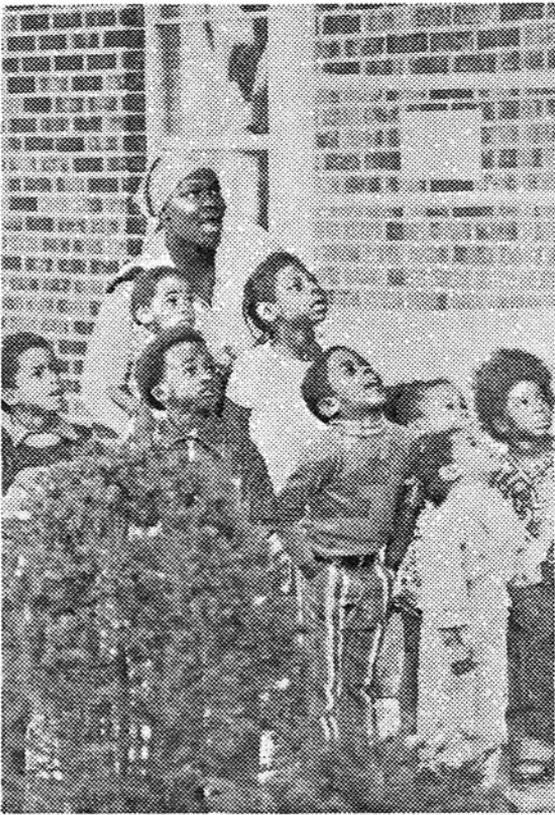
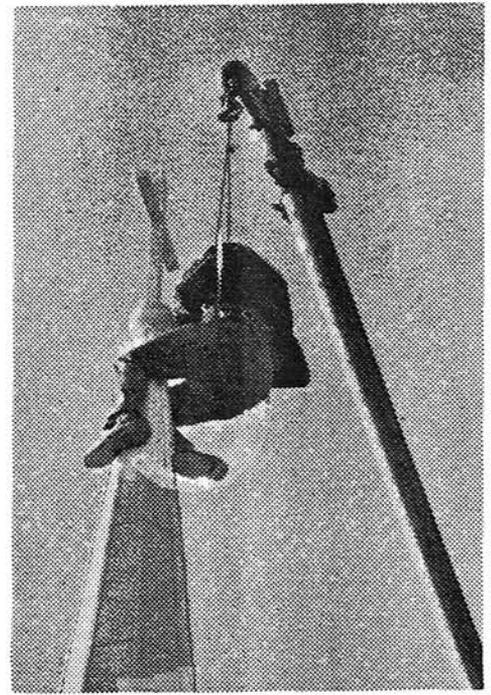
The records through the years of First Baptist life are scant and mostly silent in reference to the Brotherhood. There is mention of permission being granted for organization and their monetary contribution at one time during the pastorate of the late Reverend Arvel Carroll, Sr.

The present body was revived in 1972. Its purpose is to increase interest on the part of men to take their rightful place in the church and civic and social affairs of the community. The body is organized to carry out the "Great Commission," by showing concern for the souls of lost men and using talents for the uplifting of God's Kingdom. It wishes to be light in darkness and salt that savors. It has grown in number and spiritual heights.

The main focus of the Brotherhood is in the visiting of inmates at the LaGrange Reformatory, where the men witness on God's grace and love for all mankind, share in picnics, banquets and sports activities. It is a part of the music department, and works with the Youth Department.

The desire of these brothers is that God in Christ will bless all Christian men everywhere with a desire and a zeal to "their calling to fulfill."





*The raising of the steeple is a glorious sight.*

## *Chapter V*

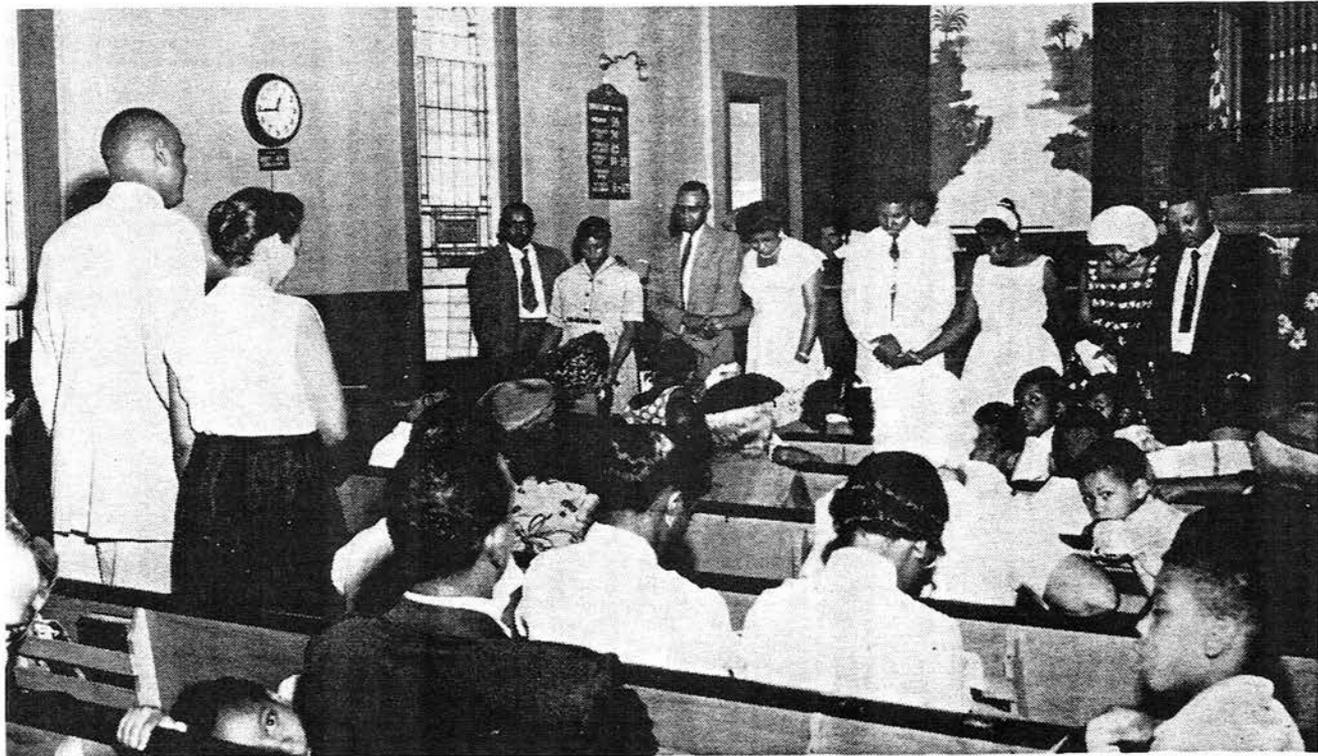
### *Tid Bits*

## TID BITS

- The largest family in First Baptist is the Burks.
- In the past three years First Baptist has averaged approximately eighty new members per year.
- The oldest member of First Baptist is Sister Elizabeth Hughes Bradley.
- The youngest member of First Baptist is Tammara L. Debow.
- Brother Joseph Williams was the nephew of Brother Lou Elder, one of the founders of First Baptist.
- From visual observation it is apparent that on any given Sunday morning the age group of 29 to 50 outnumbers all other age groups in attendance.
- Deacon James Burks is senior in years of service as a deacon in First Baptist life.
- The old opera pump type organ that was given away at the time the new baptismal pool was installed in the old sanctuary was a product of the Reverend Richard Reynolds years.
- Prior to the pastorate of Reverend Coleman, children under 12 years of age could not become members of the church.
- The fellowship dinner in February, 1979, was sponsored by Pastor Coleman and his wife, Sister Cora.
  
- The James Wilsons lived and worked on the Henry Watterson estate in Jeffersontown, Kentucky. Henry Watterson was the president of the Courier-Journal newspaper. James Wilson, Sr., Mary Lizzie Williams, Benford Tilford, and Sallie Reynolds were baptized in the pool on the estate of Henry Watterson by Reverend Richard Reynolds. It is rumored that First Baptist Church had several such baptizings there.

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- Since the re-entry to the new church edifice, First Baptist has not missed baptizing each month.

*In the very early history of the Jeffersontown white Baptist church on Taylorsville Road, the church was known as Jeffersontown Baptist Church of Christ. The name was changed to First Baptist in the late 1940's. In 1974 the membership voted to take the original name of the church because of history attachment. Thus it is now known as Jeffersontown Baptist Church. During the history of both the white Baptist church and the black Baptist church, there has been on occasions mix-ups in bank statements, mail, etc. because of the similarity of the names used by the general public and the memberships. First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown (the black Baptist church) has often received correspondence addressed to the Jeffersontown "colored" church or the First Baptist "colored" church. Also on occasion there has been transporting of mail between the two churches simply because the mail carriers delivered it to the wrong church. Jeffersontown Baptist Church (the white Baptist church) is our sister church, and we pray that God will continue to bless us to work together in continued friendship.*



Because First Baptist is a family-oriented church, and the family begins with exchange of marriage vows, each year on his wedding anniversary, Reverend Coleman gives these couples a renewing of vows to remind them of their charge to God and to each other. It is a very beautiful ceremony, but also a very serious commitment.

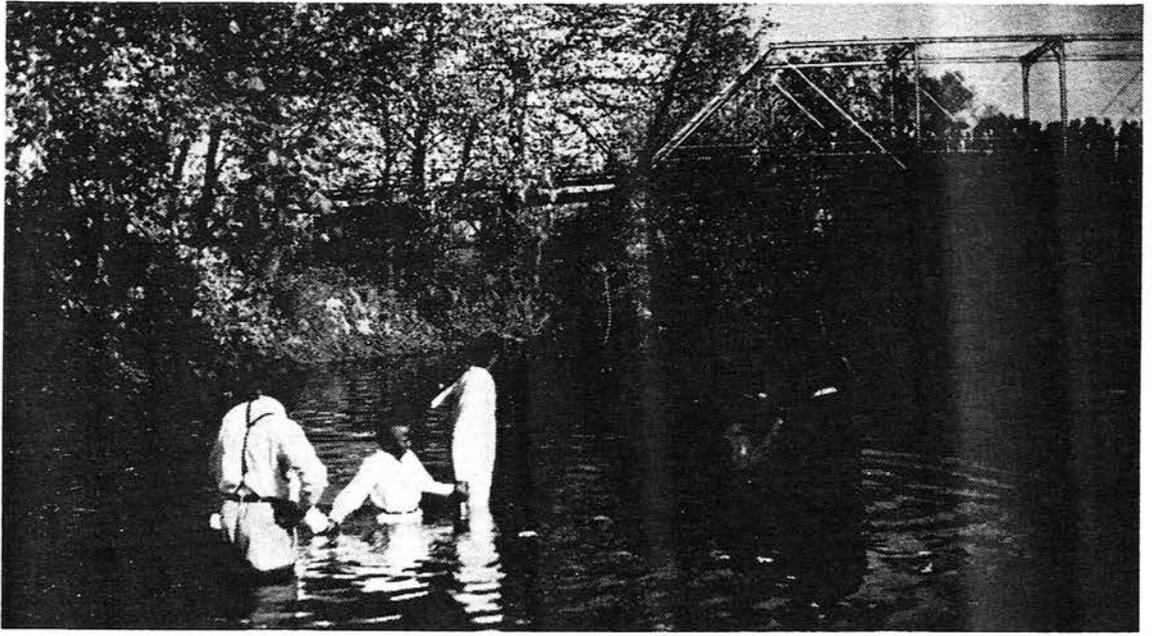
### CHARGE TO A COUPLE

I charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, to remember that marriage is a covenant. It is a lifelong union of a man and a woman who accept themselves as whole persons and promise each other to be faithful, responsible, loving and loyal. If you will take these vows without selfish reservation and keep them as bond of honor, your home will be an abiding joy and security to yourselves and a blessing to others.

I charge you further to remember that Christian marriage, which begins in moral commitment and continues in unswerving loyalty, is rooted and grounded in love. It is creative love that draws the soul of man and woman together and enables them to discern the true values of life. This love is very patient, never rude, and always eager to believe the best. Under the inspiration of such love you will meet the opportunities and problems of the future with intelligence and confidence, ever mindful of the scripture, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."

And I charge you, by God's grace, to be true to the heavenly vision which has been planted in your hearts. Today your separate lives with their own memories, achievements, and aspirations are merged into one. Bring into this new life the strength of an inflexible integrity clothed with gentleness, the devotion of true love, and the power of a profound faith in the living God, whose mercy is everlasting and whose truth endureth to all generations. Then God will guide you through the unfolding years ahead and by the love of Christ the love you bear each other will be strengthened and enriched.

(By C. T. Binkley)



*Baptizing in Floyds Fork.*

# WARS

Jesus told his disciples that war and rumor of wars were also a sign of his return to earth for his people. Matt. 24:6

In biblical days war was always man's way of showing supremacy and power, by fighting for possession of another's belonging.

War has also been a controlling factor in the statistics of the population. It is a controlling factor in the economic condition of the world.

Recession, regression and depression one or the other always accelerate during peace time, and during war the economy escalates.

During the century and a half of First Baptist's life, war has always hovered by. We have survived five major wars and only two of them were on American soil; the revolution and the civil war. Although for different causes indirectly they both were fought for personal civil rights of the people and to stop repression.

The revolutionary war, 1754-1783, was a people against the government, a revolt against Great Britain. The Americans wanted to be an independent country. America won the war and for one hundred and thirty-five years they were at peace, but as a young nation they had much work to do. A government to form, schools, cities, churches, and states in essence the basic foundation of everything we have now. As the states formed and the economy and society prospered, the monster of power started his work. The north and south started a disagreement because the north's industrial society did not like the South's agricultural society. When the north no longer had a need for slaves in their life style they became very moralistic against it and insisted slavery be abolished. This of course did not set well with the south who needed the slaves on their plantations in order to develop their agricultural society.

The results of this disagreement grew into the Civil War, 1861-1865. Freeing of the slaves and the resolving of federal control to state control were the results of the war won by the north.

The assassination of President Lincoln was one of the saddest climaxes to the war. Until this day he is still credited with freeing the slaves. Many voters consider the republican party their choice religiously as a sort of homage for what he did for blacks.

It was the result of this war that humanized blacks. As they ventured from the plantations, with their own homes, schools and churches, independent people with much faith in God. This era was the turning point for First Baptist, as stated earlier in the introduction, making it as individuals and families and progressing as a Christian family. Their own church building no more white trustees or overseers. This truly must have been a hallelujah time for us and all black churches.

World War I, 1914-1918, in Europe caused by rival alliance or balance for power.

World War II, 1939-1945, in Germany. The significant fact in this was the use of nuclear weapons for the first time on Pearl Harbor.

The causes were the same as World War I. Another significant fact in this was the use of blacks in combat. This was a first in American history. As friends and relatives left to serve it must have been heart-breaking for those left to grieve for them as they went to face the unknown.

The Korean War, 1950 to 1953 and the Vietnam War, 1961-1975 were both a result of the unfinished business of World War II. The Nazi and Communist were not happy with the results of who possessed or dominated who, or what, and as most wars end without any real settlement of their grievance. It isn't unlikely that the rumors may not start again some day.

## T.V.

Development of television in 1888 by a German and English scientist was started, but not really perfected until 1928 with commercial production in 1945.

Through T.V. the world has been able to visit more places than could be imagined. It has been a source of education, religious exposure and participation. Through it we have become more knowledgeable in fashions, sports, local to universal current events, and all award shows, (academy, Miss American, etc.)

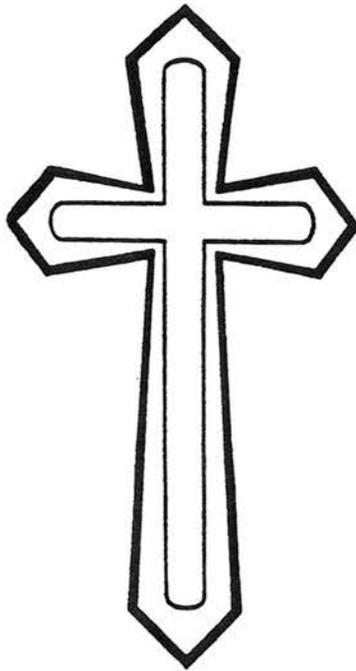
The two hundredth birthday of America crossed our screens for almost six months. We saw the assassination of three prominent leaders.

The mass riots of many cities including our own. (Louisville).

Air crashes and hijackings, busing protests, walks on the moon, space launchings and landings, tornadoes, mountains erupting, train derailments, Derby celebrations, and all local and national parades.

There are all kinds of enlightening programs to help us be more aware.

T.V. has served as babysitters, companions for senior citizens, help for the lonely, an help for those troubled by drugs or other problems. It has aided the runaway and by crusades and telethons, raised money for programs to aid humanity. Also there are innumerable religious programs for our edification also many where the Christian can be a participant as well as recipient. One such program is "Sing Ye." First Baptist choir has been invited to be on this program in the future.



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*Chapter VI*

*Memorials*

# MEMORIALS

From the days of slavery, Blacks have been a unique race. We have always felt the need to be equipped with the ability for building, making, and inventing. At first it was the desire to get out of the fields that stimulated this need. It proved profitable, so we passed it on to future generations.

As schools were opened and we added the ability to read to our other capabilities, our potentials became unlimited.

We, as blacks, have never lacked the motivation to be first class citizens, but found it difficult and often impossible to surmount the obstacles placed in our way thus impeding the attainment of our goals.

The people that placed the obstacles had their motives. They were very aware of our intelligence and ability to survive. They also knew that if we were given a free rein, they would not be able to hold us back.

The names on this list represent those who worked diligently and untiringly to build this church, spiritually, morally, and physically.

Many contributed their talents as carpenters and farmers. Some are still with us. Others have gone on to seek their reward for a "job well done." To all we say thanks.

|                 |                  |                 |                |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Abstain</i>  | <i>Johnson</i>   | <i>Shields</i>  | <i>Young</i>   |
| <i>Adams</i>    | <i>Jeffrey</i>   | <i>Stallard</i> | <i>Dorsey</i>  |
| <i>Ballard</i>  | <i>Knox</i>      | <i>Taylor</i>   | <i>Gurnell</i> |
| <i>Branner</i>  | <i>Lewis</i>     | <i>Williams</i> | <i>Tytus</i>   |
| <i>Brown</i>    | <i>Miller</i>    | <i>Wilson</i>   |                |
| <i>Burks</i>    | <i>Moore</i>     | <i>Baker</i>    |                |
| <i>Carroll</i>  | <i>Owens</i>     | <i>Harris</i>   |                |
| <i>Clark</i>    | <i>Patterson</i> | <i>Hyatt</i>    |                |
| <i>Courtney</i> | <i>Ray</i>       | <i>Rose</i>     |                |
| <i>Drake</i>    | <i>Talbot</i>    | <i>Weaver</i>   |                |
| <i>Duncan</i>   | <i>Reynolds</i>  | <i>Wordlow</i>  |                |
| <i>Hughes</i>   | <i>Robinson</i>  | <i>Cissell</i>  |                |



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*Chapter VII*

*Profiles*

*He pleaded as but few can plead, with eloquence and might. He pleaded for humanity. His soul and true nobility went out in every word. And strongly moved for better things was everyone who heard.*

*Too soon death made good his claim, on him who moved us so. And yet in death, I think he will — this sleeping man of God in many a multitude be heard, still pleading for those he loved.*

**Dr. Richard Reynolds** was born in the area of Jeffersontown, Kentucky. He graduated from school and became the first teacher at the Newburg School.

He was a member of Green Street Baptist Church. After his call to the ministry, he took a course from the Correspondence College in Indiana, to better prepare himself for God's work.

In 1887, the First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown called him as their pastor. He was ordained by this church, served three years, and went to California for nine months after which he returned and continued to serve.

Dr. Reynolds pastored First Baptist for a total of forty-six years, passing into death during the one-hundredth anniversary of the church and his forty-sixth year as pastor, in June of 1933.

Dr. Reynolds, scholar, teacher, evangelist, humanitarian, and pastor, served this community and many others in numerous capacities. He served on the Board of Trustees of Simmons University, was moderator of the General Association of Kentucky Baptists, a member of the District Convention, critic of the Ministers and Deacons Meetings, and guest speaker at many special occasions.

He was revered by all who were exposed to his wisdom.

**Reverend Arvel Carroll, Sr.**, a native of Bethany, Kentucky, was born on February 3, 1901 to Mr. and Mrs. William Carroll of Georgetown, Kentucky. He joined the New Columbus Baptist Church. In 1924 he was licensed to preach, while a member of First Baptist Church of Stamping Ground, Kentucky. He attended school in New Columbus. After being called to preach, he moved to Louisville, Kentucky where he entered Simmons University and received his Bachelor of Theology degree in 1948.

While at Simmons he preached at Live Stone Mission. Later he organized this mission into the Live Stone Baptist Church, located at Floyd and Jefferson Streets in Louisville. He was then called to First Baptist Church, Jeffersontown, Kentucky, where he pastored for thirteen prosperous years. He later pastored Mt. Zion Baptist, Hazard, Kentucky, where he remained for two years until he was called to Joshua Tabernacle Baptist Church in 1951.

On December 28, 1962, he was stricken ill, and was retired to Joshua in 1963.

Reverend Carroll married the former Elmaven Dugan of Mt. Washington, Kentucky, and to this union was born four children: Mrs. Shirley Ann Burks; Arvel Carroll, Jr.; Mrs. Bernice Marie Shelby; and Mrs. Wilena Fulton.

Reverend Carroll departed this life March 6, 1978 after an extended illness.

**George Lewis, Jr.**, was born in the Jeffersontown area in a settlement known as Lewistown. It is believed that his father, George Lewis, Sr., owned a very large plot of land that was handed down to his three sons: George, Henry, and Dave.

George accepted Christ and joined First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown. He was active in every phase of the church, serving as deacon and Sunday School superintendent some fifty years.

He loved children, sang bass in the choir, and was very active in the Central District Association. It is assumed that his formal education and Bible knowledge was afforded him by his parents. He attended all church services, sometimes making two trips on Sunday pushing his wife in a wheelchair (she had only one leg). He resigned as superintendent of the Sunday School in 1952 and was voted emeritus. He died at the age of ninety, some ten years later.

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*The information recorded here is verbal history passed down, and thus may contain some errors. We thank Sister Sadie Abstain for this peek into the life of a very impressive soldier of the cross and member of our church.*

**Miss Faye Reynolds** was the daughter of the former pastor, Reverend **Richard Reynolds**. Miss Faye was active in all departments of the church. She taught the senior class of the Sunday School for many years. The senior class was composed of teenage boys and girls aged 15-18, and young married couples who did not want to leave the class or their peers.

The young people in Miss Faye's class loved and respected her very much. They were faithful in their attendance. Many walked for miles each Sunday to attend class. The average attendance was thirteen, and the average offering was \$1.20.

**Miss Faye** died July 10, 1960.

*Faye Reynolds is pictured at the beginning of this chapter*

**Miss Sadie Abstain** is a native of Kentucky and a resident of Jeffersontown, Kentucky. She taught for many years in the public schools of Jefferson County.

She is greatly devoted to the services of humanity regardless of what it entails. She is always ready to do her part: play a game of badminton with the youth of the community; sit at the bedside of the sick; visit the home of the shut-in; and comfort the bereaved.

She has touched the lives of most of the individuals in Jeffersontown, both young and old.

She has not forgotten "from whence she came," and is a resolute believer in prayer. She has served in numerous capacities in the church.

In 1953 the Master of Arts degree was conferred upon Miss Abstain by Indiana University. She is a member of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. She has not failed to root out, work at, polish and refine each of the gifts which the Lord blessed her with.

After the Civil War, women from the extraordinarily colorful, to the near drab, from the born aristocrat, to the self-made, had one overriding loyalty — their right, as God gave them to see it. It was in this atmosphere that a profile of courage was necessary for survival.

Courage is the virtue that Elizabeth Gilbert demonstrated as she faced the life the Negroes were forced to accept.

Born in rural Spencer County, Kentucky, living on a farm in the days when most of the work had to be done manually and family cooperation was a necessary must. There was little or no help from the government, help or encouragement came mostly from the church and the family. Her father, John Gilbert, taught his children the fundamentals of education as he knew them, from church teachings. His sayings were “something he learned from the Bible” and “one man with courage makes a majority.” Elizabeth accepted this when there was a need to be met. If she was hungry, it was necessary to prepare a meal; if the need was clothing or a quilt for the bed, it was necessary to make them; if someone was sick and needed attention, it was necessary to give it. She knew that whatever the need was it must be faced with courage and hope and faith in herself and God to get the job done.

At the age of nineteen she married Elijah Hughes and they relocated in Jefferson County, Kentucky where they united with the First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown in 1905. She is the mother of eight children and remains a member of the church. She continues to set an example of a Christian mother, either directly or indirectly. She always accepts people just as they are. Learning at an early age that “colored women were interested in their image” and equally interested in the esteem of others, she capitalized on this and gained many friends through caring, sharing, and loving.

Her greatest joy is that so many of her friends correspond and visit her, and at the age of ninety-two (our oldest member) she can still attend church services sometimes. After the death of her husband in 1968, she married William Bradley, and when he passed in 1972, Elizabeth G. H. Bradley decided to make her home with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. William Hewitt, in Louisville, Kentucky.

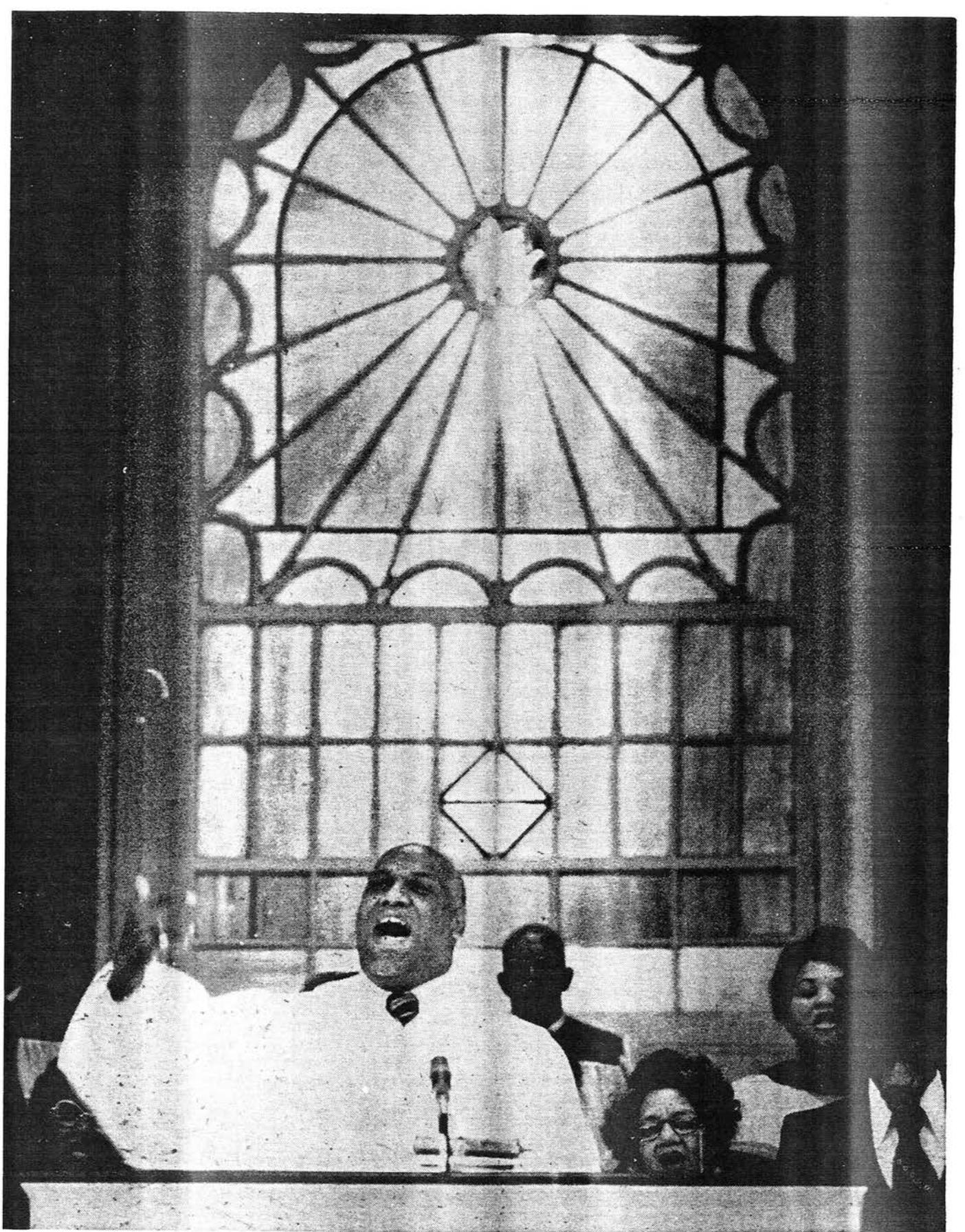
A Profile of Courage  
by  
Roy L. Hughes (Son)

Reverend Melvin Morrow, son of James Rufus and Louise Morrow, was born July 19, 1901, in Gordonsville, Kentucky. He accepted Christ and joined the old Union Baptist Church. He was united in marriage to Ines Elnee Harbin in 1923. To this union was born one son, Clifford.

In later years, he moved to Louisville, Kentucky and became a member of First Baptist Church, Jeffersontown, Kentucky, under the pastorate of the late Reverend Arvel Carroll.

Reverend Morrow served First Baptist Church for thirty-one years in the capacity of Associate, Assistant, and Acting Pastor. He was always a great asset to the church. He gave generously of himself and his means, as the Lord so prospered him. He in his own modest way proclaimed God's wrath on a sin-filled world.

Reverend Morrow departed this life on January 18, 1979.



***Praise Ye The Lord!***

# APPENDIX

The task of writing this history was a monumental one indeed. But it was so very rewarding spiritually. At times the unraveling of materials would reveal the goodness of God and actually what faith in God can do. The impact and intensity was so great that at times we would almost shout.

Had it been possible for all of First Baptist to participate it would most certainly have been an experience never to be forgotten.

No words can express the faith of First Baptist better than the song:

Through it all, through it all  
I've learned to trust in Jesus  
I've learned to trust in God.  
Through it all, through it all  
I've learned to depend upon His word.

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