

# Shady Grove Baptist Church History

## May 2016

### AS THE STORY GOES

The year was 1871 and the country had come to its senses and ended a devastating civil war and the atrocious, hideous, and appalling institution of slavery, and after passage of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the constitution guaranteeing, at least on paper the rights of all men, a group of former slaves, our ancestors, who had recognized their freedom in Christ long before that time, left the balconies of North Pamunkey Church and Macedonia Christian Church and organized a worship area of their own.

They held worship services in a bush harbor under a black oak tree. Though bales of straw were their pews, they were fervent and fearless in their praise and worship to God who had brought them through the dark, harsh, and inhuman years of slavery.

Desiring to follow their vision of greater freedom from slavery and poverty, our ancestors had a vision of a much better life for their children. They knew that a better life could be attained by staying faithful to God and abiding in His Words.

Wanting to build a "House of God", they purchased a track of land from Dr. Thomas and Mrs. Sallie Woolfork for \$75.00. They continued to hold worship services in the bush harbor for one year, as a growing membership soon enabled them to construct a building that faced west. In 1872, the Reverend Coleman Gillum proudly led the congregation from the bush harbor into the church. And thus, "The Shady Grove Baptist Church" was established. Later, the first church building was completely torn down and a new church was erected, this time, facing south.

Some names mentioned in the church archives, and from some relatives, as founders are: Wesley and Courtney Ellis Coleman, Mrs. Harriet Crutchfield, Harrison and Lucy Ellis, William Hills and Susan Madison Ellis, Henry and Margaret Frye, Mrs. Polly Hicks, Mr. Harrison, Jessie and Henrietta Henderson, Mrs. Rachel Jackson, George and Ann Jackson, Jake and Millie Jackson, Mr. Reuben Mansfield, Thomas and Katherine Richards, William and Martha White, Mr. David White, Jake and Emma White, and Ben and Malinda White.

The first Deacon Board is believed to have been composed of Deacons--- Harry Williams, the first chairman; Albert Burruss, the second Chairman; William White, Ned Johnson, David Thompson, Travis Daniels, Sr; Minor Burruss, Alexander May and Harrison Ellis. Thornton Willis was the first church secretary.

Shady Grove has had a total of 13 Pastors, starting with Rev. Coleman Gillum in 1871; followed by the following: Reverends C. Johnson, Robert Quarles, Z.D. Lewis, J. H. Prestley, Jessie Paterson, Edward Lewis, Lee Davis, George E. Galloway, Frank Thompson, Ronald Hart, Edward White, and Joseph A. Moore our present pastor.

Reverend George E. Galloway and Rev. Edward White are the only sons of the church who have served as pastors. Rev. Lee Davis pastored the congregation for 33 years and Rev. Frank Thompson served as pastor for over 25 years and placed great emphasis on unity and peace. During Rev. Ronald Hart's tenure the church opened its doors every Sunday rather than just twice a month.

In June of 1995, the baton was passed from Rev. Ronald Hart to Rev. Edward White, the great, great grandson of one of the founders. This was 124 years after the Vision of our ancestors. Rev. White had been interim pastor for 18 months and generated great enthusiasm and encouragement among the membership. He continued with spiritual guidance, organization and unity. He emphasized church ministries as opposed to church programs. Under his leadership, we adopted the theme, "Shady Grove is a church Where Everybody is Somebody and Jesus Christ is Lord." Rev. White had a Vision of a new edifice, which would not only meet the needs of the congregation; but, it would allow it to provide more community services and to offer space to outside civic groups for other activities.

This Vision caught on with members of the congregation and was accepted. In September 1997, phase one of this building project was dedicated, "Shady Grove Baptist Church Family Life Heritage and Cultural Center." Besides the ministries that were already in place, new ones were organized: New Members Class, Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, and Outreach Ministry.

In 2001 Rev. Joseph A. Moore became the pastor-elect. In October 2004 the baton was passed to Rev. Joseph A. Moore as he was installed as the thirteenth pastor of the Shady Grove Baptist Church. And the Vision continued. The most recent accomplishments under Pastor Moore's leadership have been the formation of a Gospel singing group, the Fifth Sunday Singers; the opening of Sunday's Best Boutique, which the idea came from the Youth Church ministry; the dedication and naming the educational wing, The Florence Esther Willis Hardman Jubilee Education Wing, in memory of Mrs. Esther Jubilee on December 1, 2013; and the licensing of Deacon John Tyler as a minister on December 7, 2013. Sister Rochelle Bazemore-Fountain became the musician for the Shady Grove Combined Choir. Pastor Moore also is the musician for 3 of the church's 4 choirs.

The following persons have been licensed as ministers at Shady Grove: The Reverend Dr. Youtha Hardman-Cromwell, Minister Maverick White, Evangelist Yvonne White Jackson; Reverend Fred Sales, Sr., and Minister John Tyler.

On January 21, 2014, the former Shady Grove Baptist Church building was demolished due to structural damage. Items that could be salvaged were taken out and stored. The stain glass windows were professionally removed, are being restored, will be encased in wooden frames, and will be installed along the wall of the Florence Esther Jubilee Education Wing. Lights will be placed behind them to make it look as if they are reflecting sunlight.

Our church is also blessed with several active ministers who have returned as members or retired from pastoring elsewhere. Our associate ministers are the Reverend Annette Yates Tyler, who returned November 3, 2013; former pastor, the Reverend Edward White returned December 2013; and Minister John Tyler, who was licensed in December 2013, the Reverend Frances Lewis and the Reverend Maria Lewis (mother and daughter, respectively). We are also blessed to have the Reverend James Lewis, who retired from pastoring in Detroit, Michigan, worshipping with us many Sundays.

In 2014, the Reverend Jesse Killings, became a member of our church by Christian experience and is an associate minister.

The stained glass windows from the old church were removed, refurbished, and placed in the Florence Esther Willis Hardman Jubilee Education Wing along the walls with lights behind them.

Pastor Moore was injured in an automobile mishap in March 2015 and the pulpit has been filled with the associate ministers of Shady Grove preaching God's Word. We are so thankful for them.

We thank God that Trustee James Howard Richardson's lived to see his dream that he worked so hard financially to obtain – the road through the cemetery. The church family voted to name the cemetery road the, "J. Howard Richardson Memorial Parkway."

The Shady Grove School, located behind the church, was blessed to receive the state historical marker, which was dedicated on Saturday, November 14, 2015. Several of our members who attended the school were at the dedication. The goal is to set the building up as a small museum.

The church newsletter was implemented. We are thankful to Sister Chantel Ramzey and Brother Craig Broaddus for doing it.

Our church held its 18<sup>th</sup> Regional Community Health Fair the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in October. Three hundred plus attended.

Our membership has grown by baptism and Christian experience.

There perhaps are other names and deeds which may have not been mentioned that have been crucial in the growth of our church, but those names and deeds will not be forgotten when the Book of Life is opened and the roll is called in glory. We never cease to thank God for the great things that He has done through those who came before us, and we pray that we will allow him to use us in His blessings to future generations. We are confident at Shady Grove that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

May God continue to richly bless us as we continue the Vision of our ancestors.

Contributed by Deaconess Sylvia Tyree - 2014

Updated by Miss Phyllis Highland & Deaconess Linda Lewis - 2016