

# The HISTORY Of



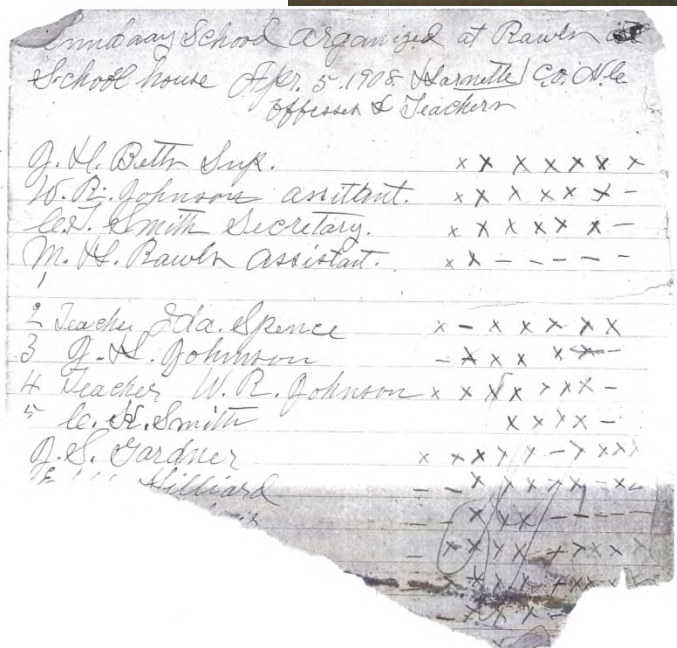
## Rawls Baptist Church

“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

# HISTORY OF RAWLS BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1869 Henry Rawls (my grandfather) donated the land on which a school house known as "Rawls School House" was built. In 1898 the Raleigh and Cape Fear Railroad was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly and by December of that year its terminus had reach Fuquay Springs. As the line continued to extend, it passed through the heart of the Rawls community reaching Lillington in 1903. A tiny depot known as the "Rawls Depot" was built along the line and named for the school nearby. When a larger school was needed, it was built on the present site of the Rawls Church building.



*Rawls School House built in 1907-08 located where Rawls Church is now. The first Sunday School was organized and met in this building according to the document to the left.*

In the year 1913, a group of concerned people in the Rawls Community, who had been meeting for worship in the school house, were led to organize a Missionary Baptist Church. This church, to be known as the "Rawls Missionary Baptist Church," was organized on October 21, 1913. Of the twelve charter members, only the names of Hurley and Dewey Weathers are known.

In July of 1914, logs were sawed to start the church building. This first building was located where the Rawls Church Cemetery now is. Rev. J. D. Betts was the first pastor and served until 1918. During the pastorate of Mr. Betts, the membership increased to twenty-six and work on the building continued, also.

Rev. W. C. Dowd was the next pastor and served for about three years. The first musical instrument, an organ, at the cost of \$20.00, was bought in 1918. The pastor's salary at this time was \$100.00 per year.

Rev. J. L. Martin was called as pastor in 1921 and served about one and a half years. The church membership continued to grow. Rev. Walton Page served as pastor for a short time during 1923. Rev. Fred Womack was called in 1924 and served as pastor until 1927.

Rev. G. N. Ashley was called to pastor the church in 1927 and under his leadership the church grew more membership-wise than at any period in the church's history. He organized the Sunday School and helped draw up a church constitution which was adopted in 1932. Gerald Motley and Otha Hilliard were ordained as ministers that year. A new church building was started on the site of the present church building. The building was not completed for several years and was really a huge undertaking during the depression years. Services were first held in the new structure in 1932. The land for the cemetery was bought in 1932, also. Mr. Ashley took a leave of absence in 1934 to go to the Holy Land but continued to serve as pastor until September 1934.

Rev. Otha Hilliard served as the pastor for a few months. Rev. C. H. Upchurch was called as pastor in late 1934 and served until November 1939. Rev. C. H. Norris was called and served one year. The church building was completed at this time.

Rev. M. L. Hux was called in 1940 and led the congregation to adopt a new policy. Instead of calling pastors every year, the pastor's term was indefinite as it remains today. Rev. Hux served until September 1945. Rev. T. H. Williams was called September 22, 1946 and the unified budget plan was adopted while he served. Rev. I. K. Stafford came as the pastor in 1949 and stayed until September 23, 1951.

Rev. Zeb V. Moss accepted the call as pastor in December 1951. During his stay the church adopted the retirement plan for ministers, "Relief and Annuity."

An oil painting was presented to the church by the B. I. Cotten Family. When it had to be removed to build the baptistery, the painting was returned to the family.



*This oil painting was a gift given to Rawls Church in the 1950's by Bennett and Cora Cotten. It was painted by a gifted painter, Robert Ragan, husband of Clarene Cotten who was Bennett Cotten's niece. The painting was hung on the wall where the baptistry is now until 1985 when the baptistry was built. It was then given back to the Cotten family.*

In 1955, the building committee presented a plan for adding additional Sunday School rooms and two rest rooms to the present building. This work was done. Zeb Moss and Evelyn Krause were married while he was pastor of the church. Rev. Moss and family left in 1955 and served as missionaries in Africa until they retired.



Zebedee Moss and Evelyn Moss.

Dr. and Mrs. Zebedee V. Moss were reappointed as missionaries. They will live in Zambia, where he will work as media consultant for eastern and southern Africa.

Since 1991 he has been executive director of public affairs at the FMB. From 1987-91 he was the board's associate area director for eastern and southern Africa. The Mosses served in Zambia, Malawi and Kenya, 1959-87.

A native of Hoke County, Moss received the A.A. degree from Gardner-Webb (Junior) College, the B.A. degree from Wake Forest (N.C.) College, the B.Div. and D.Min. degrees from Southeastern seminary. Before appointment he was a pastor in Caroleen.

From Union Mills, Mrs. Moss, the former Evelyn Krause, received the A.A. degree from Gardner-Webb (Junior) College and the B.A. degree from Meredith College.

Rev. Eugene Williams became the pastor in June 1955. In 1957, a choir loft was added to the sanctuary and the R. F. Jones family presented an organ to the church. In 1959, a committee was appointed to survey the community with regard to building a parsonage. A lot was secured from T. H. Gardner and the house plans were drawn up.





MAY 1962

*Rawls Baptist Church  
May 1962*

The parsonage was finished in 1962. A trustee committee was also drawn up at this time.



JULY 1960

*Construction of Parsonage  
in July 1962.*



JULY 1960



JULY 1960



JULY 1960



*December 22, 1962 – Burning of the Note for the parsonage – (from left to right) Rex Bradley, Pastor Julian Motley & Clinton Abernathy.*

Rev. Julian Motley was called as pastor in 1959 and stayed until 1963. He was the first pastor to live in the parsonage. While he was pastor, a nursery was equipped. He started the church use of the budget envelopes and also set up the rotating deacon plan. Following Rev. Motley, Rev. Kermit Mathis served as pastor for less than a year.



*Rawls Baptist Church was  
brick veneered in 1965*

Rev. Charles E. Stevens became the pastor in September 1964. In October 1964, the church voted to brick veneer the church building and to install stained glass windows. A committee worked for six months revising the constitution and this was adopted in 1965.



The church elected and ordained the first woman deacon, Retha Gardner, October 10, 1965. Our pastor was married to Sara Sellers during 1965. In December of 1965, an intercom system was recommended and installed in 1966. The year 1966 marked another milestone and full-time preaching services each Sunday morning.



*This photo (taken August 1966) shows how the attendance was displayed on the wooden display board in the background.*



In 1967, the church voted to accept the Church Audiovisual Education Plan, CAVE. New light fixtures were installed in 1967. That year the church decided to participate in the plan to print a Church Directory, having pictures taken of each family group and putting them in a directory along with names and addresses. The church sanctuary was carpeted in 1967; choir robes were purchased in 1968. Rev. Stevens took a tour of the Holy Land leaving in December 1967, but he remained the pastor until 1968. October 1968, Larry Rhodes was elected and ordained.

Rev. Robert Clark came as pastor in November of 1968. An air conditioner was installed, and the annex was re-roofed in 1969. Several things were done to the parsonage during 1969: a stove and refrigerator were purchased, storm windows installed, and air conditioning purchased. There were 218 members in 1970. Charles Rhiner was elected and ordained in October 1970.

In 1971, the annual revival was held with several coming into the church. In October, an ordination service was held for Mr. "Pete" Washington who became a deacon. Mr. Tom Welch was hired as the first Music Director. Mr. and Mrs. Clark were elected messengers from the church to the Baptist State Convention held in Charlotte, NC. In 1972, the annual revival was held with several being baptized. Chalybeate Springs Church was most gracious to our church, letting us use their baptismal facilities for a number of years. Sunday night services were begun in September and the summer youth program organized to remain a permanent part of the church program. Member Henry Rawls was elected moderator of the Little River Association and served for two years in this position.

In 1973, the annual revival was held in May. In November, the Brantley Sutton family presented a set of chimes to the church in memory of her father and in honor of her mother.

In 1974, the revival was held in April. Sherrill Goss was ordained as a deacon in September. The sanctuary was painted and ceiling installed. Ricky Mason was hired as Music Director and Jennifer Hester as pianist.

In 1975, revival was again held in April. The roof was shingled. Mrs. Jim Commander hired as Church Musician, and the Training Union Program started.

In 1976, revival continued in April, with Mr. Marion Terry the visiting minister and Mr. Boyd Spence the Music Director. There were no additions to the church.

In the April 1977 revival, Mr. Roy Smith was guest minister. One addition came into the church. New carpeting was laid in December.

During the 1978 revival in March, with Mims Fanning as guest minister, three additions were made to

the church. On July 30, 1978, Rev. R. L. Clark resigned as pastor after having served nearly ten years, longer than any previous pastor. Ronnie Pearce of Zebulon supplied for one month and then was called as interim pastor and served through December of 1978.

For January 1979, available persons from the seminary were used to lead the worship until Mr. Robert Coats was called to serve as interim in February. Mr. Coats brought the messages for the April revival and Mr. Joe Stephenson led the singing. On April 15, Stephen Michael Buffkin was called as pastor. Rawls was Mr. Buffkin's first pastorate. Several things were done to the parsonage in anticipation of his residence. Drapery and shutters were hung at the windows, the hard wood floors were refinished, and a new well was dug.

Wayne Ellis preached the annual revival for 1980 with two additions to the church. The church sanctuary and outside woodwork were painted, and a handicapped ramp installed. Rev. Buffkin resigned as pastor in July, leaving August 24. At the October homecoming there were 204 members and the church had experienced 20 deaths during the past decade.

Following Mr. Buffkin, David Watson served as interim before Ronnie Pearce, who had earlier been an interim pastor, was called as pastor in 1981. The church participated in the World Hunger Program, installed a water fountain, renovated the parsonage, and placed flood lights on the back corners of the church building. September 27, 1981 was designated "Beatrice Rawls Day" honoring Miss Rawls who had served as church clerk for fifty years. In appreciation, she was presented a silver tray and a Bible. Barbara Gunter was appointed church clerk in April 1982. Air conditioning was installed in the education wing, the church grounds underwent beautification, the constitution was revised, carpet was laid in the nursery and upstairs hall, the bathrooms were tiled. In 1983, the sanctuary pews were refinished and padded seats and backs added. The congregation increased the insurance on the church and parsonage, bought a typewriter and calculator, and organized a tape ministry for shut-ins. Ms. Arlean Miller was called as church musician.

When Rev. Pearce left in 1983 following almost three years as pastor, the deacons were instructed to work out guidelines for future pastors and the church voted to present a Bible to every new member. On March 11, 1984, a brass urn was presented to the church in member of Bennett and Cora Cotten by their children.

Dr. James F. Heaton served as interim until the church called Wayne Schlink in 1985. The J. Floyd Sherman family gave funds for a baptistery as a memorial to Mr. Sherman in 1985, and Troi Fuquay became



the first to be baptized therein. Kenneth and Evelyn Bradley honored their parents, Rex and Sally Muriel Bradley and Ralph and Hazel Pleasant, with the presentation of a painting for the new baptistery which as dedicated July 28, 1985.



*The painting in the baptistery was a gift from Kenneth and Evelyn Bradley in honor of their parents, Rex and Sallie Muriel Bradley and Ralph and Hazel Pleasant. The baptistery was provided as a memorial to Mr. Floyd Sherman by his children.*

The church voted to provide health insurance for the pastor and his family and to begin discipleship classes. The WMU celebrated one hundred years of missionary work. Parsonage improvements included concrete flooring in the carport, and the installation of aluminum siding over all woodwork. A personnel committee was organized consisting of the following: Chairman and Vice Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School Director, WMU Director, and a member appointed by the Deacon Board. In 1986, storm windows, new heating and air conditioning, mini blinds for the educational rooms, and a church van were purchased. The membership adopted job descriptions for all salaried church workers in 1986 and voted to replace monthly business meetings with quarterly ones in 1987. Bryant Hudson became Music Director; Barbara Gunter resigned and was replaced by Karen Mangum as church clerk. Finally, plans were made for the Seventy-fifth Anniversary Celebration.

In July of 1989, the church voted to extend a concrete sidewalk from the front to the back door of the church. In October 1989, the membership voted to prepare a second church directory and work began in



December. AT the end of December, Wayne Schlink resigned to become pastor of Union Chapel Baptist Church in Zebulon.

In February, a recommendation was made to sell the church van and in March the Building and Grounds Committee recommended that the parsonage be renovated. In March 1990, Robert Coats was again called to become the interim pastor, serving through October.

In anticipation of new pastor Kevin Hopkins, the church erected a chain link fence at the parsonage and spent a total of \$10,453.30 on house renovations. Plans for homecoming that year included having Rev. Zeb Moss return as guest minister for the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary observance. The church membership was 145 with approximately 120 active. Rev. Hopkins came as Pastor on October 14, the day of Homecoming.

Music Director, Ray Merrill, resigned March, 1991 and died in May. David Marrow served as music director from April, 1991 until July 1992. Jodee Welch came in June as pianist and assumed the position of choir director in August.

The church began participation in the North Harnett Food Pantry and purchased a policy of health insurance coverage for the pastor's family. New choir robes were acquired, exit signs installed and a fire extinguisher purchased. An official letter of protest was authorized against the actions of the Pullen Memorial Church and Olan F. Binkley Memorial Church for their recognition of gay unions. The Youth Program, revived under the Morrows, continued. John Moody was acquired as pianist in October 1993, replacing Welch.

The church was re-shingled in 1994 and liability insurance of one million authorized. The church voted to participate in the Little River Association's Belarussian Children's Ministry in the spring of 1995. Jane and Jerry Bradley served as hosts to Tania, the first child coming from Chernobyl disaster area to Rawls.

Rev. Hopkins' pastorate ended with his resignation in March, 1997 and the church had Dr. Robert Newton as interim until his son, Robert Lee Newton, Jr. was called in March 1998. The parsonage was refurbished and a new heating and air conditioning system for the sanctuary was installed in October, 1999. Jeff Morris was hired as Youth Director on November 21, 1999. Harnett County was given a temporary easement of ten additional feet for use by the equipment installing the county water system.

The church continued participation in the Belarussian Children's Ministry, enjoying the interpreters hosted by Shirley and Ernest Simmons. Alena Afitserova came for two summers, followed by Tanya Trefanova. Alena spent the school year 1999-2000 with the Simmons, accepted Christ and was baptized February 27, 2000, and admitted to membership. In January, 2000 a policy, "Guidelines on the use of Rawls Church for Weddings and Marriages," was authorized.

On March 16, 2000, the church voted for the resignation of Lee Newton as pastor and the payment of three months salary as recommended by the Board of Deacons.

Lee Vernon Coyle was called as pastor on September 3, 2000. Michelle Coyle was hired to serve as Music Director. The Youth Program continued under Jeff Morris and his wife Kay until their resignation in 2002. In April, 2001 a mobile unit was set up for Sunday School classrooms and in June, 2001 the church voted to again purchase a van. A recommendation to involve more members in the Sunday School Opening Assembly was adopted and in December, 2002 it was deemed necessary for safety and parking to remove all but one tree from the church property.

Extensive renovations were undertaken in the sanctuary, Sunday School area, and the bathrooms. New carpeting was installed and the pews re-covered in 2002. Because of smoke and fire damage to the parsonage, refurbishing followed there, also. The membership authorized plans to add a wing to the church building, and a committee began work on a proposed constitutional revision. Member Mike Donohue was a participant in the Little River Association Project for Honduras in 2002 and was accompanied by Member Chris Bowling to Honduras through the same association in 2003 and 2004. Homecoming activities were set for October 13, 2002.

Authorized on January 5, 2003, an architectural firm was engaged for \$3,000 to draw plans for an addition to the church building. Upon presentation of the plans on August 3, the cost came in at \$7,000. Bonnie Belle Cotten Hale was sent a letter of appreciation for the gift of two acres of property to be used as the church saw fit. Jim Holder was licensed to preach by the church body on January 18, 2004. On May 25, 2004, the church voted to mail letters to each family in membership informing them of plans for a church addition. The addition was authorized on July 25, 2004. A committee presented terms of the construction loan with BB&T on October 31, 2004. At the same business session, Lee Coyle offered his resignation, effective November 21, 2004.

The church proceeded with a groundbreaking ceremony on November 7, 2004.



Brick work was begun on March 9, 2005.





















Rev. Paul Jones was called as interim pastor and a search committee formed to fill the pulpit. September 5 was observed as "Test the Tithe Sunday, 2005." The building addition was dedicated and celebrated with a covered dish dinner on September 11, 2005. Former pastor, Lee Coyle was invited to bring the message and the membership vote to call Rev. Larry King to pastor.

Both the Youth Program and the WMU excelled in 2005-2006. In June 2007, the active membership reached 149. In June 2007, Faye Washington was elected as the second woman deacon in the history of Rawls Baptist Church. As the church adopted a policy which barred a husband and wife or two siblings from serving on the same deacon board, Faye ended her service as a deacon in October, 2008. The largest budget in the history of the church was approved on September 24, 2007. Lay Renewal Weekend attendance was excellent September 21-23, and October 10, 2007, was set as Homecoming Day.

Even with the debt for the building, the church undertook the repair of the stained glass windows in the sanctuary and finished the task on July 21, 2008. The Fellowship Hall and kitchen have proven to be very useful for church functions. Upstairs classrooms and a study for the pastor were timely. The church continued to retire the debt during 2009.

On Friday, January 29, 2010, a heavy snow fell in the area causing services to be cancelled for the first time in many years. As a result of Vacation Bible School, fourteen children accepted Christ as Savior this summer. Pastor King decided to retire from the ministry and Paul Jones again was called as interim in September, 2010. A meaningful deacon ordination and the adoption of an expanded budget were significant.

Homecoming on October 17, 2010, welcomed Rev. Julian Motley, pastor 1959-1963, as speaker. A unusually large attendance heard his wonderful message based on Psalm 2 after which \$16,000 was collected to defray the debt on the building. Thanksgiving and Christmas activities and improved Sunday School attendance marked the remainder of 2010.

Jimmy Davis Holder was ordained on January 9, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. Participating were four ministers who had been his pastor: C. Paul Jones, Larry King, Chip Hopkins, and Lee Coyle. The church gave a reception in the fellowship hall honoring Jimmy and family.

A "Dream Committee" was formed to find ways to help the church move forward. The Harvest Day offering, October 9, 2011, completed paying the ten-year loan for the church in only six years. Former pastor, Larry King, was invited to burn the note during the Celebration on November 21, 2011.

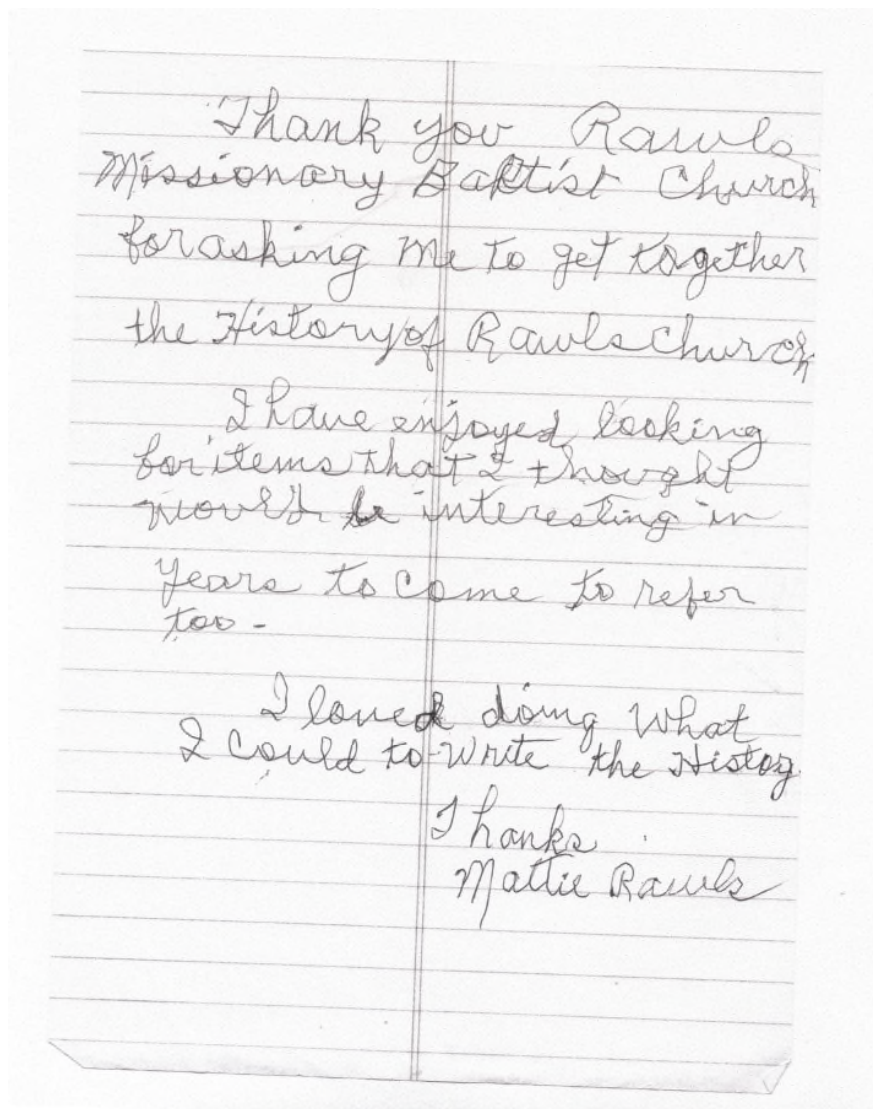
This year a second ordination for the ministry took place November 27, 2011. Joseph Todd Baker, who serves as Youth Minister, was set aside by Paul Jones, Larry King and Rev. James Denton. Early in 2012, the WMU recognized our pianist and organist, Sara Whittington Young, who began playing piano for the church at age 13.



On January 8, 2012, the membership voted to renovate the older part of the church building at Rawls Baptist Church to continue to provide for the growth of our Lord's work.

Mattie Rawls, former Church Historian

*\*\*\*Recorded and written by the church historian for many years, Mattie Rawls. Miss Rawls stopped recording the church history in 2012. Only the photos with their description were later added by Gaynelle Holder and Tracy Bowling to provide a visual history of Rawls Baptist Church.*



# **Recorded History of Rawls Baptist Church**

In the 1800's, a small school house was built on the Rawls family land and it was called Rawls School House. The people living close by were known as Rawls Community. In 1903, the railroad extended through Rawls Community and a depot was built. It was also known by the same name.

Documented and registered documents tell most of the beginning and organizing of Rawls Missionary Baptist Church.

## **REAL ESTATE HISTORY - THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS FOUND THROUGH RESEARCH:**

On September 27, 1907 – Deed-Harnett County, N.C. Book 226 Page 123 J. A. Jones and wife Effie Jones and the estate of Jas. Gardner joined together and sold 2 acres of land to the Harnett County Board of Education for the purpose of building a school. This school was built within six months of this transaction on the same site that Rawls Church is now on. This school was also known as Rawls School House. (See document No. S-001). Picture of school (document S/C-002).

April 5, 1908, a group of people met in the Harnett County Rawls School House and organized a Sunday School. The officers chosen for this Sunday School were J. H. Betts, Sup.; W. R. Johnson, Assistant; C. T. Smith, Secretary; and M. H. Rawls, Assistant. A Sunday School report book was found in the home of Ethel Smith, widow of Thurman Smith, by the current owner while remodeling. It was recently given to the church historian to record as history. (See copy of document No. C-003)

October 21, 1913, Rawls Missionary Baptist Church was organized. The first church was built where the Rawls Church Cemetery is now located. It was recognized in the Little River Baptist Association as a church in the annual report book in 1914.

November 27, 1928, the two acres of land bought by Harnett County Board of Education for the construction of Rawls School House was sold to Rawls Church members for the construction of a larger church building. A new school had been built in 1924 a few miles away named LaFayette School and the small school building was no longer needed. (Deed in Book 229 page 230; see also document No. C-004)

March 6, 1934, survey of 1.10 acres was done for cemetery land. (See document No. C-005)

March 15, 1934, deed of J. S. Gardner heirs sold 1.10 acres to Rawls Church to be used as cemetery land. (See document No. C-006)

March 21, 1960, deed of T. H. Gardner and wife, Retha Smith Gardner, sold small track of land to Rawls Church so a parsonage could be built. (See document C-007)

In 2003, the heirs of the T. H. Gardner Estate donated .50(1/2) acre to Rawls Church for the purpose of constructing a new addition on to the existing building. This addition would be more Sunday School rooms

space, a fellowship hall with a kitchen and a pastor's study. This addition was completed in 2005. (Note: Before this construction was started all old land deeds were combined in one new deed).

In 2003, Bonnie Belle Cotten Hale gave a donated gift to Rawls Church of two acres of land to be used as needed. This land was located on Rawls Baptist Grove Church Road. The church members chose to sell the land at a public auction and the money was used to help pay the existing debt of the new church addition.

***\*A copy of all documents mentioned in this report are available to view and read in a separate notebook.***

# **CONTINUED CHURCH HISTORY:**

## **Church History from 1914 – 1971**

*- Special past history notes discovered after the 100<sup>th</sup> year centennial celebration in Oct of 2013:*

July 11, 1914 the first business minutes were recorded. During this meeting, Hurley Weathers and C. J. Smith were appointed to look after the hauling and sawing of logs for the church building. Members present at this meeting was 7 members absent 5.

January 31, 1933 during a business meeting the disposal of the old school/church building across the road was put in the hands of the building committee, J. F. Sherman was chairman and the deacons. It is believed that maybe they choose to burn the old building but not documented as such. G. N. Ashley was pastor of Rawls Church during this time. He left on July 23, 1934 to sail to Europe to be gone for six months. He left the church in the hands of Otha Hilliard. Mr. Hilliard was a member of the church and ordained for the ministry.

March 23, 1935 the first WMU was organized during a business meeting with the help of the associational director.

June of 1935 the church started using budget envelopes.

Fall of 1951 Altar Furniture was purchased for \$427.65. Also, the Communion Table was donated in memory of R. F. Jones by Mrs. Lillie Jones and children. The Pulpit was given in memory of Wilson Rawls by M. H. Rawls and children.

May 1969 the first Brotherhood meeting. It was announced during the May 14, 1969 business meeting that a Brotherhood had been organized and would meet the following week.

December 8, 1971 during a regular business meeting Rufus Moore made a motion that the church ask Kermit Rawls to ring the church bell every Sunday morning at 9:45. No one opposed to this.

## **Church History from 2012 – 2018**

August 19, 2012, first African American, Bob Hardie, joined the church by transfer of membership.

August, 2012, construction was started on the front of the church to build a new handicap ramp. The front stoop also had to be rebuilt and extended out three feet so as to meet building code for the ramp. The overhang top of stoop was also extended to make it look better. This work was completed in September, 2012.

September 2, 2012, Bob Hardie's wife, Marianne Hardie, also joined the church by transfer of letter.

September 9, 2012, after the morning worship, a business meeting was held for the purpose of voting to purchase a new organ from Moss Music Co. for \$9,000.00. The old organ would be removed by and maybe thrown away by the music company when the new organ was delivered.

First Sunday new organ was used in the church was Sept. 16, 2012.



A centennial committee was organized to plan the centennial celebration of Rawls Church to be held in October, 2013. The first committee meeting was held on Sunday, September 21, 2012.

A date for the celebration was set for October 12 & 13 of 2013.

Mattie Rawls resigned as church historian Sept. 30, 2012.

January 12, 2013, during the quarterly business meeting members present voted to purchase new hymnals for the church. The choir director, Joe Star, said the church needed at least 150 hymnals at a cost of \$15.00 each. Also, special ones for the director and the musicians would be needed. The money for these hymnals would be obtained by donations and, upon request, the books could be in honor or memory of someone.

January 20, 2013, Faye Washington resigned her position in the church as a deacon.

March 2, 2013, there was a special business meeting called for the purpose of voting to make a change to the deacon qualification article in the church constitution. This was for the purpose to clarify the qualifications and to omit some of the scripture listed in the current article. The vote to make these changes was 66 yes and 5 no.

April 29, 2013, work began to remodel the sanctuary of the church beginning with the choir and pulpit area.



*The choir and pulpit area during construction (picture taken April 30, 2013)*

May 5, 2013, the new hymnals were used in the church for the first time. All the money was donated.

July 7, 2013 during a quarterly church business meeting a change was made in the way the church deacons would be elected. The deacons were given the authority to choose the men eligible for this position and present these names to the church for a vote.

August 2013: A month of future planning. Chris Bowling and Mike Donohue are making plans to once again go to Honduras in Oct. 2013.

A date for the church centennial celebration was set for Oct. 12 & 13, 2013. In planning the church centennial, several items have been on display and presold as in T-shirts, mugs and Christmas Ornaments with the centennial logo on all items. Ink pens & fans are available for free to anyone. Jeremiah 29:11 was chosen as a reminder of what the Lord has done and is still doing at Rawls Baptist Church.

The choir and pulpit remodeling were completed.



*The choir and pulpit area after construction (picture taken August 24, 2013)*





*The choir and pulpit area after construction (picture taken January 6, 2014)*

September 2013 Gary Smith was voted in as a new deacon and would be ordained at a later date.

September 2013 new front doors were installed in the church. The threshold was removed and kept for church history when the old doors were removed.





*The front doors before renovations (picture taken March 2013)*







*The front doors after renovations (picture taken February 5, 2014)*

October 2013 two church members, Mike Donohue and Chris Bowling, went on a mission trip to Honduras for a week. The two men traveled with a group of Baptist Men organized by Coats Baptist Church.



October 12 & 13 of 2013 the church celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year. Church members and friends enjoyed a catered “pig picking” event with music and much fellowship on Saturday Oct. 12. Sunday Oct. 13, 2013 everyone present enjoyed a breakfast on the church grounds starting at 9:00 in the morning followed by the church worship service at 10:30. A total of 6 previous pastors of the church attended with the present pastor, Clarence Hardison, Jr., who was in charge for the service.

November 4, 2013 work began by some of the men members of the church to remodel the inside front of the church. This remodeling included the removal of roll down doors on both side wings. Also, in the front entrance where the sound system operated from the floor was elevated to make the sound system higher up and out of sight. Stairs were constructed to get up to the sound system room. The front entrance remodeling was started first with the roll down door on the left side (which had been used for a Sunday School Class Room). January 6, 2014, after completion of front entrance, the men started on removal of side wing doors. Also, the pews had to be removed to do the rest of the remodeling so the church services were held in the fellowship hall until February 9, 2014 the first worship service was held in the newly remodeled sanctuary. The remodeling consisted of the side wing arear painting the entire sanctuary, new ceiling tile with recessed lighting and all new carpet in the entire sanctuary.

The old light fixtures were auctioned off by silent auction to anyone who wanted to have one.

February 14, 2014 a special business meeting was called for the purpose of deciding whether to put the pews back in the sanctuary or purchase all new chairs. The members present voted to keep the pews in the middle section of the sanctuary and purchase new chairs for the wing area and choir loft. It was also voted to sell the 19 pews now not needed for \$100.00 to anyone who desired to purchase one.

The cost of all the remodeling and upgrading of the sanctuary was \$41,000.00. This included a new sound system and monitors.

*The following pictures are of the sanctuary before renovations (pictures taken August 24, 2013)*







*The sanctuary before renovations (pictures taken August 24, 2013)*





*The sanctuary before renovations (pictures taken August 24, 2013)*





*The sanctuary after renovations (pictures taken February 2014)*







*The sanctuary after renovations (pictures taken February 2014)*





Started using the new sound system and monitors in March of 2014. Also, the new chairs were ordered from a company in Georgia. In April 2014 two men from the church went to Georgia to pick up the chairs and brought them to the church.

April 18, 2014 all the pine trees were removed from in front of the church cemetery and all around the parsonage by a tree service company.

May 2014 a brick wall was constructed in front of the church cemetery which was paid for by Chris Knott in memory of his mother Dottie Knott. Also, a brick wall was constructed around the flag pole in honor and memory of all veterans.

June 20, 2014 a youth in the church, Miranda Nutt, left on a mission trip to Hungry for 2 weeks. She was financially supported by the church. She went to teach English to children in Hungry through the organization Word of Life Hungry Ministry.

July 2, 2014 a special called business meeting was held before prayer meeting to vote on Sam Arent for a paid position of Associate Pastor and Youth Pastor. He was approved for this position and would start on August 4, 2014.

August of 2014, the front of the cemetery was paved money provided by Chris Knott.

June of 2015 men in the church working on improving the inside of the parsonage to get ready for Sam Arent and his wife Brittany to move in August 2015. August 21, 2015 was Sam and Brittany's first night staying in the parsonage.

June 2015 the church again financially supported Miranda Nutt and Sue Schmidt on a mission trip to Hungry working through Word of Life Ministries. This time Miranda stayed seven weeks and Sue was there for two weeks.

October 11, 2015 the church celebrated 102 years of age with an evening meal, special music and worship service.

October 14, 2015 at the regular WMU meeting the members present voted to change the name of this organization to WUC (Women United in Christ). The WMU of Rawls Missionary Baptist Church was organized during a business meeting on March 23, 1935 with the help of the Little River Baptist Associational Director.

April 2016 during a quarterly business meeting, members present voted to purchase a new piano. May 9, 2016 a K. KAWAI piano was purchased and it was delivered to the church on May 11, 2016.<sup>201</sup>

Sunday, September 25, 2016 at 6:00 PM an ordination service was held for Sam Arent, Sam had already served as Associate Pastor and Youth Pastor in the church since August of 2014.

Sunday May 7, 2017 Sam Arent read a letter of resignation effective immediately from the positions of Associate Pastor and Youth Pastor.

June 2017 a church member, Miranda Nutt, went on a mission trip to Argentina funded by donations from a church fundraiser. Miranda was working through a group called "Teach Beyond Ministries". In July 2017 Miranda went on another mission trip to Brazil with the same ministries group.



January 10, 2018 existing church steeple was removed to be replaced by a new church steeple. It had been decided during a business meeting in December 2017 to get a new church steeple and replace the old pews with new ones. The old bell in the steeple was kept for church history.

February 2018 all old existing pews were sold to individuals for \$100.00.

February 15, 2018 the new pews arrived and put in the church.

*M.R. Smith testing out the new pews in the sanctuary*





*New pews in the sanctuary*



March 5, 2018 the new steeple arrived and was installed.



*This is the old steeple after it was removed.*



*The old bell after it was removed.*





*Arrival of the new steeple March 5, 2018*









*The new steeple*



In July 2018, a food pantry was opened in the parsonage. The food pantry began distribution on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month for service to the community.

Also, in the summer of 2018, several members of Rawls went on mission trips to Brazil with Teach Beyond, a ministry that provides Holy Spirit transformed education to people of all ages around the world. Miranda Nutt served in four different English camps from July through August in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Fortaleza. Tracy Bowling, Austin Bowling, Larry Schmidt, and Sue Schmidt also served in the Fortaleza camp in August of 2018. In each of the camps, they ministered to kids and teenagers through English classes, bracelet-making workshops, and personal time with the kids during different activities and chapel times.

*This research and information is reported by the current church historian, Gaynelle Gardner Holder, who has recorded the church history from August 2012 through August 2018.*

# Pastors of Rawls Baptist Church

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. J. D. Betts* (began in 1914 or 1915 to 1918)                     | Wooden building, 1914, across the highway.  |
| 2. W. C. Dowd* (called for 1919 & 1920)                             |   |
| 3. J. L. Martin* (called 1921 & 1922)                               |   |
| 4. Walton Page* (called Oct. 19, 1924)                              |   |
| 5. Fred Womack* (called 1924-1927)                                  |   |
| 6. G. N. Ashley* (1927 until left July 24, 1934 to visit Holy Land) | Present sanctuary & cemetery, 1932  |
| 7. Otha Hilliard* (called Aug. 25, 1934)                            |   |
| 8. C. H. Upchurch* (called Oct. 27, 1934-1939)                      |   |
| 9. C. H. (Cad) Norris* (called Nov. 5, 1939-1940)                   |   |
| 10. M. L. Hux* (called Dec. 21, 1940; left Sept. 1945)              | In 1940 calls of one year ended in favor of indefinite calls.   |
| 11. T. H. Williams (called Sept. 22, 1946)                          | Unified budge adopted.  |
| 12. I. K. Stafford* (called Feb. 27, 1949-Sept. 23, 1951)           | Resigned to teach at Campbell College.  |
| 13. Zeb V. Moss (called Dec. 1951-1955)                             | Married Evelyn Krause. Both sent as missionaries to Africa; now retired.                                    |
| 14. Eugene Williams (called June 1955)                              | Choir loft and organ added to sanctuary.  |
| 15. Julian Motley (1959-1963)                                       | Deacon rotation begun; nursery.   |
| 16. Kermit Mathis (served less than one year, 1963)                 | Parsonage finished 1962.  |
| 17. Charles E. Stevens (called Sept. 1964-1968)                     | Brink veneer and stained glass windows added.   |
| 18. Robert L. Clark* (Nov. 1968-July 1978)                          | 1966, Rawls began full-time services.   |
| INTERIM: Ronald Pierce (July to Dec. 1978)                          | Air conditioned church & parsonage.   |
| Robert Coats (Feb. 1979 to April)                                   | First music director & Training Unions.   |
| 19. Stephen M. Buffin (April 1979-Aug. 1980)                        |   |
| INTERIM: David Watson   | Parsonage renovation; Handicapped ramp.   |
| 20. Ronald Pierce (1981-1983)                                       |   |
| INTERIM: Dr. James F. Heaton  |   |
| 21. Wayne Schlink (1985-Jan. 1990)                                  | Parsonage renovations, 1990.  |
| INTERIM: Bob Coats (March 1990)                                     |   |
| 22. Kevin (Chip) Hopkins (Oct. 14, 1990-March 18, 1997)             | Parsonage furnace & refurbishment, 1998   |
| INTERIM: Dr. Robert Newton (July 13, 1997-Feb. 28, 1998)            |   |
| 23. Robert Lee Newton, Jr. (March 1, 1998-March 16, 2000)           | Air conditioning & heating, 1999  |
| 24. Lee Vernon Coyle (Sept. 3, 2000-Nov. 21, 2004)                  | Sanctury, Sunday School & bathroom renovations, New carpeting, pew covering, & parsonage refurbishing, 2002 |
| INTERIM: Paul Jones (June 11, 2005-Sept. 11, 2005)                  |   |
| 25. Larry King (Sept. 11, 2005-Sept. 26, 2010)                      | Addition to building & fellowship hall, 2005.   |
| INTERIM: Paul Jones (Oct. 3, 2010-April 22, 2012)                   | Parking lot was paved and spaces marked.  |
| 26. Clarence Hardison, Jr. (April 29, 2012—Present)                 | Repair of stained glass windows, 2008   |
|   | Began remodel of sanctuary, beginning with the choir and pulpit area, April 29, 2012.                       |

*In Loving Memory*  
*Of*  
*Our Deceased Veterans*

Lloyd Babb  
Issac Barker  
John S. Barker  
Pernay Bird  
M. T. Britton, Jr.  
James M. Corbett  
Joseph Cotten  
Ogene Cotton  
B. I. Cotton  
Allie Ray Currin  
Charlie Dean  
William Aubrey  
Dixon  
Richard Francis  
Donohue  
John Gardner  
Layburn Gardner  
L. B. Gardner  
T. H. Gardner  
Tommy Garrett

Ruther Barker Gesing  
Harold Goss  
Revels Clarice Goss  
Hershell Gray  
John G. Gray  
Wilton Gray  
Lynn Mashburn  
Howard  
John M. Mann  
Leonard Marcom  
John Marks  
Dewitt Moore  
Rufus Moore  
D. Fletcher Nutt  
Louise Jones Pierce  
Kermit Rawls  
Rex C. Revels  
Roy H. Revels  
Wilson Rawls  
Ossie Sherman

Dowell Smith  
Linwood Smith  
Otho Chester Snipes  
Alvin Weathers  
Arthur G. Weathers  
Charles Weaver  
Clarence Weathers  
Hurley Weathers  
Robert Weathers  
Andrew Wester  
James Levi Wester  
Jeff Wester  
Leon Wester  
John Whittington  
John M. Wilkerson  
Luther W. Wilkerson  
Gilbert Woodall  
Hunter Woodall