

The History of Trace Creek

How we ended up as a church, located here at 1320 Broadway Ave., New Johnsonville, TN., that came to be known as Trace Creek Baptist Church. This article contains historical facts from many sources such as recorded minutes of the church, historical recollections from historical society books and from members who have past ties with the church when it was located at Denver, TN. and when it first moved to our present location. It includes a history of the first settlers in the Trace Creek Valley, of how New Johnsonville became a city as a result of the flooding of the Johnsonville area (Old Johnsonville) as a result of the building of Kentucky Dam at Gilbertsville, Ky. and how that fits into our church history. It includes brief histories of other churches that helped to form Trace Creek Baptist Church in 1881.

Considered to have been the first settler in Humphreys County, Moses Box settled in the Trace Creek valley in what we know today as Denver, TN. Denver has been known by other names such as Box, Gould Switch, and Box's Station. About 1909 a Mr. Greenway, a postal inspector, was credited with renaming this area Denver, TN, after his hometown of Denver, Colorado. In 1874 Gould Switch is listed as being the first Post Office of this area and an article in the Humphreys County Historical Society's book *Humphreys County Heritage* states a church, later to be named Trace Creek Baptist Church, was built by this time. This conflicts with other records which show that the church, known as Box's Station (Trace Creek), was established on Dec. 17 1881 by members from Chapel Hill Baptist Church, which was a church that consisted of members who had been dismissed from the Beaver Dam Church in Benton County. The Chapel Hill church was located in the area we know today as the Beard property on Highway 70. This area was known as part of the Flatwood community at that time. The church at Gould Switch may have been there at the time of the first Post Office, but not officially established until later. Some future record may clarify this matter.

In the first records of membership of Trace Creek Baptist Church, a Moses Box is listed as a member and shows that he was baptized in 1867. According to census records of 1850, Moses Box was 74 years old, if this is correct, then he would have been 91 yrs old at the time of his baptism. It is possible, but most likely, this would not be the same Moses Box who originally settled in the Trace Creek Valley, however Mr. Box had a

son, named Moses Box, Jr., this may or may not be this person of record. Many Box names are listed as having been members of the church over these many years, most likely some would have been relatives of Moses Box. A church located in the Big Bottom area(Plant), was organized in 1868 and named Aurora Baptist Church, being a branch of Chapel Hill Baptist Church.. An effort was made in 1871 to consolidate the Chapel Hill and Aurora Churches but the effort failed.

Box's Station (Trace Creek) became a Mission Station of the State Mission Board until 1882. At this time another effort was made to consolidate the Chapel Hill and Aurora church, this time with the inclusion of the Box's Station Church. All three churches agreed to this union or reunion as one might call it, for many of the members of these churches had been members of the other churches and due to splits for various reasons, had moved their membership or had helped to establish another church. The minutes of some of the church meetings referred to some of these members as being disaffected, a term the dictionary says is an unfriendly, a disloyal, or discontented member. Some members of Chapel Hill, became so disaffected they asked for their letters, but were refused on account of the Spirit manifested. Meaning that it was obvious to the churches eyes and mind that they were not being spiritually minded, this made progress very slow in the early church. So this was more of a reconciliation, not only to each other, but also to God, so a greater purpose could come about. It was agreed that the Box's Station Church location would be where this consolidated body would worship together. At the first conference (today we would say business meeting) on June 4, 1882 at the Box's Station church and by reason of there being more members from the Chapel Hill Church, it was voted to retain that name for the present and the Deacons from Chapel Hill were retained. Box's Station's name has now changed to Chapel Hill.

Now, just as all good Baptist churches do, this consolidated group formed a committee, imagine that. The church would, from time to time, form committees on a needed basis, very few standing committees were recorded until well into the 1900's. One of the first committees formed was a building committee, being that they were meeting in the school building at that time. Several months later another committee was formed to look into the matter of coming up with a name to call the new church.

On June 17, 1883, the church met in conference for consideration of naming the church. The committee presented three possible names: Trace Valley, Mt. Hermon, and

Jerusalem. After discussion, it was amended that the name be Trace Creek. That name was selected unanimously. So from thereafter the church would be known as **Trace Creek Baptist Church**. The church being located close to the Trace Creek most likely influenced it's naming. A report was also given by the building committee that the church building would be ready for worship services on August 19, 1883. A building lot had been donated and cost of construction amounted to \$1,186.00. Dedication Day of the new church building was Sunday August 19th, 1883 with Sunday School beginning at 8 2 A.M., Prayer meeting at 10 A.M., Singing at 10.50 A.M., A Historical Sketch at 10.55 A.M., at 11 A.M. the sermon was brought by Elder W. J. F. Allen, the consolidated church's first elected pastor. His sermon was from Matthew 16:18. Alleging therefrom that Christ did establish the Church himself which has existed from that day until this, giving much Scripture Proof and church history, showing that Baptist of today believe and practice identically the same doctrines as did the Apostles and primitive Christians, tracing their origin back through the Reformation and the Dark Ages to Christ. The church house could hold only 2/3 of those present that day. The ladies filled most of the church and most of the men stood outside. Afternoon services were held at 3 P.M. that day, with a singing and dismissal at 4 P.M. Protracted meetings continued on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and the intervening nights. On Thursday night at 9 P.M. the church met at the creek for a Baptismal service. Can you imagine the heat and humidity at 9 P.M. on an August night, not to mention the bugs and mosquitos encountered from the lanterns that would have had to have been brought with them to be able to see? But yet, can you imagine what a beautiful and glorious site that was; moonlight and lantern light glistening from the surface of the creek water as it rippled by, the contrast of the whiteness of the baptismal robe against the darkness of the night and water, the going down into the water to be raised symbolically a new creation? Baptismal services were conducted at the creek until April 16, 1950 where the first account of anyone being baptized in a baptistry pool was noted. This took place at the Camden Baptist Church, Camden, TN. There were others who were baptized in Trace Creek after this, but according to Bro. J. C. Hall, he was the last one to be baptized in Trace Creek, this was on July 12, 1953 as recorded in the church minutes. Many were baptized at the Camden First Baptist Church after that and then in our own Baptistry. It was decided on Sunday, Sept. 25, 1960 to build our own baptistry after members showed up at the Camden church and found the baptistry at that church had not been filled. The baptistry at Trace Creek was built under the floor of the podium, with a circulating water pump and gas heater system. It was constructed by the men of the church. The

Baptistry that we now use was installed when the auditorium was renovated in 1992. There are two ordinances of the church, Baptism and The Lord's Supper. Both are symbolic in nature, Baptism revealing what has taken place spiritually and The Lord's Supper calls us to remembrance of Christ's sacrifice as an atonement for our sins.

The worship services were held on Sunday and the conferences (business meeting) were held on Saturdays. These conferences were sometimes preceded with a short sermon, sometimes a lengthy one. Can you imagine us doing that today, taking an extra day for business meetings? While on the subject of business meetings, it was some time period before the church actually had a designated day for the business other than Saturday and even when they did, it really did not matter for they would call a meeting at any time, usually preceding the worship service, to dispose of certain business especially when admitting members for membership. Business was conducted this way in the church on into the 1920's. The church had a covenant, order of business (much similar to the Robert's Rule of Order that we use today) and Articles of faith. One interesting thing that the early church always did, whether at conference or during regular worship services was that they opened the doors of the church at every meeting. The doors were probably physically open during warmer seasons, but this term meant that the church was inviting anyone present to come for salvation, baptism, moving of letter, etc. to join the fellowship of their church. Today we would call this the invitation portion of our worship services. Many did join the fellowship over the years, some moving letters, some on profession of faith, some coming from other denominations.

There is not a clear date when the early church first associated itself with other churches, but it is noted early on that Trace Creek was associated with the churches of the Judson Association until September of 1928, at which time the church joined the South Western Association. The church then associated itself with the Carroll County Association in 1937, which in 1940 changed its name to be the Carroll-Benton Association. On September 25, 1960 the church felt it to be in their best interest and of greater service for the churches of the Truett Association, that they unite themselves with these churches that were on the same side of the Tennessee River and remain a member of the Truett Association today. The Truett Association was organized in 1950 when several churches split from the Judson Association. In 1886, records show that some of the churches in the early association (Judson) were: Dry Creek, Johnsonville, Ebenezer, Waverly, Bowen Chapel, Liberty and New Hope.

Why would a church want to associate itself with other churches?

The statement on the home page of our Association web site states that the following is the purpose of our Association:

- 1. To foster fellowship among the churches.**
- 2. To assist the churches in strengthening their programs of enlistment, evangelism, teaching, and training.**
- 3. To encourage churches in the establishment of missions and new churches. (Also, to encourage support of local, home and foreign missions through the Cooperative Program.)**
- 4. To promote and work with the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention to carry the gospel to all the world.**

It was mentioned earlier that Trace Creek (Box's Station at that time) was a mission church of the State Mission Board. Two missionaries served the church in pastoral roles at that time, until the first pastor of the consolidated church was elected. This was a direct help from the State Mission Board. Today we refer to this body as the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Program. The church had to have financial help for many years, even into the early 1960's. This help was in the form of supplemental salary for the pastor. The Associations and the State Mission Board did, however, make it mandatory for the church to make a contribution into the Cooperative program in order to receive this benefit and required the pastor to submit a regular report on the church's progress. If one looks closely at the financial records of the church over these early years, even into the 1960's, you could conclude had it not been for this supplemental salary the church may have faded out of existence and we may not be worshipping here at Trace Creek today.

When a person sought to unite with Trace Creek Baptist Church in the past and presently, it expects a certain commitment from those joining. When you seek fellowship with a church, you are making a covenant with the other members and they with you that you will do certain things for each other, that we are committed to each other, but more especially we are committed to God, His ways and purpose. We show our commitment by giving of our time, gifts and talents and by supporting the ministries that the church provides, by our stewardship.

Now in the early church it may seem to us, by today's standard, that they went to extremes in their expectations of its members. As mentioned in an earlier article, it was frowned upon to associate with certain denominations. On many occasions, if a member had missed several Sundays (2-3) a committee was formed to check on the absent member or members. Some of those who were investigated were found to be intoxicated and were swearing while under the influence. If the person was found to be sufficiently penitent, the committee would recommend that they be restored to the fellowship, if they weren't then most of the time they would be dismissed, or excluded from fellowship. One man had been checked on for missing services for several weeks and the committee found that he lived 8 miles from the church, had no horse and had to work. The committee found this to be a satisfactory excuse and brought no action against him. It was especially difficult for members to get to church in the wintertime, they did not have the equipment to remove snow from the roads then and church would have to be canceled. Some of us can remember the snow and ice of 1951 but in February 1886 there was 24" of snow on the ground at Denver, TN. Surely they let them off with that excuse. In another recorded minutes of the early church it stated that a particular woman was dismissed from the church because of her walk . One of our members stated that a faithful servant of the past, had related to him the same story of a woman who was dismissed from the church for the way she walked and she meant it in a way to mean that it was the way she physically walked. That must have been some walk! It may seem to us today to have been an extreme measure, but the early church may have felt that a person's spiritual walk should not have been presented in such a physically provocative manner.

Another matter concerning the conduct of the members was recorded as a resolution being adopted on May 3,1884 by the church, stating that they were opposed to the participation in, encouragement of, or patronizing of dancing or of dancing schools or of dancing institutions and all who did would be guilty of violation of the Rules and Practices of the church and of the teachings of the Bible. Records do not indicate that anyone was ever charged with the violation of this resolution. The 1884 records also indicate that the male members of the church were prorated a certain amount to pay to the church according to the tax list of that time. This money was placed in a contingent fund to be used as the church needed. This must have been an early form of stewardship.

Many of the historical facts of the church and its members are available to us by the faithful recording of the business and activities of the church by the Church Clerk. When the church was first established in 1881 records indicate that the clerks were serving in a temporary capacity until after the three churches consolidated and for a short time even after they did unite. The first elected Church Clerk of record was S. L. Loudermilk, who was elected in 1883 and served until 1887. Also, that same year, Bro. Loudermilk was ordained by the church to preach, after which, when you see his name mentioned in the minutes, he was referred to as Elder S. L. Loudermilk. The minutes of the early church indicate that a good number of men of the membership were ordained as preachers through the early years and each after their ordination service, were called or referred to as Elder so and so. These men remained active members in the local church and preached whenever it became necessary. This was often, for the church would be without a full-time pastor on many occasions and the church would ask one of the ordained men to preach that day. These men were of great service to the early church, for without these Elders the church may not have survived. A Sallie Fields was Clerk from 1888 -1891. In 1891, J. V. Stribling served until 1894 and then there were several who served for short interim periods. The next notable time of service as Clerk was by Jno Box, who served from 1900 -1904. There were no records available for the years 1905 -1909. Next a Mrs. A. C. Stitt served for 28 years as Clerk, from 1909 -1937. The early minutes that Mrs. Stitt wrote were brief and for several years they were few in number, but as time passed, they became more frequent and began to gain in detail. When reviewing the minutes that she had written over those 28 years, one can see that her handwriting began to deteriorate and the content of the minutes became less and one might wonder the reason for this. In the last year of her service as clerk, the handwriting changed abruptly, it became very neatly written and contained much detail and were signed by the Assistant Clerk, this was because the Assistant Clerk was writing the minutes. When the clerk position was to be voted on for the next year, the minutes stated that Mrs. Stitt resigned as Clerk because of failing eyesight. Now we know the rest of the story for the change in her handwriting. The Assistant Clerk was then elected to become the Church Clerk, this being Mrs. L. L. (Miss Patty) Parnell, who served from 1937 -1961. She served faithfully for 24 years, until, because of failing health she could no longer continue her duties. Miss Patty was so faithful to Trace Creek, not only as Clerk, but in so many ways, and she was dearly loved by all who knew her, and she loved everyone, too. The church named its Library in memory of her, and a contribution

from her family was made to be placed into a savings account and the interest accrued to be used to buy books on a continuing basis. Mr. Edward C.(Bill) Russell was elected to serve from 1961 -1970. Bill said that one of the hardest things that he ever had to do was to go and ask Miss Patty for the minutes book, especially since her memory had begun to fail her. Bro. Bill had a way of writing some of the minutes, that it almost seemed you were back in that time of the church's history as you read them. Mrs. Kathryn Daster served from 1970 -1974 and Mrs Francine Osborne served from 1974 -1977 at which time Bro. Bill Ladd became Clerk from 1977 -1982, Bro. Ladd put a lot of detail in the minutes he recorded, Francine Osborne filled out the last half of the 1982 term. Bro. Carl Miller served as Clerk from 1982 -1983. The next Church Clerk elected was Mrs. Karen Brown. Mrs. Brown served from 1983 -2000. 17 years of service to our church and she could always refer you to the minutes you needed if circumstances arose for such a need. Mrs. Diane Eason, was elected the fall of 2000 and served until 2003 when once again Mrs. Brown was elected to serve.

In the early church minutes, all of the activities of the church were recorded, Sermon text, when members united with the church, songs that were sung, financial status, when baptisms took place, revivals held and the preachers who came, for every time the church met, whether for business or worship, etc. Today, not as much of the same type of information is included in the church minutes of its business meetings, just mostly the business and the attendance of the different organizations and requests for letters. However, the same information is still available if someone wants or needs that information. This is because our Church Secretaries and their Assistants have kept these records in the filing of double copies of the church bulletins for many years in the past, by saving copies of all communications sent and received by the church, the filing of financial records, by the records of membership kept in a membership book, by additionally keeping the same membership records in data form on the church's computer system, which is an Automated Church Membership System software package, the Church Directory booklet with all the organizations and those filling various committee positions, Pictorial Directories and such, thus the need to include this information in the church minutes is not necessary today. Technology has made it somewhat easier to maintain this type of information.

It's strange how sometimes roles will reverse in life, take for instance the church of 1881 started out in the school house and then later built its church house. In 1924 the school

asked permission from the church to have classes in the church in order for them to relocate the schoolhouse. The roles reversed, but each was a help to the other in a time of need. There were fewer than usual records for the time period between 1900 -1935. It does not seem that the records were lost or misplaced because the original minutes book (shown in a copy of the microfilmed originals) was being used at this time period, there just were not many entries during this time period and when there were minutes, it seemed there was not much out of the ordinary going on. Activity in the church may have been such that it did not seem that any minutes needed to be recorded, there were instances recorded where the church did not meet for a month sometimes. This, too, will probably remain a mystery of the past. At any rate, we know that the great depression took place during this time period, about 2/3 of State Route 1 (this was a road from Bristol to Memphis that was created by the Tennessee Highway Act of 1923 and ran through the Plant and Hustburg communities) was designated as part of a new U. S. Highway 70 and was routed from Waverly through New Johnsonville in the early 1930's. This Highway was known as The Broadway of America Highway, originating in North Carolina, construction began around 1925 and terminated in California in 1936.

There have been several church census reports taken of the church ministry field and surrounding areas over the years. The purpose of obtaining these records is to see what group or groups that the church would need to focus its ministry in. One of these census reports, taken in 1936, had the following information of interest: Out of 775 people surveyed, only 30 were Baptist, 30 were Presbyterian, 8 were anti-mission Baptist, 140 Christians, 109 were Methodists, 3 were Holinist, 4 of other denominations, 225 indicated they were unsaved and 350 or more needed to be in Sunday School. A year after this, 1937, the minutes showed the active membership total to be 34 at Trace Creek.

There have been many caretakers, custodians or janitors, whatever term that you may want to use for the one who cleans up the messes we make in church. Some have been our youth who needed to earn money for college, some were from our adult members and a few were hired from outside the church membership. In the early records of the church the term Sexton was used for this position, the dictionary meaning given was caretaker or janitor with other duties of ringing the bell and digging graves. One of our past custodians when asked about this earlier term(Sexton, and the duties involved) said that he would take care of the church and even ring the bell if we wanted him to, but he didn't think he would care for digging graves and besides, he didn't even know where

our cemetery was.

In 1941 an event took place that would bring a smile to the Women's Rights Movement of today. It seems that two of the women of the membership were elected to serve as Trustees. Quickly, opposition came up about women serving in such a position in the church. Wonder who was opposed to this situation, the women or the men? The church was called into conference to address this situation. The two women stood their ground and stated that if the church voted for them to resign they would do so, otherwise they would serve to the best of their ability. After discussing the situation, the church felt that it would be OK for the women to serve.

By this time TVA(The Tennessee Valley Authority) was beginning to have an impact on Trace Creek Baptist Church and the surrounding communities of Plant, Hustburg (the entire Big Bottom area) and Johnsonville. This was due to the purchasing of land and the moving of the railroad that became necessary because of the impending impoundment of the Kentucky Lake Reservoir. This resulted in the total loss of the town of Johnsonville, it's residents and business establishments by the year 1944. The families had to move to other areas. Many moved to New Johnsonville, which was located 3 miles downstream (south) of Johnsonville. New Johnsonville was incorporated in 1949 and its mayor was A. W. Lucas, Jr., who will be mentioned again later on, in regards to our church history. TVA was signed into existence by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 as part of his New Deal. The electric power development of the area came along as a result. As a result of the railroad needing to be moved due to this impoundment of Kentucky Lake, in Sept. 1942 TVA offered the church \$1,730 for the purchase of 0.11 acres of church property for the needed right of way. Many people would like to sell land for that kind of money today. The church had to have in its minutes that the trustees had the authority to act on behalf of the church before the transaction could be completed. The sell of the property was completed in March, 1943. TVA required that the church would have to move the church building forward 10' and sideways 10'. The church went further and moved it forward 18' and sideways 10'. In May, TVA came back and informed the church that they would have to move it an additional 10' forward, the church felt that this was a great injustice to the church and after lengthy discussion decided to do nothing but wait and see what developed. Nothing ever did. The church used the money received from the sale of the railroad right of way to make many needed repairs to the church building. A little money was left over after the repairs were made.

On September 2, 1945 a revival was to begin at Trace Creek, three evangelists were to come and conduct the services. At the last moment two of the evangelist could not come. One of the evangelists who had to cancel was Bro. Barney Flowers. The Sunday service was held but the revival was canceled after that day due to the death of Mrs Pitts (Louise) Ladd, who died on September 3, 1945. Bro. Barney Flowers did get to come back later and hold revival services at Trace Creek the week of July 23, 1947. A tragic event took place during this time of revival. A group of youth and adults, along with the pastor and his wife from Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson, TN were traveling through New Johnsonville and Denver, TN to their destination of Ridgecrest, N. C. when the driver of the Gulf Transport bus lost control and the bus went off of highway 70 on the S curve section of the old segment of the highway going down Denver hill. Bro. Barney Flowers and lady member of the church were some of the first on the scene to offer aid and assistance. The great tragedy of the bus wreck was that the pastor's wife and a young lady lost their lives, as they were sitting in the front next to the door area. Even to add to the tragedy was that the young lady who lost her life had been sitting further back in the bus behind her best friend, but had moved forward to sit with the pastor's wife just prior to the driver losing control. That best friend was Mrs. Nancy (McNatt) Palmer. One can still sense the pain that this memory holds for Mrs. Palmer as she related the details of that terrible accident . Mrs. Palmer would have had no way of knowing that some 16 years later she and her family would be living in New Johnsonville and become members of Trace Creek Baptist Church. That's the way it has been for many of us, being relocated to this area because of work reassignments or new job opportunities. Many of us had no idea that we would end up in a place called New Johnsonville, TN and become members of a church named Trace Creek Baptist..... **But God Knew!**

When TVA began the condemning and purchasing of land to impound the Tennessee River and form Kentucky Lake, it seemed to be a negative impact to most of the people of the area. This was because a whole town and it's infrastructure were doomed to extinction, but we are going to see how this negative impact caused by TVA, would later, because of another TVA project, become the positive turning point that Trace Creek Baptist Church needed. In 1949 TVA began the construction of the Johnsonville Steam Plant and this began a rapid population and economic growth in our area. This was evidenced in the growth of the Sunday School attendance at Trace Creek that year,

having gone from an attendance of 57 to 114 in just 11 months. During this rapid growth period of 1949, it was discussed in the August business meeting of that year to consider the possibility of changing the name of Trace Creek to Denver Baptist Church. No action was taken on the discussion at this meeting, the church wanting more of the membership to be present before any further consideration on the changing of the church's name should take place. Any further discussion about changing the name of the church was not mentioned again in the church records. Electric power production at the TVA Johnsonville Plant began in 1951.

With the assets of electric power availability, the stable river navigational system, Highway 70 and the railroad all being centrally located in one area, boosted the image of New Johnsonville and the surrounding area as being a prime industrial growth site. This would later result in many large companies like DuPont, FooteMineral(now Chemmetal), Consolidated Aluminum(now Scepter), Vanguard, Matheson, Valley West, Inland Container and others to locate in this area, further boosting the population and economic growth of New Johnsonville and Humphreys County. With this industrial and population growth came a natural growth in the membership of Trace Creek Baptist Church. The economic base for the area would be changed from primarily an agricultural one, to primarily an industrial based one. Trace Creek would face several critical financial situations in its future, but it now had the economic base to sustain it through these many years. A negative was changed into a positive, thanks to God's grace.

In 1943, a new church was established in Waverly, TN. This church being First Baptist of Waverly. In November of 1948, First Baptist, Waverly and Trace Creek Baptist Church were considering forming a joint Pastorate, whereby one Pastor would preach at both churches on a rotating basis. He would preach at one church in the morning and at the other in the evening. In February of 1949 Bro. Fred Evans accepted the call of both churches. This situation came about due to both churches struggling to provide full time pastors because of finances. The Waverly church was first to get on its feet financially and Bro. Evans accepted the call of First Baptist, Waverly as their full time Pastor, resigning as pastor of Trace Creek effective the last Sunday of December 1950. Feb. 5, 1950 saw the first mention of Trace Creek having a choir. Even though Trace Creek had experienced a rapid growth in 1949, as is usually the case when membership of a church increases rapidly, the finances lagged for a period of time before they started to

increase. This may have been the reason Trace Creek did not get to retain Bro. Evans as a full time pastor and Waverly did.

Each year, Trace Creek would dismiss its evening worship services so that it's members could attend Baccalaureate Services at Tribble High School located in the Hustburg community. Baccalaureate is where a sermon is presented to the graduating senior class and those guests present. This took place the Sunday prior to the Graduation Commencement.

In 1949, in order to seat more people in the church's auditorium, a small balcony was built above the main entrance doors of the church. Members who attended the church at Denver stated that the steps to the balcony were very steep. Then in 1950, records show that toilets were built. In 1951 four 10 x 12 Sunday School classrooms were built with a small hallway down the middle. The classrooms were included in the motion to build the balcony but the construction was delayed for a while. The classrooms were much needed for the expansion of the growing Sunday School Department. You can still see these four classrooms at the old church site at Denver. The church had a dedication day for the new classrooms on Feb. 17, 1952. It seems strange, but the Sunday School membership was greater than the church membership at this time period. 1951 saw the church installing three gas floor heaters in the auditorium and heating was installed in the classrooms and the church was also underpinned at this time. Most of this work was done by the men of the church, with a small amount of the work contracted. 1952 also was the year the church had it's first bulletins. However, many did not use the bulletins and due to an accumulation of them, the church voted to discontinue purchasing them. They had to purchase them 100 at a time so it did not take long for a pile to accumulate. Did you know that in 1952, Bell Telephone Company would give the Pastor of a church a discount on his phone service?

Due in part to the vision of the Pastor of the time, who expressed that due to parking space problems and the need to expand the size of the church, he felt that the church should buy a new site and build upon it. He donated the first \$25 towards this Building Fund. The church agreed with the pastor and decided to purchase a lot on Highway 70 where our church is presently located. The church voted on Sept. 21, 1952 to buy a lot from Mr. D. L. Warren, which was 2 of a 6 2 acre lot for the price of \$2,750. Mr. Warren had first asked for \$1,000 an acre. An offering was taken on Oct. 19, 1952 with

\$1,525.60 being received at that time for the purchase. The church voted to take the remainder out of the treasury in order to complete the purchase and did so. Through the years, the church has had a building fund

On Dec. 7, 1952 Mrs. Anna Belle Clement Lucas, Jr., wife of A. W. Lucas, Jr, who was the first mayor of New Johnsonville, joined Trace Creek by transfer of letter. The former Ms. Clement came from the well known Clement political family from Dickson, TN. and she would later serve in the State of Tennessee Legislature for nearly 20 years as a State Senator. Her brother, Frank G. Clement, became the Governor of Tennessee. Mrs. Anna Belle Clement Lucas gave a \$1,500 donation to the church's building fund in Jan. 1954 and then one month later moved her church membership to a church in Nashville.

Some interesting things took place a year after the purchase of the lot on Highway 70 in New Johnsonville. The owners of the adjoining property(the other 2 of the 6 2 acre tract) had built a concrete block tourist court next to the highway and it has become a concern to the church. In the Oct. 11, 1953 business meeting, this circumstance was discussed. Many felt that this made the lot the church had purchased on Highway 70 no longer a desirable site to build a new church building on and that they should look into disposing of the property. On Nov. 1, 1953, the entire morning worship service time was used to discuss the wisdom of moving the church to New Johnsonville and building on a lot offered by A. W. Lucas, Jr., instead of the one midway between Denver and New Johnsonville that the church had purchased. It was voted to wait until the December business meeting to see if the Lucas lot and conditions met with the approval of the church and whether or not to build a new church in New Johnsonville. The church was very much divided on the issue. It was voted in the December meeting to reject the motion to vote on moving the church. At the close of the morning worship services of Feb. 14, 1954, the church clerk explained to the church the recent development in the matter of moving the church to New Johnsonville. The Pastor of Camden Baptist Church and the Associational Missionary had come by and explained the urgent need of a Baptist Church in New Johnsonville and further explained if a church movement was not started by Trace Creek, then Camden or some other church would start one there. They also stated that the State Board was vitally interested in seeing the work developed there and were willing to aid to the extent of purchasing a lot or making a cash contribution to the building fund in the amount of \$500 - \$750. This prompted the

church to appoint a committee to contact Jr. Lucas and learn if he was still willing to give the lot for a church and the conditions required and then report back to the church. The following week, this committee reported to the church that they had contacted Jr. Lucas about the lot and he proposed to give to the church any lot they chose upon Carman Ave. facing the highway, 100 ft. wide by 190 ft. deep. The only restriction being that it had to be used for a church building site and as soon as the church voted to accept his offer he would give them a deed. Voting on the proposal was delayed until the next Sunday and it was decided that the majority vote would prevail. A standing vote was to be taken in this matter, allowing anyone who was too ill to attend to vote by written ballot. The following Sunday, Feb. 28, 1954, the pastor asked for all members to vote one way or the other. Two votes were handed in from those too ill to attend. There were 23 votes in favor of accepting Mr. Lucas' offer of a lot on Carman Ave. and moving the church and 2 voted against the proposal.

Gov. Frank G. Clement, mentioned above, was scheduled to speak at Trace Creek Baptist Church on May 9, 1954 but due to a scheduling conflict, he came a week earlier, May 2, 1954 and spoke. Gov. Clement was well known as a great orator. A microphone and speaker system was set up so that all could hear the message that Gov. Clement brought that Sunday morning. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers and was completely filled and the overflow crowd sat and stood along the railroad embankment and up and down the hollow where Jay and Alice Cagle lived. It was said to have been the largest crowd ever assembled in Humphreys County for any event, even to this day.

The church's finances were so bad in 1955 that the church was three weeks in arrears on the pastor's salary and individual members of the church cashed the pastor's checks and held them until the church could pay them off. It became hard to get pastors to come and preach, but the church was still going forward with it's plans to build a new church. They still had their building fund and were still contributing to it even though they were having a hard time meeting their budget requirements. Yet, with great faith, the Deacon body still recommended on June 19, 1955 that the church start a new church building program as soon as possible. On August 7th 1955 the church voted to adopt the building plans the Building Committee had submitted and that the first two units of the project be constructed on the 3 acre lot located on Highway 70 and declared all previous agreements and commitments in conflict with this motion be considered null and void.

There was no notation as to why the church decided to build upon the lot located on Highway 70 but one might imagine that the size of the lot that Mr. Lucas had donated on Carman Ave. was not large enough. The size of the church building alone would have taken up the entire lot. It was also voted to hire one carpenter to supervise the construction(Later it would be voted to hire more carpenters, reasoning that it would cost no more to pay several carpenters for a shorter period of time than it would to hire fewer for a longer period of time). The church also voted to adopt the Broadway Plan of Financing and to issue \$10,000 worth of Bonds to be paid off over a 14 year period and to endeavor to raise \$1,000 during the time of the construction and that the first Sunday of September be set aside as a Special Building Fund Offering Day and that two additional trustees be elected to meet the requirements of participation in the Broadway Plan of Financing. The church voted to sell the building lot to the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention for \$1,000. The Executive Board actually paid the church \$2,000 for the lot, then deeded the church lot back to Trace Creek Baptist Church.

On that same day at 4:30 in the afternoon of August 7th, 1955 the church met on the new building lot on Highway 70 for the Ground Breaking Ceremony. The plan of the building had been outlined on the ground with string and the weeds and grass cut out on the inside of this line. Chairs were placed for the convenience of the people. A short service was held and the first shovel of dirt was moved by the various committees in charge of the project.

Trace Creek Baptist church voted on September 21st, 1955 to incorporate, this was a necessary procedure before the church could sell bonds. At the beginning of each year, the church has to pay the State of Tennessee a fee to maintain it's incorporated status.

On October 5th, 1955 work was actually begun on the church, a well had been dug striking a strong stream of water at 16 feet and could be dug no deeper. This well is no longer in use and has been filled in. It was located at the southwest corner of the original building and just to the east of our south educational wing.

November 2nd , 1955, the church voted to return the deed to the lot on Carman Ave. to Jr. Lucas since he had asked for it's return since the church was building upon the Highway 70 location.

In February of 1956, \$4,400 worth of the bonds still remained to be sold. Some were

purchased by prominent business people of the area with stipulations that the church use the proceeds to purchase the brick for the building. Also in February of 1956, the family that operated the Skating Rink offered to give all their proceeds on a Thursday night to the Building Fund, if the church was willing. The church voted to thank the family for their generous offer and that they would accept any offering they might give the church, but did not feel that the church could sponsor any project for the purpose of raising funds. This is an old Baptist custom that still hangs on today. Work on the building was slow, but progressing.

The brick work on the exterior of the building began on August 27th, 1956. It must have seemed to the membership of the church that the work was going extremely slow on the building. The men of the church were meeting on Monday and Thursday nights to work on the building. Money was becoming a critical issue in the progress of completing the church building. Funds were not available for the heating system and the church voted to purchase the system on the basis of faith in God to provide. Some of the building materials for the building were donated for the building (sand, gravel, welding plates for the porch posts) and a letter of appreciation from the church was sent to those who had made these donations. Some of those supplying goods or services to the church during the construction accepted the Church Bonds as payment. Leftover materials like brick, blocks, lumber and such were often purchased by members of the church so that very little waste of the building fund was encountered during the project time.

Concrete for the porch, purchasing of 50 chairs, the installation of the heating system, insulating the ceiling and grading around the building and spreading of gravel for a parking lot and further interior work were some of the projects that remained to be done at the end of the year 1956.

On January 2nd of 1957, the church voted to authorize the Brotherhood to attempt the organizing of a Boy Scout Troop. At the same business meeting, A member of the church offered a lot to the church on which to build a pastor's home and the church voted to accept this donation. The church had considered in July, 1956, to purchase a parsonage in an amount of \$6,000. After the pastor had contacted a loan company and found that they would require 1/3 of the cost as a down payment, the church decided that they should do nothing about a parsonage at that time.

The pace of final work on the new church building is steady and all the little things are

being completed. Then, **The Big Day, March 17, 1957**. The following are the minutes of that day exactly as they were written: First Service in the new Church building. The Altar was beautifully decorated with flowers sent by florist and friends. Sunday School attendance reached 115, but many more came for the worship services and the house was comfortably filled. Bro. E. R. Alexander read the History of the Church and made a few appropriate remarks. Mrs. Reginald Foster sang a solo. Bro. Armour delivered the message. At the close Mr. and Mrs. Earl Smith and daughter, Patricia Ann were received into the Church upon the promise of a letter from the 7th Baptist Church in Nashville. There was Open House between 2:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon when many people came and were shown through the building. Robert E. Brown, former pastor, brought the message at the evening service.

In the past it was left up to the pastor to supply his own housing. Some lived in distant towns and traveled each week to the church site to do their preaching and ministering, sometimes staying in the homes of church members. The church, also at times, would rent housing for the pastor and his family. On January 2, 1957 a plot of land located on Flatwoods Rd. was donated for the purpose of building a Pastorium on. This is the lot where Mr. Bill Russell's home stands today. A strange series of events will explain why the Pastorium was not built on this lot as expected. On the third Sunday of September, 1958 a goal was set for \$1,000, for a Pastorium fund, to be raised by the church. \$1,137.01 was given, and on October 13, 1958 feeling a great need to go ahead and construct the Pastorium as soon as possible, thereby making better use of the \$50 that was being paid for renting a Pastorium, the trustees met with the Pastor to formulate plans; desiring to get the best and most adequate building possible at the cheapest price. The consensus of opinion was to construct one upon the lot that had been donated previously, using as much lumber as possible salvaged from the demolition of the old church building, the church already having approved in July to allow the Pastor to use his vacation time, as he had requested, to take down the old church building to use the lumber for building a new Pastorium in the future. This is recycling at it's best. Along with using as much of the old church materials for construction it was felt that free labor of the men of the church and community that they could give would be the best plan.

A financial plan was confirmed with the Bank of Camden whereby when the building was completed then the mortgage payments would be the same as the rent that was being paid at present for a Pastorium. The construction plan and the financial plan was

passed by the church, by standing vote, 28 for and 9 against. Two weeks later on October 24th, 1958, Groundbreaking for the Pastorium took place on Flatwoods Road and the following days saw the digging of foundation footings begin. This is when the strange events fell into place that was mentioned above. The State Highway Department had begun digging the drainage ditch on the East side of the church property so that the drainage ditch in front of the church building along the highway could be filled in making a nicer looking lot for the church. During this same time period the owner of the adjoining property to the East of the church property, had tried unsuccessfully to buy additional property from the church, when he could not he made an offer to the church to sell this property to the church for \$6,500. This property was 3 acres in area and contained two dwelling houses upon it. It was thought that the Pastor could move into the larger of the two dwellings and stop paying rent and the other dwelling could be rented for extra income. The church clerk had just received notice from the landlord, where the pastor was now residing, that she was going to raise the rent that the pastor was now paying to \$75 a month. This made the proposal more appealing to the church than originally. The church clerk recorded in the minutes God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

At the November 5, 1958 business meeting, the Deacon body recommended that the church should go ahead and purchase the adjoining 3 acres and two dwellings. A motion was made and seconded to do just that. The motion passed unanimously. Later, the Pastor related that there was a great need for additional heat in the house they were using as Pastorium. Two of the gas heaters from the old church building were installed and this helped greatly to the comfort of the Pastor's family.

The dwelling that the Pastor and his family were residing in on the new property was adequate housing for them, but the Deacons and Trustees felt that a more modern Pastorium should be provided and on July 6, 1959 made a report to the church that the church could provide the Pastor and his family with better living facilities as their study showed, by one of three options: (1) Rent, (2) Buy, (3) Building. They reported that they did not feel that renting or buying was a very economical solution. It seemed to them that building would be the best solution since many of the men had offered free labor. They felt that the financial obligations that the church still had at that time was a negligible amount and that since materials from the old church demolition would be used and that the remaining cost to the church for materials would only be \$ 8,000 that

we should proceed to build. The church voted 23 for and 13 against. It was decided that no money would be used for this project except what was designated for that purpose. Work began almost immediately on the new Pastorium (within a two week period). To help finance the building of the new Pastorium a Happy Hundred Club was started. This was established with the anticipation that 100 people would donate \$100 each or would give \$1 a week for 100 weeks to pay for the needed materials.

God provided Trace Creek with a group of men who were skilled in the many areas that were involved in the building of a Pastorium. Some were electricians, some brickmasons, some carpenters, some plumber/pipefitters, some with roofing experience and those that were willing to just help out any way they could. The fellowship that was enjoyed by their labors together can not be measured. We can't forget the ladies either, who provided meals and snacks during the times when the men would work on the Pastorium or the church building. If you have never been involved in such a project and enjoyed the fellowship that takes place; what a blessing you have missed.

The original Pastorium plan did not include the carport that is now attached to it, but was added shortly after when the lady who had donated the original lot for a Pastorium donated the proceeds of the sale of that lot to the carport fund.

On July 11, 1962 the church voted to sell the two dwellings that remained on the property that the Pastorium was on and were being rented at the time. They were sold at auction for \$625. One of these dwellings is still standing where it was moved to on the Forks of River Road.

Over the years several remodeling projects have taken place on the Pastorium to keep up with modern standards. New cabinetry was installed, new modern appliances, central heat and air, gas water heater, new carpet, new paint, new drapery, new deck, asphalt drive and beautiful landscaping are just a few of the projects that were done through the years.

Providing a Pastor with a Pastorium for he and his family's residence was the way that churches provided adequate housing for many years and this was the way that Trace Creek provided housing for its Pastors. It was not thought very much about the consequences or effect this would have on Pastors when they began to retire. It did become apparent that when Pastors retired, they may have served many churches over the years and then when they did retire they had no equity with which to purchase a

retirement home with. When Trace Creek was able to hire additional staff in the position of Youth/Music Minister, this minister was allowed to designate part of his salary package as housing allowance thereby providing him a way to establish equity in his housing for the future provided he purchased a home. Our Pastor continued to reside in the Pastorium and was not getting to acquire any equity for the future. The church felt that the Pastor should be allowed to have a housing allowance and be able to accumulate equity for the future and changed it's policy in regards to the Pastor's housing. We are still able to make use of the Pastorium, it is being used as the meeting place for the youth of the church.

In August of 1958 the youth of the church were wanting to have a swimming party. The Pastor stated that as long as he was Pastor of the church that he could not approve of mixed groups going swimming together. On many such occasions the men and boys would swim at one time period and then the women and girls would take their turn. How times have changed.

Trace Creek established in 1959 the first kindergarten in the New Johnsonville area and Humphreys County. A lady of the church was the director, with the help of the pastor's wife and many of the women of the church served as the teachers. The start-up expenses were contributed by the church and thereafter to be a self supporting organization. Many children of the church and community got a jump start on their education at Trace Creek. When the Pastor of that time period resigned, the kindergarten closed. The new Pastor wanted to continue with the Kindergarten program but the church elected to discontinue it's operation. Many of those who had been working in the Kindergarten program did not want to continue working. The school systems now have outstanding Kindergarten programs and there are many pre-school programs in place in the area.

Many, many members were received into the church from 1958 into the mid 1960's primarily as a result of the DuPont company locating in the area.

1961 saw the fabrication and installation of the steeple on the church building. Many of the men of the church helped to make this possible. Engineers from the DuPont company drew up architectural blue prints to correspond to the scale of the church building. Men of the church who had a background in sheet metal fabrication built the steeple. The DuPont company was gracious to supply the crane to help place the steeple atop the building. The crane was not long enough to raise the steeple high enough for placement, so with a little ingenuity by the men they used a length of light pole to extend

it's reach. Problem solved! The steeple still stands today, pointing our attention to God above.

In the February 1962 business meeting, a motion was made and passed that the church look into establishing a set of constitution and bylaws as many of the church felt we needed them. It took quite a period of time before they became a reality.

In August of 1962 the church voted to buy a safe. There had been much discussion on this issue for several months, not so much as to the need for, but as to where to purchase it. The church would put it's deeds and records, minutes books and any money that had not been deposited, into the safe.

The following month the Pastor informed the church that the old grocery building, located directly across the highway from the church at that time, was going to be opened as a restaurant. He stated that this was of a great concern to him and that he had talked to the manager of the restaurant and he had assured him that intoxicating beverages would not be sold there. The Pastor also told him that he was concerned about the loud music that would be played on an outside speaker would be a great distraction to the church members. The manager assured the Pastor that the music would be turned down during church service time periods. This building was torn down when the Deerfield Inn was constructed.

For many years, the ladies of the church and also a few of the men have served in the Nursery in taking care of the babies and small children during the worship services. The church voted in the October 1962 business meeting to install an intercom system whereby they could hear the services, yet still maintain a close watch on the children.

November 1962 saw the church having the old minute records microfilmed and the old record book was placed in the newly purchased safe for preservation.

In April of 1965 the church voted to purchase new pews, pulpit and communion table. This was a much needed improvement from the old pews from the old church. The pews were installed by the middle of that year and the old communion table was returned to the granddaughter of the man who had built it. The old pulpit is still in use today in the Friendship Sunday School classroom.

The church also voted in 1965 to establish a mission in the Hustburg area. A committee was placed in charge of proceeding with all the necessary things that would need to be

done. An old church building in Hustburg was to be the designated site. In January of the following year the chairman of the mission committee resigned and the mission project failed to materialize. Nearly twenty years later, the deacons would discuss again the possibility of establishing a mission church at the very same site but felt that it was not a feasible project at that time.

1966 saw Danny Sparks become the State President of the Royal Ambassadors and in 1968 Danny, with the support of Trace Creek and other churches of the county, would lead the creation of C.I.A. (Christians in Action) which is still an active program in the county today.

November 1, 1967 Trace Creek, some five years after voting to look into having a constitution and bylaws, passed the motion to accept the constitution and bylaws that were presented by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. These bylaws have been revised or updated on several occasions through the years when it was deemed necessary by the church. Up until this time, most of the committees formed by the church had been on an ad hoc (specific) basis. Now most of these committees have become standing committees that function on a continuing basis with members rotating on and off.

1968 was the first time of many that Trace Creek would have a pictorial directory of its membership published. If you look through the many directories that were published through the years, you can see how much the membership of Trace Creek has changed. Many have moved on to other places to serve, many have passed away, many have aged but many have also been added to what makes the history of Trace Creek.

Sometime in 1969, the church's safe was stolen and its contents lost forever. Had it not been for the foresight of microfilming of the original minutes book we would not have the record of our early church history, since the original had been placed in the safe.

The church voted on May 7, 1969 to purchase the three acres of property on the west side of the church. However, the owner of the property directly behind the church property had a 50' right-of-way on the east side of this property thus dividing the two properties. The church trustees contacted the owner of that property and came into an agreement that the church would swap a 50' right-of-way on the extreme west side of the purchase property thus joining all of the church property as a whole. The owner of the adjoining property agreed to this arrangement since it would still give him access to his property and the church proceeded with the purchase of the new property. The purchase price was \$4,000.

The comfort of the pews became a concern of some of the membership in November, 1969 and a lengthy discussion as to need vs. cost occurred. It must have gotten frustrating to some of the members because the question was asked as to why they were needed. The minutes recorded that one member replied To sit on. Needless to say, the motion failed to carry at that particular time, however in the July 1979 business meeting it was voted by the church upon the recommendation of the Deacons to purchase pew cushions with donations being made by the membership and the remainder of the cost to be taken from the general funds. All the pews were cushioned during the 1992 renovation of the auditorium.

In January of 1970, the church voted to build a new educational wing at the cost of \$40,000, which included the renovation of the old motel building. Committees were established for the needed areas of concern(design, usage, financing, etc) and in December 1970 the plans for the new addition were finalized. Construction began early in 1971 and the church took possession of the new facility in July 1971.

A great improvement to the parking area took place in 1975 with the expansion and paving, with asphalt of the parking area of the church and the driveway at the Pastorium with a connector section to the church parking lot. Cost of this project was \$8,000 after the contractor refunded 15% of the cost of the project to the church. The church just recently repaved the parking area and extended the parking capacity in the fall of 2004 to serve a greater number of vehicles.

Basketball goals were installed in 1978 at the edge of the parking area on the east side of the church so the youth and children could play. Later the goals were moved to the back parking lot area.

In the October 1979 business meeting, the church took on a great mission project by voting to sponsor an indochinese refugee family. The Vietnam war had come to conclusion a few years earlier and there were many refugee families who needed help because they could not return to their native land because of the political atmosphere at that time. Much was done in preparation the following month with food, clothing and household goods being gathered from various sources. A local lawyer had donated a house rent free for one year to the refugee family if the church would renovate it so they could live in it. (This house, which was located near the top of Denver Hill, burned the first week of March 2005) Materials were donated for this purpose and many of the men

of the church, especially the retired and senior adult men, did the renovation work. The work of these men made what seemed to be an impossible project a reality. There were even volunteers from outside the church family who also helped in this project. All phases of this mission project exceeded all expectations. The refugee family arrived in March of 1980 and the church covered their expenses until the World Church Services, who was their main sponsor, delivered a check for funding the refugee family. Jobs were found for the refugee family by members of the church and many of the church membership helped teach them to speak English. The church also helped at times with health and dental care expenses. Even though the refugee family would later relocate to another state, there was much love shared by all that were involved and friendships are still shared today with this family.

In the December 1980 business meeting, the Deacons recommended that the church have a Centennial Celebration sometime in 1981. The church agreed. There were more than 300 at the Homecoming Sunday service on September 6, 1981, for part or all of the day. More than 100 guests signed the register.

In the fall of 1984, the Pastor's study and secretary's office were upgraded by combining the old office areas and the old nursery area. This was a huge increase in the working area for these offices.

The Victory Generation (V.G.'s) was recognized as an organization of the church at the September 1985 business. This allowed this group to be supported by the church. This group consists of the retired and senior adults of the church.

During the August 1986 business meeting, the church voted to build a new educational wing with basement, the same size as the existing children's educational wing. This allowed the church to tear down the old motel building that had been used primarily as a youth building. This wing was dedicated the first Sunday of January 1987. The church was debt free when the building was completed due to the generous giving of the members of finances and by nearly all of the labor being provided by the men of the church.