Anniversary 75th Celebration

1891 - 1966

East Baptist Church
Clements and Powell Streets
Paducah, Kentucky
Seventy-Five Years of God's Blessings

The Story of

East Baptist Church

Paducah, Kentucky

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Celebration

July 24-29, 1966
Church Directory

Pastor .......................................................... W. O. Spencer

Music Director .................................................. Tom Butler

Organist ....................................................... Mrs. C. B. Stevens

Assistant Organist ........................................ Miss Carolyn Fitch

Pianist .......................................................... Mrs. Jim Munal

Assistant Pianist ............................................ Mrs. Charles Reeves

Clerk ............................................................ Herschel Gish

Assistant Clerk ............................................... C. B. Stevens

Treasurer ....................................................... J. H. Styers

Assistant Treasurer ........................................ Levi Jones

Trustees—Edward Rodocker, Chairman; J. H. Styers, L. E. Reed, C. B. Stevens, and Bill Rogers

Deacons—Charles Lynn, Chairman; Harlan Jackson, Associate Chairman; Dallas Austin, Robert Emerson, Harlan Fitch, J. H. Fitch, Herschel Gish, Rudy Goad, Edgar Jeffords, E. M. Jeffrey, Boyce Jones, George Noles, R. R. Ramage, Terry Sills, John Smith, Huel Trevathan, Ozzie Vandergriff.

Ushers—Levi Jones, Chairman; Dallas Austin, Johnnie Barrow, Ralph Cardin, Gayle Downs, Eugene Griffith, Marshall Nikirk, and J. H. Styers.

Church Secretary ............................................. Mrs. Harlan Fitch

Church Custodian ............................................. Lester E. Wilson

He is a graduate of Campbellsville College and has held pastorates in Ohio County, 3½ years; at Blackford Baptist Church in Hancock County, 8 years; and at Hall Street Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky, 12½ years. Bro. Spencer is active in both Associational and State work, having served as moderator of Daviess-McLean Baptist Association and also two terms as a member of the Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Bro. Spencer and his lovely wife, the former Dorothy Patrick of Livermore, Kentucky, have captured the hearts of the people here, and it is the earnest prayer of all members that their work at East Church may continue to merit God's blessings for a very long time to come.
Introduction

For seventy-five years the people of East Baptist Church have loved deeply, served devotedly, and preached faithfully the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Her history is far too great to be presented without writing many volumes.

This booklet is a brief glimpse back upon the work of God the Holy Spirit through the lives of our ancestors. “To God be the Glory! Great things He hath done.”

Believing that memory is sometimes a blessed inspiration, we have set aside a week in commemoration of the past work of God’s people; but as we look back, we also look ahead. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Philippians 1:6

The present state of the life of the East Baptist Church is a living memorial to the wonderful people who have come this far. With the faithful, dedicated people now composing her membership, we look forward under God to the next seventy-five years and more. Her vision is forward; her courage strong. She sings, “Lead on, O King Eternal. We will follow Thee.”

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”—I Timothy 1:17

W. O. Spencer, Pastor
Old Langstaff School, first building on present property, used as church building from 1907-1911.

Church Building: 1912-1928
Construction cost: $5,385.00

Church Building 1928-1948
Renovation Cost: $7,500.00

Auditorium 1941
Present Auditorium

Congregation: July 1966

Parsonage: 1927 Bridge Street 1940-1958

Present Parsonage: 252 Clements Street Completed in February 1958

BOARD OF TRUSTEES


Church Secretary, Mrs. Harlan Fitch, who has served since October 1955.

Custodian Lester E. Wilson.
SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS AND TEACHERS

The earliest records of East Church indicate that there were 5 teachers and 40 pupils in the Sunday School organization in 1892, with Bro. T. Reeder serving as superintendent. In 1954 the Sunday School enrollment reached its peak of 979 with J. H. Fitch as superintendent and Rev. Sam Sloan, pastor. The present Sunday School organization of 12 departments is fully staffed with 102 officers and teachers, led by Dan Sills as superintendent and Marshall Nikirk as assistant superintendent. The present enrollment is 524. One member, R. S. Buckingham, has set a record of not missing Sunday School in 31 years.


BAPTIST TRAINING UNION OFFICERS AND LEADERS

Training Union programs in East Church were begun about 1911 with the establishment of a Baptist Young People's Union. By 1922 there were 42 enrolled in the two unions, the Junior and the Senior. The name was later changed by the Southern Baptist Convention to include programs for all ages. The peak enrollment of 310 was reached in 1955 when Miss Juanita Jones was Director and Rev. Sam Sloan, pastor. The present organization has 7 departments, 14 unions, and 192 members. Charles Reeves is Director; Pat Trevathan is Associate Director; and Boyce Jones is serving his fifteenth year as General Secretary.

Others who have served as Director are James E. Bouland (the first one in 1926), J. H. Fitch, Terry Sills, Frank Park, Miss Dorothy Munal, B. D. Sills, Charles Lynn, Miss Agnes Burnett, Miss Juanita Jones, Charles Vick, Luther Griffin, and Charles Reeves.
WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION OFFICERS

An organization known as the Ladies Aid, dating back to January 1908, is the first record of special women's work. In 1917 a Woman's League, which seems to have been the forerunner of the Woman's Missionary Society, was reported in the minutes. The present Woman's Missionary Union, with an enrollment of 79, is composed of three societies for the ladies, a Y.W.A., an Intermediate G.A., and a Junior G.A. Mrs. Kenny Osborne is the President.

Other presidents who have served since the organization of the W.M.U. are Mrs. H. C. Hopewell, Mrs. R. F. McClure, Mrs. J. E. Cochran, Mrs. G. W. Turner, Mrs. Mamie Goodman, Mrs. Edith Trewathan, Mrs. L. T. Lindsay, Mrs. Boyce Jones, Mrs. M. K. Trewathan, Mrs. Joe T. Odle, Mrs. A. L. Wallace, Mrs. Sam Sloan, Mrs. Charles Gholson, Mrs. V. R. Wright, Mrs. Louis Reaves, Mrs. Ed Kelly, and Mrs. Bill Rogers.

SANCTUARY CHOIR

Miss Carolyn Fitch, Asst. Organist
Mrs. Jim Munal, Pianist
Mrs. C. B. Stevens, Organist and Junior Choir Director
Tom Butler, Music Director

Absent: Mrs. Charles Reeves, Asst. Pianist
It was on a summer night in the year 1891 that East Baptist Church was organized. At that time Bro. G. H. Powell was conducting an open air revival in the yard of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Starrett, on Benton Road (now 224 Clements Street) in Mechanicsburg. During the progress of the meeting, Bro. Powell announced plans to organize a Baptist church. When the action for organization was taken, fourteen people came forward to unite into a church. Thus the Island Creek Baptist Church came into existence, with Bro. G. H. Powell being called as its first pastor at a salary of $60.00 per year. During the following days and weeks, several others came into the church, and by the time the Association met in October the membership was 37.

A list of the charter members is now available, but among those who were charter members or who joined soon after the organization were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jones, Mr. and Mrs. John Ramage, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Park, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Smith, Mr. and Mrs. John Moore, Mr. and Mrs. David Moore, Mr. and Mrs. James Wood, Mrs. Eliza Byerly, Mrs. Elconie Medley, Mrs. Catherine Shores, Mrs. Rachel Russell, Mrs. G. W. Starrett, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brame, and Mr. W. L. Sullivant. Fifty years later four of these charter members were still living: Mrs. J. A. Park, Mrs. James Wood, Mrs. Elconie Medley, and Mr. W. L. Sullivant. Of these four, only Mrs. Elconie Medley lived into the 75th year of the founding of the church. She died in May 1966.

The meeting at which the church was organized was not the first activity of Baptists in this part of the city. As early as 1850 the First Baptist Church of Paducah had conducted some mission services in Mechanicsburg and since 1875 had carried on this work rather consistently. Also each summer for several years, various Baptist preachers had conducted revival meetings in the vicinity. All of these activities laid the foundations for the church which came into being in 1891. First Baptist Church not only helped before the organization but also continued to befriend the little church long after it was formed, often helping to support the pastor and in other ways lending financial and other assistance.

A building known as the old Soap Factory, which stood near the banks of Cross Creek (Island Creek) at the end of Kinkead Street, served as the first meeting place of the new church. Soon thereafter, a lot at the corner of Ashbrook and Yeiser Streets was given to the church and a frame structure valued at $700.00 was built in the autumn of 1891. This small building was used by the church the first sixteen years of its existence.

In the beginning the growth of the church was rather slow. At the 1892 Association it reported a membership the same as the year before, 37. However, there was a Sunday School with 40 enrolled, and $13.85 was given to missions. Before Bro. Powell's three-year ministry was concluded, the membership had grown to 70 and the pastor's salary increased to $100.00 per year.

In 1894 Bro. C. C. Bussell was called as pastor at a salary of $200.00 and the church reported a membership of 62.

In 1895 the church changed its name from Island Creek Baptist Church to East Baptist Church. Bro. L. B. Duncan was called as pastor that year and served until 1901. During his pastorate the membership reached 92. In 1898 the total gifts for local expenses were $130.00 and $2.30 was given to missions.

In the fall of 1902 Bro. J. L. Perryman was called as pastor and served for one year. His salary was supplemented by the First Baptist Church and the State Mission Board. During the year the Sunday School was taken under the jurisdiction of the church.

In November 1903 Bro. L. B. Duncan was again called as pastor and served one year. In 1904 Bro. T. E. Richie was called and served one year. The
church enjoyed a good revival that year with 33 new members coming into the fellowship. The Sunday School had four classes with an enrollment of 65. Bro. N. M. Reeder was superintendent.

In the fall of 1905, Bro. Sandy H. Allen was called as pastor and served until August 1908, when he resigned. Under his leadership the church experienced much growth. In 1906 there was a revival with more than 80 additions and the membership grew to 163 and to 194 in 1907. In the spring of 1907 a committee was appointed to plan for a new church building and in June of that year the Langstaff school house, which stood on the site of the present church building, was purchased.

Bro. J. P. Riley followed Bro. Sandy Allen as pastor and served more than four years. There were several developments during his pastorate. Southern Baptist Sunday School literature was adopted, the first Ladies Aid was authorized, and Bro. N. M. Reeder was the first minister ordained by the church. The major project at this time was the construction of a new church building, which cost $5,385.00. During the building period services were held in a tent on the corner of Flora Avenue and Bridge Street and later in the rooms upstairs over Cartee's grocery, which is still standing on the corner of Bridge and Clements Streets. The erection of the new church was begun on September 11, 1911, and first services were held in the completed building on January 14, 1912. At that time the membership of the church was 200 and the Sunday School had an enrollment of about 180. Bro. Riley resigned in the spring of 1913 to accept the pastorate of the Benton Church.

The decade 1913 to 1923 were years of varying prosperity and decline for the church. It was during this period that the effect of World War I was felt within the church life as well as among the individual members. Five pastors served during these ten years: H. K. Thomas, 1914; O. J. Taylor, 1915-1916; H. C. Hopewell, 1917-1918; Terry Martin, 1919-1920; and A. E. Lassiter, 1921-1923. In spite of the difficult times, the church saw progress in the Sunday School and women's work, and the B.Y.P.U. was established. It also participated in the Seventy-Five Million Campaign of Southern Baptists. The State Mission Board supplemented the pastor's salary temporarily but was stopped by the church in the early twenties. The membership in 1923 was 137.

On October 10, 1923, Bro. A. W. Leigh was called as pastor and served for nearly nine years. Growth in spirituality and physical facilities was evidenced during this period. There were 186 persons baptized, and the membership rose from 137 in 1923 to 315 in 1932. In 1927 a frame Sunday School building was erected, and in 1928 the church building was remodeled by the addition of a basement at a cost of about $7,500.00. During these years a total of about $35,000.00 was given for all causes, with $2,831.49 going for missions. Bro. Leigh resigned in May 1932.

In June 1932 the church called Rev. Joe T. Odle as pastor. He began his ministry in July and served almost eleven years, the longest pastorate in the history of East Church. When Bro. Odle came, the church was facing difficult times, as those were the darkest days of the depression. Under his leadership, however, the church quickly gained momentum and all phases of the church work progressed rapidly. In October 1932 a great revival meeting was held with Bro. W. K. Wood as evangelist. Seventy-three persons were added to the church, and by the end of the first year East Church gained 146 new members. The evangelistic spirit continued through the years that followed so that by the end of Bro. Odle's ministry nearly 700 members were received into the church with more than 400 by baptism. Membership rose from 315 to 675.

Along with the rest of Paducah, East Church was engulfed by the Ohio River Flood in January 1937. Services had to be suspended from January 17 until March 7. The flood waters reached a height of about eight feet in the church basement but did not reach the auditorium, which was the haven of safety for more than 100 refugees. Damage to church property was about $1,000.00, and the Baptist Flood Relief Committee donated $625.00 to partially cover this damage.
In 1932 the church debt incurred in the 1928 remodeling of the building was still about $5,400.00. Because of the depression, bank failures, etc., nothing had been paid on it for about a year. Small payments were resumed in the fall of 1932, and the final payment was made in March 1940. The bonds were burned in a great praise service early in April.

Several building and remodeling projects were carried out during Bro. Odle's pastorate. In 1937 the auditorium was beautified and a baptistry added. In 1938 a frame Sunday School Annex was erected. In 1940 the auditorium was redecorated, and the parsonage at 1927 Bridge was purchased. In 1941 the church built a mission at the corner of Sowell and Ewing Streets. This mission is the present Berea Baptist Church, which bought and now occupies the former Immanuel Baptist Church building on Murrell Boulevard.

During all this period of depression, flood, debt paying and building programs, the church displayed true missionary spirit, giving 20% of its income to missions.

Another memorable event during Bro. Odle's ministry was the fiftieth anniversary of the church commemorated with a Golden Jubilee Celebration, August 3-6, 1941. (At that time the history of the church was published from research data compiled by the pastor, which has been incorporated, practically verbatim, in this publication commemorating the 75th Anniversary. Two years later in March 1943, Bro. and Mrs. Odle, Joe Thomas, and Sarah moved to Mississippi, where Bro. Odle became pastor of the Crystal Springs Baptist Church. He is presently serving as editor of the Mississippi Baptist publication, The Baptist Record.

The last twenty-five years in the history of East Church have been fraught by many changes, some favorable and some unfavorable. Economic conditions have been better and people have had the means to contribute more for religious purposes. At the same time, the growth of other new and nearby churches has to a great extent restricted this field. Of the six pastors during this period, the shortest was that of Rev. R. B. Hooks, 1943-1944; the longest was that of Rev. Sam Sloan, 1949-1956.

The Hooks family—Bro. and Mrs. Hooks, R. B., Jr., Carter, Frances and Monita—even though they had only a one-year ministry, made their contribution to the Lord's work in East Church. There were 72 additions to the church and a total of $17,816.63 was given to all causes, with $4,125.89 going to missions. Church membership was 671. Bro. Hooks resigned to go into State Mission work. He is presently the pastor of Brownsville Missionary Baptist Church, Brownsville, Kentucky.

In August 1944, Rev. and Mrs. T. J. Tichenor and Shirley came to East Church to begin a five-year ministry characterized by evangelistic efforts. During his pastorate, Bro. Tichenor baptized 295 people. This number is indicative of the fact that East Church led the Association, composed of 39 church, in number of baptisms for three out of four years reported. Church membership rose from 690 to 1100, and the average attendance in Sunday School grew from 264 to 352. Offerings increased from $17,817.00 to $31,609.00 with mission gifts for the five-year period totaling $24,418.00. Under Bro. Tichenor's leadership, the sanctuary was remodeled as it appears today; and an educational plant consisting of 37 rooms was erected behind the church sanctuary, at an amazingly low cost, because of volunteer labor, not only from members of East Church but from men of other faiths who found in "Bro. Jack" the kind of friend they needed and loved. Bro. Tichenor also instituted Extension Department Day, a project that provided the means by which physically handicapped persons could be transported to church to attend services.

Bro. Tichenor left East Church in 1949 to assume the pastorate of the Seventh Street Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee, where he remained until a few months ago when he accepted the call of First Baptist Church, Mt. Healthy, Cincinnati, Ohio.

In April 1949, the Lord led Rev. and Mrs. Sam Sloan and their small daughter Sandy to East Church,
and every phase of the church work showed a substantial gain during their ministry of seven years. The average attendance in Sunday School rose from 352 in 1948 to 524 in 1955, the highest average attendance reported in the history of the church. Likewise the Training Union showed an increase of from 87 to 204, and Vacation Bible School attendance increased from 230 to 345. Other accomplishments included the purchasing of a Hammond organ for the sanctuary, the Air-conditioning of the sanctuary and nursery, and making improvements to the entrance of the building as it is today. Cooperative Program offerings increased from $2,718.40 in 1948 to $13,220.26 in 1955. Total gifts for missions for the seven-year period were $87,109.03. The Brotherhood and three new choirs were organized, and Youth Sunday was inaugurated. Eight young men were licensed to preach, five of whom were ordained to the Gospel Ministry. Of the 819 members who came into the church, over 400 came for baptism.

Bro. Sloan resigned as pastor of East Church in February 1956 to begin another church ministry in Ashland, Kentucky. He is now pastor of the First Baptist Church, West Carrollton, Ohio.

Rev. and Mrs. Wendell H. Rone, Sr., Wendell, Jr., Ila Faye and Kyle came to East Church in August 1956. During their three-year ministry the church continued its strong program of evangelism and expansion. Again in 1957, East Church led West Union Association in number of baptisms. A total of 207 members were added to the church, of whom 107 were by baptism. Over $35,000.00 was given for missions during this period, emphasizing the missionary zeal of the church and its pastor. The church also purchased two additional pieces of property and built a new pastorium, valued at $31,000.00, across the street from the church building. Bro. Rone, also a widely recognized author of several books dealing with Baptist doctrine, held a relatively short pastorate here; but his scholarly presentations of the Scriptures have left a deep and lasting impression upon those whom he served as pastor and preacher. He left East Church in July 1959 to assume the pastorate of Bellevue Baptist Church, a newly organized church in Owensboro, Ky., where he is presently serving.

It was only a few weeks following the resignation of Bro. Rone that the Lord led the pulpit committee to recommend Rev. H. D. Hudson to the membership as pastor of East Church; and he and his family, Mrs. Jane Hudson, Dyanne, Joe and James moved to the church field in September 1959 to begin a four-year ministry. In the first year, the indebtedness on the new parsonage was paid and work was started on the new educational annex, which was completed in 1961 at a cost of $88,550.00.

Other physical improvements included the laying of a new carpet in the church sanctuary and the purchasing of two new pianos and new equipment for the church office. During Bro. Hudson's ministry 169 persons were added to the church and mission gifts totaled $40,557.00. He resigned as pastor in September 1963 to return to the First Baptist Church, Bardwell, Kentucky, where he is continuing his great work for the Lord.

The present pastor, Rev. W. O. Spencer, came to East Church on May 26, 1964, from the Hall Street Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky. The subsequent months have confirmed the belief that the Lord was definitely directing the people of the church to call him as pastor. The work of the church is moving along smoothly and a fine spirit of fellowship exists among the entire membership. In the two years Bro. Spencer has been pastor, 70 have been added to the church; total offerings have reached $120,373.04; and mission gifts have totaled $27,819.94. The educational building has been completely air-conditioned, and offices for the pastor and church secretary have been remodeled and air-conditioned.

At the present time, only one wife of a former pastor holds membership in East Church. She is Mrs. A. W. Leigh. Another member, Mrs. G. R. Emerson, is the daughter of former Pastor H. K. Thomas. Both these ladies are models of faithfulness to their church. Former Pastor and Mrs. A. E. Lassiter (1921-1923) are now living in Los Angeles, California; and
the wife of former Pastor Sandy H. Allen (1905-1908), Mrs. Kitty Allen, makes her home in Paris, Tennessee.

To summarize, it suffices to state that East Baptist Church has always been a great missionary church, and of the $950,980.82 contributed in the last twenty-five years, nearly $200,000.00 has gone to missions. Down through the years this missionary spirit has been an inspiration for others to answer the call to enter the Gospel Ministry. As evidence of this, the following young men have been ordained to preach: N. M. Reeder, H. L. Travis, Sam Walker, F. H. Brien, all in the early history of the church; and Marvin Hines, W. T. Pepper, Jr., Roscoe Halliman, Sr., F. T. Goode, and Robert Covington, all prior to 1941; more recently there have been Garlon Sills, 1945; Billy Joe Joiner, 1948; Barner D. Sills, 1948; Albert (Bud) Robison, 1948; Harold Skaggs, 1953; William (Bill) Wade, 1953; Terry Sills, 1953; W. O. Gamblin, 1954; Jewell Barrett, 1955; Nolan Smith, 1959; Joe Barber, 1963; James Park and Philip Jett, 1964. This is a worthy testimonial to a God-led Membership inspired not only by its pastors but also by some fine young men who have served either as pastor-assistants or as music directors. They are Bill Wade, Floyd Key, Glen Inglehart, Joe Tarry, Don Bruce and the present music director, Tom Butler.

And so the history of the East Baptist Church in its 75th year concludes with a commitment of the future to an all-wise God with a prayer that His benediction may rest upon and guide the church in its varied programs of missions and service.

From a membership of 14 in 1891 the church has grown to a present membership of 959.

Compiled by the Historical Committee for the Celebration: J. H. Fitch, Chairman; Miss Juanita Jones, Mrs. Harlan Fitch, and W. O. Spencer.
Diamond Jubilee Celebration
JULY 23-29, 1966

SATURDAY, JULY 23
7:00 P.M.

W.M.S. BANQUET
“Diamond Memories”
Mrs. Joe T. Odle, Speaker

SUNDAY, JULY 24
10:45 A.M. and 7:30 P.M.

SPECIAL SERVICES
Rev. Joe T. Odle, Speaker
Special Music
Fellowship Hour after Evening Service
Fellowship Hall

MONDAY, JULY 25
7:30 P.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NIGHT
Rev. R. B. Hooks, Speaker
Special Music
Fellowship Hour

TUESDAY, JULY 26
7:30 P.M.

TRAINING UNION NIGHT
Rev. Sam Sloan, Speaker
Special Music
Fellowship Hour

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27
7:30 P.M.

W.M.U. NIGHT
Rev. Wendell H. Rone, Speaker
Special Music
Fellowship Hour

THURSDAY, JULY 28
7:30 P.M.

YOUTH NIGHT
Rev. H. D. Hudson, Speaker
Special Music
Fellowship Hour

FRIDAY, JULY 29
7:30 P.M.

MUSIC NIGHT
Hymn Fest: East Church Favorites
Special Music
Fellowship Hour

PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR THE CELEBRATION:
Robert Emerson, Chairman, Tom Butler, Mrs. Edward Rodocker, and W. O. Spencer.