

The History of Leesville Road Baptist Church

The Leesville Road Baptist Church has its roots in the assembly of a small group of Christians who began meeting in 1949 in a store building on Campbell Avenue in Lynchburg, Virginia.

By the summer of 1950 they had erected a small church building on Leesville Road. It was located on a parcel of land made available by Mr. Wyatt W. Wilson, Sr. and was operated under the name of Oak Grove Christian Church with thirteen members. The size of the building was nineteen feet by twenty-eight feet. According to the church minutes of November 22, 1952, a meeting was held on that day and those in attendance voted unanimously to organize a Southern Baptist Missionary Church. The group made plans to purchase land and erect a new building.

The church gets a NEW NAME and makes NEW PLANS

At a business meeting on January 10, 1953, the name "Leesville Road Baptist Church" was chosen as the name for the new church. The organizational meeting of the new Leesville Road Baptist Church was held on February 22, 1953, with Rev. Robert L. Randolph as moderator and Rev. Ralph Culler assisting. The charter membership roster included thirty members. The new church membership approved a motion to apply for membership in the local Strawberry Baptist Association, a division of the Southern Baptist Association.

The church calls a NEW PASTOR!

At a business meeting on March 8, 1953, Mr. M. Keith Wilson, Mr. Eugene Stone and Mr. Everett Saunders were elected as deacons and trustees of the church. In October of 1953 Rev. Riley W. Ware accepted the church's call as the first pastor at Leesville Road Baptist Church. By this time other land had been purchased for a new church site and in December of 1953, a building committee was chosen to plan for a new church building.

The church gets a NEW BUILDING!

The new building (currently the old building) was constructed in stages. The lower level was completed and served for both Sunday School and Worship Services. By January of 1957, Rev. Riley Ware had decided to return to school and therefore tendered his resignation. The church spent little time in locating a new pastor and in March of 1957, Rev. John B. Thurman was called as a pastor.

The church gets a NEW ADDITION!

By the middle of 1958 the church had decided to complete the building and added the much anticipated new sanctuary on the upper level. Construction was completed and the new sanctuary was ready for use in early 1959. Rev. Thurman served as pastor until April of 1966. The church was to have to wait almost a year before getting its next full time pastor. In May of 1967, Rev. Charles M. Rector was called as the next pastor. Under Rev. Rector's leadership, the church purchased additional land, renovated and air conditioned the sanctuary, and purchased new furniture. The dedication service was held on October 5, 1969. The church membership at this time was 143.

The church moves to a NEW ASSOCIATION!

Rev. Charles Rector served as pastor until August of 1971 at which time Rev. Alan Mason was called as the new pastor. By 1972, the church was considering the establishing of a bus ministry. In October of 1972, the church decided to withdraw from the Strawberry Baptist Association and joined the Lynchburg Baptist Association, also a division of the Southern Baptist Association.

The church acquires NEW LAND!

In March of 1973, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Law donated two acres of land for a new church parking lot. The new land not only provided plenty of new parking space, but also a place for recreational activities such as our annual fall barbeque.

The church gets a NEW LIABILITY!

In February of 1974, a motion was approved to award a contract for construction of a new building to J.E. Jamerson and Sons. The new addition would eventually carry a total construction cost of \$234,330. The new building, which constitutes our current sanctuary and Sunday school rooms, was completed in early 1977. The new sanctuary is designed to seat 650 people. The dedication service was held on February 6, 1977.

In September of 1979, Rev. Alan Mason resigned and Mr. Charles Sanders served as interim pastor until October 1979 when Rev. Ron Lynch was called as pastor.

In April of 1980, Rev. Ron Lynch resigned and Mr. Charles Orr served as interim pastor from July of 1980 until August of 1980 when the church called Rev. Stan Frye as its new pastor.

The church assumes a NEW POSITION!

In November of 1982 under the leadership of Rev. Stan Frye the church decided to withdraw from the Southern Baptist Convention and the Lynchburg Baptist Association and became strictly independent with no affiliation or accountability to any other religious institution.

In October of 1983 Rev. Stan Frye decided to return to a ministry of family evangelism and resigned his pastorship at Leesville Road Baptist Church. Dr. Gerald Kroll of Liberty University served as interim pastor until January 1985 when Rev. Wayne Willis accepted the call to serve as pastor.

Coming from Rockwell, North Carolina, Rev. Willis served as pastor until July 1991. Under Rev. Willis' leadership our church developed a greater commitment to missions and increased missions support from two to six missionaries and established a Missions Scholarship Fund. It was also during Rev. Willis' pastorship that the annual Fall barbeque was begun; a great time of fellowship.

The church gets NEW OPPORTUNITIES!

In December of 1991, the Leesville Road Baptist Church extended a call to Dr. Harley N. Towler, Jr. to become its new pastor. Dr. Towler, a Lynchburg native, returned to the "Hill City" from Greenville, South Carolina. Under his leadership, may our church seize upon new opportunities to proclaim the GOOD NEWS to a lost world. And may all that we do be done to the glory of God!