

The History of Mountain View Baptist Church, Six Mile, S.C.

“What else could we call this church but Mountain View?” These words were spoken by the late Frank Tompkins as he stood where the church was to be built, and gazed upon a beautiful expanse of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mountain View Baptist Church was constructed upon a 3 ¼ acre parcel of land donated by Mr. N.D. Parsons. The land was valued at fifty cents per acre in 1909.

According to the first recorded church minutes, there were nineteen original members who founded Mountain View on November 29, 1909 at the home of Brother E.M. Bolding. These charter members were: N.D. Parsons, Sallie Parsons, Eber Parsons, J.A. Parsons, J.L. Parsons, Dovie Parsons, Nannie Parsons, S.L. Hudson, Mary Hudson, A.B. Stokes, Janie Stokes, Carlie Holden, Anna Holden, E.M. Bolding, Alice Bolding, J.B. Bolding, Eula Bolding, Samuel Bolding, and Essie Bolding. Rev. J.E. Foster was elected pastor and E.M. Bolding was elected church clerk. The first fifty dollars for construction of the sanctuary was pledged by Nelson Bolding. He worked at a saw mill earning fifty cents per day.

The first sanctuary was dedicated on May 1, 1910. The building was completed with donated materials and labor by church members, neighbors, and friends. There were even friends of other faiths who assisted in the construction. The sermon of dedication was delivered by Dr. W.T. Derieux of Greenville. A collection of one hundred dollars was received that day.

The membership of Mountain View quickly expanded, due to transfers from Six Mile, Mile Creek, Secona, and Praters Creek churches. Mr. W.N. Bolding donated a plot of land in a hollow below the church. There was a spring on the property and a pool was dug there to use for baptisms.

The church joined the Twelve Mile River Baptist Association on September 10, 1910. This later became the current Pickens-Twelve Mile Baptist Association. In February of 1911, Mrs. Sallie Henderson became the first person to be buried in the church cemetery. The first baby born into the congregation was Betty Bolding Buchanan.

The first sanctuary was heavily damaged by a storm in 1939. Oral history accounts tell of poles being used to reinforce the leaning building. It received more damage in a later fire. A group met on July 5, 1939 to begin the process of tearing down the weakened structure and make way for a new facility. Everyone dreaded the task of removing the first plank from the sacred building. To their surprise, it was discovered that the building had recently been struck by lightning and some of the lower boards had already been knocked off.

A new brick structure was built on the same location as the original building. It was dedicated on May 5, 1940. In 1959, Sunday School rooms, church offices, a baptismal pool, and a basement were added to the facility.

In 1962, the church constructed a parsonage under the guidance of Rev. Virgil Merck, Pastor. The house was built on a lot adjoining the church property, donated by Mr. Geer Gibson. The parsonage housed all pastors of Mountain View until 2009 when the church decided to provide a housing allowance to the

pastor. The parsonage was sold and removed from the property which was used for expanded parking facilities and earmarked as a possible future site for an activity building.

In 1971, discussions and meetings began concerning the church facilities and their capacity to handle future growth. In 1975, action was taken to begin the construction of a new sanctuary. The new structure was dedicated on June 6, 1976. It included Sunday School rooms, a nursery, rest rooms, and offices. It has served ever since as the main church facility. By the grace of God, the mortgage note was paid in full in December of 1982, just six years after completion. In 1993, the interior of the sanctuary was completely renovated, including new carpeting, paint, and refinishing of the pews and furniture.

The former sanctuary was converted into a Fellowship Hall facility for church events. Renovations included a fully furnished kitchen. Prior to this facility, activities were held in the basement area of the former sanctuary. Other areas of the building were renovated to include a choir room, Pastor's study, church office, Sunday School rooms, and restrooms.

A large bell is housed in the towering steeple of the current sanctuary. Our forefathers rang the same bell when it resided in the steeples of both former buildings. The beautiful scene gracing the baptismal pool is also rich with history. It was carefully removed from the former sanctuary and relocated in the current building. It was painted by the late Leon Cochran, along with the painting that hangs at the bottom of the sanctuary stairwell leading to the Sunday School rooms. Mr. Cochran's son touched up the baptismal scene when it was pieced back together in its current location. These are only a few pieces of a proud heritage that we carry into the future.

Mountain View has a rich history in music. In October 2007, we celebrated the history of the Music Ministry of the church. Professor Robert McDuffie Bolding, the first Music Director of Mountain View held well known singing schools in the surrounding areas at various churches as early as 1912. The complete history of the Music Ministry is detailed in a separate section. It is the text that was distributed during the service in 2007.

On Sunday, October 4th 2009, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of Mountain View. A special edition of the pictorial church directory was unveiled in this service. It included a written and pictorial history of the church. The history of the church was presented and celebrated during the service and a fellowship was held afterwards.

In April 2010, the early 1960's Hammond draw bar organ was replaced with a new Rogers Digital organ. In the same year, the church installed an elevator in the foyer to ease transit for members needing assistance to the Sunday School Rooms downstairs.

Our history continues as we carry forth God's ministry in an ever-changing world.