

Mountain View Baptist Church: A History in Music and Song

Mountain View Baptist Church was founded in 1909. The church and its ministries have continually evolved since that time. The Music Ministry is no exception. From the days of singing schools and singing conventions to cantatas and fifth Sunday night singings, our history is rich in music tradition. The general history of the church has been documented through the years. Until now, the history of our Music Ministry has largely been an oral history passed down through generations. Although some of the time frames are forgotten, the members who shaped this ministry are not.



The late Robert McDuffie ("Duff") Bolding is the first known music leader of Mountain View. He is best remembered for leading "Singing Schools" in the community and what was known then as the Hurricane Township Association, later to become the Twelve Mile River Association, and the present day Pickens-Twelve Mile Baptist Association. Mr. Bolding, a local native, graduated from the Ruebush-Kieffer School of Music in Dayton, VA around 1909. There, he learned the method of music education based on "shape-notes". He incorporated this method into the singing schools he taught, using a rotating chalk board as he taught eager minds to read and count music. "Singing Schools" were a popular church and community event during the early days of Mountain View. These were popular not only in our local area, but in most of the South at that time. The Ruebush-Kieffer School of Music was the inspiration for many well known Gospel Music publishers such as James D. Vaughan, Stamps-Baxter, and Zondervan. Some attribute the teachings of the Ruebush-Kieffer School to the beginnings of what is known as "Southern Gospel" music. The school evolved into Shenandoah University, now located in Winchester, VA.

In the early years of the church, most members knew how to read music, largely due to the influence of the singing schools. Music was an important thread in the fabric of the church. It is safe to say that the fellowship associated with singing and musical gatherings played integral parts in the founding and growth of our church. This is not to diminish the core purpose of the church, to reach souls for Christ and teach the word of God. In those days music was an important social and community event before the days and availability of radio, television, and other forms of entertainment.



1912 Singing School

A photo of a 1912 Singing School at Mountain View led by R.M. Bolding.

and by 1951 what happened—Catherine Bolding.

Prof. Robert McDuffey Bolding Dies in Pickens, S. C.

Death came to Mr. Bolding on November 7th, after a long illness. Mr. Bolding was a graduate of the Ruebush-Kieffer Music School, of Dayton, Va. He has been a great booster and blessing to the singing interest of the South. He was a consecrated Christian and faithful to his church.

Mr. Bolding will be missed, especially in his own community where he was so dearly loved.

The Visitor family extends sympathy to his many friends. His good friend, Mr. Jim Hall, writes us that he was a loyal supporter of gospel singing.

Church services haven't always been held in the 3 meetings per week format that we are familiar with today. In the era of the Singing Conventions, each church in the convention was designated as the meeting place for a given month. On that Sunday, all members of the convention would travel to the designated church for well remembered music services. Again, music played an important role in building fellowship and spirit among the community. In those days, preaching services were held on two Sundays a month, and the Singing Convention met one Sunday a month. It is believed that Rev. Vigril Merck was the first pastor to organize Sunday evening services at Mountain View.

Before the days of designated Music Directors, musicians, and choirs, different members would direct the music. Most of the time it was the ones present who knew how to read music the best or were willing to play an instrument or direct the congregation. Rev. Seagle Bolding is remembered for leading the music during church revivals. Revival was held once a year and was the first week in August for many years. Rev. Bolding is also remembered for playing his beloved harmonium ("pump organ"), now refurbished and on display in our fellowship hall.

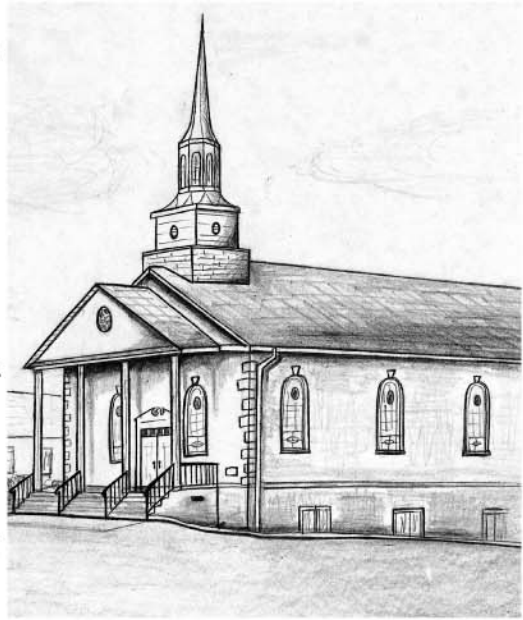
It is difficult to research and list all of the music leaders and musicians from the early years (1909 to approx. 1963). Many members participated in the music ministry from time to time. Also, as stated earlier, the history is mainly word-of-mouth, unlike the general history of the church which is better documented.

After Robert McDuffie Bolding, the Music Ministry was led by his son, the late George Bolding and also the late Calvin Pilgrim. In 1964, the Music Director was Harold Greene. Calvin Pilgrim once again led the music until the arrival of the late Rev. Heyward Fleming in the summer of 1970. Rev. Fleming's wife, Debbie led the music for several years, introducing new music to the choir, leading children's music, and rendering well remembered solos.

Other music ministries have evolved from the Music Ministry of Mountain View. In the late 1970's, Don Pilgrim, a life-long member heeded the call to the music ministry. Don was a soloist and prominent figure in our church music for many years. He was given a special farewell service and fellowship upon leaving Mountain View to become the Minister of Music at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Easley.



Calvin ("Red") Pilgrim was an ever-present figure in the Music Ministry of Mountain View. He was always faithful to the call and led the music whenever he was needed. He is best remembered for tapping his foot to the count of the music while singing or directing and "letting 'er fly". Who could ever forget his renditions of "Beulah Land" in his later years. The program from the June 6, 1976 Dedication Service of the 1976 sanctuary lists him as Music Director once again. He filled that role until 1979 when the Flemings heeded God's call to another church and the late Rev. T.W. Searcy was called as Pastor of Mountain View later that year.



Mrs. Vivian Searcy, wife of Rev. Searcy assumed the role as Music Minister after their arrival at Mountain View. She directed the Adult and Youth choirs during their pastorate at the church. One of her cherished songs to direct for the choir was "Sweet, Sweet Spirit". The Searcy's youngest daughter, Tami, is remembered for playing the piano during those years.

The Searcys remained at Mountain View until Rev. T.W. ("Bill's") retirement in 1990. Ben Finley was called as Minister of Music that year. Ben was the choir director and a well remembered soloist, along with his wife Sharon, who grew up in our church. Ben held the position of Music Director until 1994.

Doyce Rogers was called as Music Director in 1994. He brought with him a wealth of experience from years of involvement and direction of church music and radio ministries. He is a soloist and also a member of the Mountain View Ensemble and other groups.

May God bless the Music Ministry of our church as we sing to bring praise, glory, and honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Robert McDuffie Bolding



George Bolding



Calvin Pilgrim



Harold Greene



Debbie Fleming Coker



Vivian Searcy



Ben Finley



Doyce Rogers

Assistant Music Director

Patti Hunter Barger

Musicians

Lily Bolding - Piano

Randolph Bolding - Piano

Rachel Bolding Harrison - Piano

Christine Porter Greene - Piano/ Organ

Dan Greene - Organ

Elaine Finley Adams - Piano/ Organ

Beth Kelley Cohout - Organ

Diane Pilgrim Little - Organ

Shelia Murphree Helms - Organ

Tami Searcy Howell - Organ

Libba Porter Brownell - Piano/ Organ

Patti Hunter Barger - Piano

Ralphelle Nations Channell - Piano

Amy Cobb Hayes - Piano

Mountain View Ensemble

Doyce Rogers

Amy Cobb Hayes

Tretha Simmons Bryant

Cheryl Pilgrim Golden

Patti Hunter Barger

Mac Copeland



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