



*1924-2024*



## *Centennial Celebration*

Sunday, November 17, 2024

192 County Line Rd.

Clinton, AR 72031d

## Current Staff



Jason Hill  
Pastor



Blake Forrest  
Minister of Youth  
and Music

## Current Deacons



James Vest  
*Chairman*



Jacob Barnard



Ken Rickard



Josh Bradford



John Hastings



T.J. Pate

# Pastors of Formosa Baptist Church

This listing of the pastors of the church contains a few gaps, and possibly a few errors. Bill Olinger compiled the original list from existing records, some of which are missing. In the early years pastors sometimes served concurrently, (e.g., two quarter-time pastors serving at the same time), leading to overlapping times. Others preached for a time but were not called as pastors. Those known are as follows:

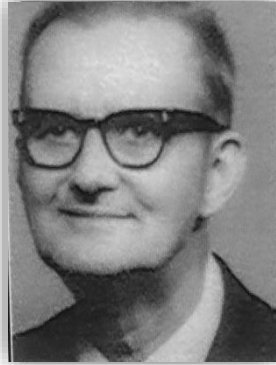
Sam Patton	1924-26
Claud Jenkins	1926-35
Walter Hays	1935-37
Edd Harness	1937-41
Bill Montgomery	1941-43
Chester Roten	1943-46
Calvin Goatcher	1947-48
Daniel Taulbee	1949-50
C. W. Tapley	1950-51
Gene Smith	1952-52
John Griffith	1952-53
George Harris	1954-55
Graydon Hardister	1955-56
Gene Smith	1957-57
Jim Bird	1957-59
Larry Williams	1959-59
Charles Petty	1960-62
Brion Nelson	1962-63
Jack Hazelwood	1963-64
G. A. Hiatt	1964-65
Bill Ward	1966-68
Charles Alexander	1968-68
Theo Cook	1968-69
Paul McNabb	1969-70
Del Medlin	1970-70
Aaron Thompson	1970-72
Ed Chadwick	1972-73
Randy Crews	1973-75
Vernon Hodges	1975-78
Lester Orwig	1978-82
Kirk Hardy	1982-88
Eugene Ryan	1988-88
Malcolm Sample	1988-92
Earl Goatcher	1993-97
Bryan Sikes	1997-98
*Eugene Ryan	1999-99
Kenny Dunham	1999-2001
Billy Don Crow	2001-09
Joel Bunyard	2010-11
Billy Reece	2011-23
*Brandon Moore	2023-24
Jason Hill	2024-present

*\*Denotes Interim Pastor*

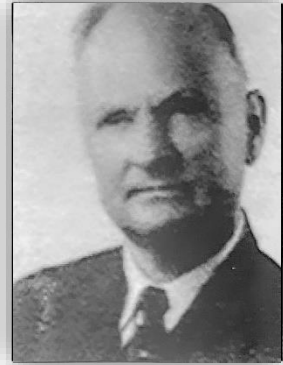
## Available Pictures of Former Pastors



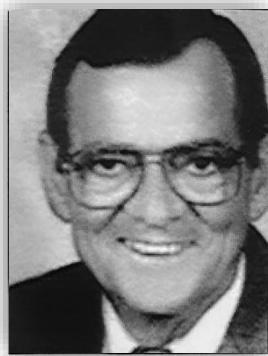
Claud Jenkins  
1926-1935



Chester Roten  
1943-1946



Calvin Goatcher  
1947-1948



Aaron Thompson  
1970-1972



Randy Crews  
1973-1975



Kirk Hardy  
1982-1988



Eugene Ryan  
1988-1988



Malcolm Sample  
1988-1992



Earl Goatcher  
1993-1997





Kenny Dunham  
1999-2001



Billy Don Crow  
2001-2009



Joel Bunyard  
2010-2011



Billy Reece  
2011-2023



Brandon Moore  
2023-2024



Jason Hill  
2024-present

## BEGINNINGS

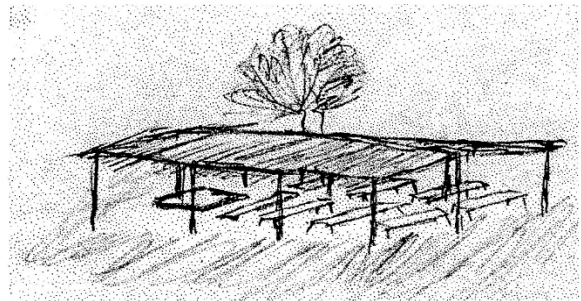
The moving forces behind the establishment of Formosa Baptist Church are blurred with the passing of these 75 years. No written records remain of the earliest days and none of the charter members are still alive. What does remain is the memory of those whose families were a part of the beginning, but memories of events and stories of two generations past can fade with the passing years. Not only are the facts related to the beginning somewhat vague; the interpretation of those facts is equally vague. Because of that, errors may occur in some of the statements in this brief history.

What is known is that at the time - 1924 - there was one Baptist church in the Formosa area: Union Hill Missionary Baptist Church, located about 3/4 of a mile Southeast of Formosa on the Van Buren County side of a rural road along the Van Buren County - Conway County line. There is no longer a building at the location, and no records of the Union Hill Church remain, but Union Hill Cemetery, immediately adjacent to the church site, continues to be used by area residents.

Perhaps several factors led to beginning the new work, but in the memory of those whose families were a part of the new church, one of the motivations for the move was a desire by several members to be more involved with "Convention" Baptists, as Southern Baptists were commonly known at that time. There was little, if any, difference among members in theological or Biblical beliefs. There was, however, a difference in belief as to the extent and kind of cooperation which should exist among churches in reaching out to a lost world with the gospel. Opinions differed both between families and within families, but even though the decision was made to begin a new work, personal relationships were not ruptured. Church records of the early 1930's show occasional joint Sunday School meetings between the Union Hill and Formosa churches.

Sunday School meetings in the Spring of 1924 in a residence on the southeast edge of Formosa began the new venture. The house no longer exists. Memories are vague as to whose home was used. Some remember it to be the home of Rev. Claud Jenkins who later became a much loved pastor of the Formosa church before going as pastor of First Baptist Church of Clinton. The plan was to meet in the house until it became

warm enough to meet outside, then try to have a building before winter came. The first "phase" of the building program was a brush arbor, located on the property of John Evans along a major road southwest of what is now the Formosa Church Camp. According to Bess (Evans) Shipley, the new "church house" was built in 1924. She, and others, remember the men of the church cutting trees and hauling them to the sawmill to be sawed. All construction was done by the members. Heating was by a wood stove; lighting was by lamps and lanterns. There are also clear memories of winter nights when the lantern lights of members could be seen making their way by road and trail to and from services. The brush arbor remained as a semi-permanent fixture for several years, used for summer revivals and for summer Sunday School classes. The road by the church was later relocated, leaving the church in a more remote, out-of-the-way place.



State and Association records, and even local memories, differ as to the specific date of the official organization of the church, but according to Mrs. Esther Olinger, the last surviving charter member, who died at the age of 98 in December, 1995, the church was organized sometime near June 14, 1924. That is the date we will use.

From multiple sources it appears the following were the charter members of Formosa Missionary Baptist Church:

John & Josephine Evans	Gladys Evans
Melvin & Betty Brewer	Maggie Evans
Amos & Esther Olinger	Nettie Evans
Melvin & Bertie Crownover	Minnie Bradley
Kara & Bea Shipp	Andrew Goatcher
Winfred & Dora Goatcher	Tommy Goatcher
J. M. (Med) Goatcher	Jim Goatcher
Sarah Goatcher	

It is possible there were others. John Evans and Melvin Brewer were the deacons. Rev. Sam Patton was the first part time/quarter time pastor, sometimes serving concurrently with others.

The following year, on October 12, 1925, one acre of land was purchased by the church from John Evans for the sum of \$25. The deed to the property is made out to the "Formosa Missionary Baptist Church" and is the only remaining document from the earliest years of the church.

The first revival meeting in the new church (under the brush arbor) was in August (weren't they always in August?) of 1924. Rev. Calvin Goatcher was the preacher for the revival. Considering the membership of the new church - almost all related by blood or marriage, with the revival preacher being part of one of the families - one can imagine the tight rope he walked in preaching to his own family. Yet there are memories of a very good revival that year. Bess (Evans) Shipley was the first member baptized into the new church.

Shortly after the new church building was erected the front door of the church was painted red. To the chagrin of some church members the church came to be called the Red Front Church. The door was soon repainted - another color - but the name remained. Correspondence from a former member requesting a letter of membership from the Red Front Church, dated 12-1-83, testifies to how long the name was remembered.

## **Gleanings from the Early Years**

### **The 1920s**

The earliest church records begin with the Sunday School reports of January, 1927. With a few gaps they continue to the present time. The earlier reports, however, are much more interesting and revealing. Each person present was named, with how much each gave - or didn't give. No secrets in giving! Ages were not secret either. Birthdays were observed by a contribution of a penny for each year of age. That could be significant. On February 13, 1927, Med and Ruth

Goatcher (with birthdays in the same week) gave 73¢ as a birthday offering, more than twice the total church offering of 30¢.

Sly comments sneak in occasionally that reveal a sense of humor even in the staid, formal proceedings of a 1920s Sunday School hour. In the "Attendance" block of spaces for officers and teachers in the record book for the year 1927, there are spaces for month, date and officers and teachers, with officer and teacher spaces further divided into male and female. In the space for males is written "handsome."

An interesting feature of the Sunday School reports of the early years was the weather report. It was always given, reflecting the importance of weather in everyday life. With no paved roads, few bridges and transportation by walking, wagon or horseback, weather often determined whether services would be held. On many Sundays there were no services, with a note the following Sunday indicating the reason; it rained, snowed, flooded or stormed. The flow of life had been interrupted.

Church membership grew rapidly. From the original 20-25 members in 1924, the church had 132 enrolled in March, 1929. Of course a few large families like the Birds (8), Bomars (8), Crownovers (5), Evans (8), Eskridges (10), Goatchers (8), Jones (12), Oligers (6), Shippis (6), Smiths (5) and Waddells (7) could overflow the small church building very easily. Attendance ranged from the 30s to the 70s.

## The 1930s

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Baptist churches and convention agencies and institutions were in dire financial need. All areas of work suffered. Missionary efforts were cut back. Agencies and conventions were forced to incur debt to stay open. Morale was low. Out of these painful years of economic hardship came an innovative method for the church to raise money: the "God's Acre" movement. Most Southern Baptist churches, including Formosa, were rural churches, with farming the predominant vocation. Dr. B. L. Bridges, General Secretary of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, wrote the Formosa Baptist Church, explaining the "God's Acre" movement and urging the church to adopt it. The church agreed. Very briefly, the plan, under the direction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, allowed for the use of allotted acreage by each farmer based on previous utilization. The usual crop allocation in this area was for cotton.

The church entered into an agreement with the USDA, working through Melvin Crownover who had an allotment of 9.5 acres which he apparently dedicated to the church. The members planted, cultivated and harvested the cotton, with the proceeds going to the church. Interesting notations in the church financial records in the 1930s show income and expenses related to the project. "Buy cotton seed: \$11.60", "pay for ginning: \$1.10", "received from bale of cotton: \$80.13", etc., etc. The financial records indicate it was a beneficial activity. Several times the sale of a bale of cotton would be followed by a payment to the pastor for overdue salary. (It seemed to be generally accepted in the early days that when there was a budget shortfall, the pastor went unpaid.)

Reflecting the heart throb of the church that led to its being established in the first place, throughout the difficult 1920s and '30s regular contributions continued to be made to the



Cooperative Program. Missions have always been primary with this church. Not only were Cooperative Program payments maintained, many special offerings were taken to help the Arkansas and Southern Baptist Conventions continue to function and to repay every cent that had been borrowed. This reflects not only the heart of the church, it also says volumes about the character of the pastors who were willing to forego much of their already meager salary in order for the gospel to continue to be taken to the world. Each monthly contribution to the Cooperative Program, or any special offering to the state convention, was always acknowledged and answered by a personal letter from the General Secretary of the convention, Dr. Ben L. Bridges.

The effects of external national circumstances on the church can be seen with a closer look at the membership, attendance and financial records through the years. Membership and attendance peaked in the late 1920s and early 1930s. But even with high attendance giving was measured in pennies, reflecting the near subsistence level of living experienced by most members. Yet there was never a hint of whining or complaining.

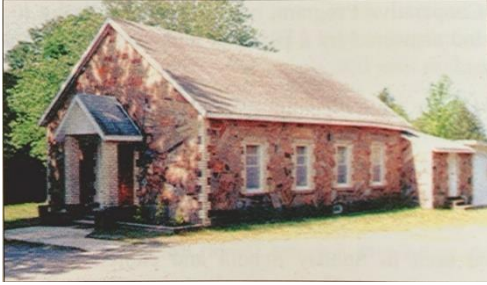
Beginning in the mid 1930s changes can be seen in Sunday School and church leadership. Membership and attendance declined. Giving was minimal. The economic depression was wreaking havoc all over the nation and it reached into Van Buren County and Formosa Baptist Church. Agricultural products were almost the only source of income, but in the depression the market hit bottom. Compounding the problem, a severe, extended drought hit the area in the early 30s, causing the production of cotton (for money) and corn (for livestock) to drop to dangerously low levels. For survival, many families moved away. Because Southeast Missouri offered better farming potential than the worn out rocky hillsides of Van Buren County, many church members were among those who moved. Their leaving took a toll on the church.

Those members who moved to Southeast Missouri found few Southern Baptist churches. Still feeling a loyalty to their home church, and realizing the acute financial need, several continued to send money to the church as they could. The gifts are noted: Evans, \$25.00, Olinger \$18.00, Jones, \$11.00, and more. Those gifts, combined with the income from the "God's Acre" project, enabled the church to continue to contribute to missions and to have a pastor, although his salary was often delayed. What is not recorded, but what happened frequently, was that the pastor was sometimes paid "in kind" with meat and vegetables produced by the members.

The story of survival through hard times by this church is not at all unusual. It happened a thousand times over in churches over the nation. But each church's history is unique, including that of the Formosa church, containing stories of individuals and families who suffered, struggled and survived and whose faith and trust in the Lord were strengthened because of the difficulties. It was that generation and that era that shaped the spiritual, moral and ethical value systems that characterized much of the Formosa community and of the nation of that day and throughout the WWII period. They provided a heritage of which their descendants can be proud.

## The 1940s

The changes sweeping the world in the 1940s also brought changes to the Formosa church. A few area residents could now find jobs locally; others left to find work elsewhere, often related to the war effort. While many left to find work, others left to serve in the armed forces. Members serving in WWII included J.C. Evans, Truett Goatcher, Wendell Shipp, Wendell Crownover.



*Original Church Building with modifications*

With all the transition, membership and attendance averages varied from year to year. From the decline of the mid 1930s attendance began to climb again, reaching a peak average of 48 in Sunday School in the 1941-42 church year, then began another decline. Average attendance remained in the low to mid 30s for the remainder of the 1940s. But church finances improved. Improving finances led to improvements in the church facilities. In 1941 the church added classrooms to the existing building. Again church members cut and hauled

logs to Aud Shofner's sawmill in Damascus. Shofner also contributed lumber for the addition. In 1942 a porch was added to the front of the auditorium. Also in 1942, \$310 was pledged to add a rock veneer wall to the church. This was done in 1942-43 by Amos Oliger and Ray Lucas. In 1946 the church really went modern when it bought factory made pews for the first time (no cushions though).

In earlier years the church had bi-vocational pastors who often lived nearby. Now for the first time "preacher boys" - ministerial students from Ouachita Baptist College - were called as pastors. It was the beginning of several years of a mutually beneficial relationship. The church, too small to have a full time pastor, came to see an opportunity for ministry in providing a place for young preachers/pastors to gain experience. For the young preachers, it was necessary preparation for an enlarging ministry in their later years. Several of those student pastors went on to major leadership roles in SBC church and convention life. Some of them include:

Bill Montgomery (1st student pastor, 1941-43): US Air Force career chaplain; retired as Colonel.

George Harris (1954-55), Pastor of a large Baptist church, San Antonio, Texas

Jim Bird (1957-59), Pastor of major church in Dallas, Texas, college administrator, professional counselor.

Charles Petty (1960-62), SBC and nationally recognized motivational speaker.

Del Medlin (1970), Pastor, 1st Baptist Church, Cabot, AR., Vice Pres., Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

In addition, Graydon Hardister (1955-56), served as a career missionary with the Foreign Mission Board in the middle East. A former member, Earl Goatcher, also served as a career missionary with the Foreign Mission Board in the Orient, then after retirement from the FMB became pastor (1993-97).

Outstanding revivals are remembered from the early years of the church. In retrospect, many current and former members who can recall the revivals of the 1930s and 1940s feel they grew out of a pattern of prayer and passion for the lost that marked the membership. Prior to the revival services, prayer meetings would be held in various homes. Then during the revival members would come early for prayer meetings. The men would go down the hill from the church in one direction to pray, the women would go another direction. (In the meantime the

visiting song leader would be leading the "Booster" band of the smaller children in hymns and choruses.) Prayer was intensive and personal. Names would be called before the Lord, with a specific request that the Lord would touch that individual and that he/she would come under conviction and be saved that night. During the invitation time members would sometimes go to lost people in the congregation and plead with them to accept the Lord and be saved. It was out of this loving, caring, praying atmosphere that great revivals occurred. The notes are hardly eloquent, or even complete. Usually they are only a brief summary: "Good revival, 15 saved, 5 joined by letter"; "Great revival, 13 saved, 6 joined by letter", etc. But people still alive today who were present when so many lives were touched can remember the inspiration of those revivals and how they impacted the entire community.

Excellent music was also a part of worship services and revivals. Singing schools were a part of church life. Melvin Brewer led many of them. From their early years the children learned to read music and sing the different parts. Songs were written with shaped notes. Unable to afford a piano or other instruments, the tuning fork was a part of every song leader's equipment. Duets, trios and quartets often came from within families.

In reviewing the changes that took place in the outside world from the formation of the church through even today, there is a thread of continuity that may explain the stability that has marked Formosa Baptist Church. That continuity and stability is seen in the Sunday School and church leaders through the years. They and their descendants have been solid rocks of faith and faithfulness in the midst of a rapidly changing world. The founding members of the church named above continued as leaders for many years.

Others were added in the ensuing years: Dr. W. W. Carnett, Claud and Tennie Jenkins, Calvin and Zona Goatcher (both Bro. Jenkins and Bro. Goatcher later became pastors), Ruth Goatcher, Ray Lucas, Ed and Reba Bird (who served many years as Sunday School Superintendent and church pianist, respectively), Maxine Barnes, Troy Eskridge, Roy Bomar, J. F. Waddell and many others continually appear as teachers and leaders through the years. Some of their descendants continued the tradition: Eualaine (Shipp) Bonds, and her daughter, Marla Vest, Stella (Crownover) Sample and Earl Goatcher.



*Shipp Family Reunion, 1961*

The stability and maturity provided by these faithful, knowledgeable members is reflected in the Christian character exhibited by the church through the years. There have been many pastors: part time, student, and even older, inexperienced pastors. With this frequent turnover, there have been occasional pastors with questionable beliefs and practices. They would be challenged, but challenged in a loving, redemptive manner. The church has never terminated a pastor. Much of this mature, Biblical way of handling an issue can be attributed to the solid understanding of Biblical doctrine and practice by the church founders. Relatively uneducated by academic standards, they had spiritual wisdom that led them to speak the truth in love, even to pastors they felt were departing from historic Biblical or Baptist beliefs.

This "guidance" could also extend to matters other than doctrine. It might be subtle, it might be obvious. Maggie Evans led music for the church for many years. If the preacher rambled without aim, or gave no indication of stopping at noon, Maggie would give obvious signs of beginning to sing the invitation hymn. The signal could not be misunderstood. Most of the preachers became fast learners.

The changes of the 1930s and '40s were merely the precursors of the changes which continued in the decades which followed. Many of them directly affected the church. Formosa High School was consolidated with Clinton High School in 1949-50; the Junior High and Primary grades (as they were then called) followed a few years later, impacting the church and the entire community. Roads were improved, then paved. Industries came to Clinton, Morrilton and Conway, drawing workers from the Formosa area. Commuting became common place. Farming declined. General economic prosperity helped the church financially, but the mobility brought by improved transportation capacity also led people elsewhere on weekends. The church became less and less the center of activity as the ease of travel made many other options available.

The decades from the 1950s through the 1980s brought inevitable change in the makeup of church membership. Along with the familiar names listed above, other names began to appear as teachers and leaders. Oral Dean Smith, Gene and Reba Sherwood, Ken and Juanita (Sigler) Patton, Estes Woolverton, Della Bonds, Bill Davis, Farris Bonds, Janie Fullilove, Delmar and Lola Lemarr, Eddie and Wilma Dunham, Bill and Betty Oliger, Bob and Marcia Patterson and Mabel Ward are just a few of the many who provided strength and leadership for varying periods of time. Interspersed with the names of resident members are the names of the pastors and their wives who were pressed into service wherever a teacher or other leader was needed. Many of the preachers were temporary, filling in briefly until another pastor would be called. Deacons Farris Bonds, Delmar Lemarr and Bill Oliger often presided at business meetings when there was no pastor.



*Mabel Ward, longtime teacher and leader*

But significant gaps occur in the records for some of those mid years. In the Sunday School record book for the year 1967-68 (one book) and 1968-74 (also one book) there is not a single name written. No teacher, no superintendent, no secretary, nothing but dates, attendance and offerings. There is a lesson here for those who keep church records: bare statistics cannot tell the story. Gaps in the record leave gaps in the history.

## THE END OF THE MILLINEUM

Although statistics are scant for many of those years, the minutes of meetings and notes about events and revivals are very good from 1967 through 1990. Church clerks such as Bertie Crownover, Elizabeth Fullilove, Wilma Dunham, Lola Lemarr, Lillian Bass and Marcia Patterson reported not only the business meeting decisions, they often reported on regular services. The election of officers, teachers and committees, and naming those who joined the church (by baptism, statement or letter), as well as those moving to other churches, help better



understand the life and times of the church. Still following historic Baptist principles, it is noted that-membership was denied to those who had not been scripturally baptized. The deaths of long time members and leaders such as Edwin Bird, Zona Goatcher and Maggie Evans are noted. It was during this period that arrivals and departures of pastors and visiting speakers were noted, providing the first specific dating for pastoral leadership.

## The 1980s

The excellent minutes partially compensate for the absence of records relating to attendance, membership and financial contributions, but it is difficult to know exactly how the church was



*Deacons in 1986, L to R: Delmer Lemarr, Farris Bonds, Opie Winningham, Bill Oliger*

doing. It does appear that the 1980s were years of good growth, with plans for building renovation and construction. This time of growth and construction occurred within the fourteen year span of three pastors: Bro. Lester Orwig, 1978-82; Bro. Kirk Hardy, 1982-88 and Bro. Malcolm Sample, 1988-92. (Bro. Eugene Ryan served for four months between Bro. Hardy and Bro. Sample.)

The minutes add a personal note during those years by often naming those who joined the church. Beginning in the late '70s Bill and Louise Tillson, Mona Duncan and sons Adam and Aaron, Millie Halliburton, Opie and Iva Winningham became a part of the church. In 1983, Henry Ward came by baptism; Bill Oliger July, 1983, Travis and Vicky Jones and Karen Johnson by baptism; June, 1984, the entire Bass family by baptism; July, 1984, Kelvin and Barbara Smith by baptism; September, 1984, Bob and Marcia Patterson by baptism. The church had no baptistry so baptizing usually took place in "Ol Piney", a good baptizing (and swimming) hole of water in Choctaw Creek. Also in September 1984 Bill Oliger was ordained as a deacon. In early 1985 Eunice Beck joined by baptism and Steve, Donna, Sherry and Connie Breedlove joined by letter. The Wayne Sowell's joined. Continuing the family involvement, Marla (Bonds) Vest and James Vest (granddaughter and grandson-in-law of charter members Kara and Bea Shipp) came in the late 1980s and together have provided much needed leadership in all areas of the church. Now their daughter Kristen is a member. The 1987 revival resulted in six professions of faith, again with baptism in Ol Piney.

Though no attendance figures can be found for several of those years, church actions indicate the kinds of problems facing the church. Facilities became inadequate. The youth group was growing, causing a shortage of classrooms. The old auditorium needed frequent repair. Better heating and cooling systems were needed. A public address system was bought. Discussion began concerning the purchase of a church van. (This item was discussed at great length. It was not a hasty decision, but a van was finally purchased in 1988. It was sold in 1991.) Extensive discussion also began concerning a completely new facility.

During the business meeting of October 25, 1989, the decision was made to purchase a little over one acre of land from the Shipp family estate at the intersection of Highway #9 and County Line Road for \$2,000 on which to build a new church facility. In January, 1990 a building fund goal of \$68,000 was set. A building committee was elected, consisting of Farris Bonds, Bob



Patterson, Henry Ward, Bill Oliger, Delmer Lemarr, Eualaine Bonds, Dale Smith, and Bernice Bonds.

## The 1990s

Within the year Smith, Patterson and Bernice Bonds moved their membership and Ken McDannald, Betty Oliger and Stella Sample were elected to replace them. The church was granted a building loan from the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. A group of volunteer Baptist leaders, called the "Nailbenders," agreed to assist in constructing the building. In April,



*New Church Building completed in 1991*

1990 the church elected three trustees for the new facility: Farris Bonds, Delmer Lemarr and Bill Oliger. In October, 1990 the schedule was set for May 6-12, 1991 for the "Nailbenders" to come erect the building. The church had the slab poured and materials on site by that time.

Erection of the building by the "Nailbenders" brought back memories of the old "barn raising" days. The "Nailbenders," mostly retired couples, some with building skills, some just "gofers", brought their RVs and parked on site. Usually the men (including the men of the church) worked on the building while the women and local church members provided food and backup help. Work began early and continued late. A leader coordinated the work, bringing electrical, plumbing and mechanical people (the work was up to code specifications) together at appropriate times. Kidding, joking, fun and fellowship filled the days and evenings. Worship services were often held at night. A revival atmosphere was created.



*Congregation in front of old church building at last service, 1991*



*Last service in old building, June 1991, Malcom Sample, Pastor*

Ken McDannald of the Formosa church did an outstanding job of coordinating the purchase of materials and supplies so there were no delays in construction. Within one amazing week a building was up and enclosed. Bricking the outside and some finish work inside came later, but meetings could now be held in the building. Savings in the tens of thousands of dollars were brought by these volunteers. Many of the "Nailbenders"

were at an age which might suggest just taking it easy, but these volunteers for the Lord provide a tremendous mission ministry by their efforts while reaping rich spiritual rewards for themselves.



*Symbolic note burning ceremony for new building loan. Foreground: Malcom Sample (Former Pastor), Building Committee (Farris Bonds, Eulaine Bonds, Stella Sample, Henry Ward, Delmer Lemarr). Background: Earl Goatcher*

The last worship services in the old facility were held in June, 1991, then equipment, pews, chairs, piano etc. were moved to the new building. Dedication services were held on October 20, 1991 at 2:00 PM. Bro. Aaron Thompson, pastor from 1970-72, brought the dedicatory message.

Improvements continued at the new location. The parking lot was paved. New kitchen cabinets and appliances were added. New pews and pulpit furniture were purchased. An upright electronic piano improved the instrumental music for all services. A quality public address

system was installed. Growth in the church was reflected in giving: the fifteen year loan taken out by the church was fully repaid in two years. The church is debt free.

Transition in church membership continued. Bill and Betty Oliger, long time leaders and teachers, left, as did Bill Davis and others. But others



*Annual Christmas party at the Goatcher residence, 1994*



*Joann Goatcher, Pianist*



came in: The Donahues, Karen Murray, Wayne and Val Schmall, Walter Bracha, Jim and Jerri Lewis, Charles and Susan Thompson and family and Stanley Goatcher were among many who joined. Ken and Veneta Rickard were a welcome addition, with Ken coming as an active deacon from his former church. He was a needed replacement for Bill Olinger.

Death took the last two surviving charter members in the mid 1990s: Mrs. Bea (Shipp) Woolverton in 1994 and Mrs. Esther Olinger in 1995. Exemplifying many of the early members, Mrs. Bea Woolverton filled many positions in church over the years. Mrs. Olinger taught the Primary (Card) class for over 40 years.



*Last two charter members, L to R: Bea (Shipp) Woolverton, Esther Olinger*

In April, 1997 Bryan Sikes became pastor. In August, 1998 he was ordained into the ministry by the church. In December, 1998 he resigned to go to First Baptist in Leslie.

From its beginning the church has been active in association life. Situated on a county line between two associations, it has changed association relationships several times. At the beginning it was part of the Faulkner Association, then it related to the Van Buren County Association. When Van Buren County expanded to include Stone and part of Searcy County, Formosa changed back to Faulkner because the churches were nearer and more easily reached. For the past several years it has maintained a very active relationship with the North Central Baptist Association, providing many positions of leadership in the association.

## THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The turn of the century and the millenium brought change on a massive scale throughout the world, as technological innovations and cultural changes took off at an exponential rate. But, Formosa Baptist has remained true to God's Word and its missional purpose.

### The 2000s

Bro. Billy Don Crow, who was the associate pastor and youth director under Bro. Kenny Dunham, became the pastor in 2001. Pastor Crow was instrumental in bringing young couples and new families to the church which led to growth of our children and youth groups. In 2001, we ordained two additional deacons, Earl Goatcher and James Vest.

### The 2010s

In 2010, Bro. Joel Bunyard became the pastor and the plans for a church addition, which included restrooms, six classrooms, a kitchen, and fellowship space/gym, were already in the works. The addition was completed in 2012. In the meantime, the house and property across the street went up for auction. The church voted to try to purchase this property for additional parking space. John Hastings was designated to represent the church and bid on the property. The land was purchased in May 2010. In June 2011, the property where the original church was located was sold to the Eddie Dunham family for \$1,000.

In 2011, Bro. Billy Reece was called as pastor. He saw the completion of our new addition and much needed space. In 2015, an extension of the sanctuary was added. It provided additional seating space, sound booth, foyer and covered entryway. It was completed in November 2015. During this time, several members of our congregation went on mission trips to Honduras and Tanzania. In March of 2012, Jamie Beavers began serving as a deacon and TJ Pate and Jacob Barnard were ordained as deacons in 2013.

In April, 2019, long time member Janie Fullilove passed away and left the church life insurance money. It was almost enough to pay off the loan for the extension of the sanctuary. The balance was collected by church members at a business meeting to finish paying the balance of the loan.



*The current church building, with completed renovations*

## 2020 to the Present

In March of 2020, Josh Bradford was ordained as a deacon. Around that same time, the COVID-19 virus broke out into a worldwide pandemic, which greatly affected businesses, governmental services, churches, and most aspects of daily life. During the Covid pandemic of 2020, the church ceased having in person services in March and relied on technology using FaceBook live and YouTube. We resumed services in October, 2020 and our attendance suffered as a result.

After a tenure of 12 years, the longest in Formosa's 100-year history, Billy Reece resigned in 2023 but remains an active member of the church. What a testimony to the positive relationships Formosa has had with its pastors! Brandon Moore served as interim pastor for several months in 2023-2024, leading the church to build a website and prepare for the next pastor. Jason Hill, a former missionary and Bible translator to Papua New Guinea (2017-2024) was called as the next pastor in July 2024.

# THE FUTURE: THE CENTURY TO COME

By Jason Hill

As I look back on the history of Formosa Baptist, I'm struck by just how much the world has changed in the past 100 years. Roads that were once dirt and gravel, frequented with horse-drawn buggies are now asphalt-paved, busy thoroughfares for all kinds of vehicles. Open-air church services have been replaced by modern buildings with central heat and air conditioning. Urbanization has drawn many away from small towns like Formosa towards bigger population centers like Little Rock and Conway. The culture of our society has changed dramatically, too, especially within the past 25 years—and not always for the better! Technological innovations like the internet, social media, and cell phones have made many aspects of life and ministry much easier, but they have also wreaked havoc upon families and communities. Humanity's sinful nature, aided by technological innovations, has found new and more creative ways to relish in debauchery.

But, the life-changing power of the gospel has not changed or abated. Formosa Baptist Church remains as committed as ever to seeing lives transformed through the power of the gospel for the glory of God. While many of the changes in our society have not been for the better, technological innovations have also enabled us to cast a broader net as we fish for men and women. Globalization and improvements in transportation have allowed us to take foreign mission trips to places like Tanzania and Honduras—places that previously would have been virtually inaccessible to all except career missionaries. The COVID crisis, while devastating, also forced churches like ours to adapt and maintain an online presence.

Change is inevitable and will, no doubt, continue at a blistering pace in our modern society. While we may use a screen for our worship lyrics instead of a hymnal, a website instead of a newspaper, and social media instead of old-fashioned phone chains, our core mission remains unchanged. We will continue to adapt our methods and tools, becoming “all things to all people, that by all means [we] might save some.” (I Cor. 9:22, ESV) But, the message of God's love and redemption never changes, and our purpose—to glorify God through the proclamation of his Word—will remain unchanged. God has been faithful in the past 100 years to Formosa Baptist Church, and we are confident that he will be faithful in the next 100 years.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*







# Welcome

*Celebrating 100 Years of God's Faithfulness!*



*“One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare  
your mighty acts.”*

Psalm 145:4 (ESV)