

History of Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church (1959 -2018)

The Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church, 7818 Bonaire Street, was originally organized on May 3, 1959 by Rev. Milton L. Johnson. The first official service was June 7, 1959. At that time, Rev. Johnson was under the leadership of the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. R. M. Shepherd, pastor. The initial service began with the hymns "Jesus Keep Me near the Cross" and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" led by Rev. C. Ellis who also prayed. The scriptures were read by Rev. C. Davis.

Rev. R. M. Shepherd stated the purpose of the meeting was to recognize the organization of the Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church. Rev. D. C. Cooper was appointed as the temporary chairperson of the service. After remarks, Rev. Cooper requested that the members of the newly organized church would come forth. Sixteen members responded. He stated there was a need for a church in this vicinity. Rev. Cooper also stated that because there were no deacons as part of the Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church at that time, it would be necessary for Rev. Shepherd to lend two or three deacons from the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church each Sunday to help carry on the service.

Rev. D. C. Cooper read a resolution and asked for a motion to be adopted. The motion was moved by Sis. S. Smith and seconded by Sis. G. Yarbrough. A copy of the proceedings of the meeting was placed on record at the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church and a copy was given to the newly organized Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. M. L. Johnson, pastor. It was moved by Deacon H. Nichols and seconded by Deacon H. Williams to accept the resolution and the motion was carried. Rev. Cooper left the church with wholesome and worthwhile advice and suggestions.

Rev. R. M. Shepherd admonished Rev. M. L. Johnson to carry on this much-needed work. Rev. J. C. Franklin, pastor of St. James Baptist Church, Rev. D. C. Cooper and Rev. M. Brown, pastor of St. John Baptist Church, were all introduced and gave encouraging remarks. Rev. D. C. Cooper led in singing "Guide Me Oh Thou Great Jehovah". Rev. J. C. Franklin offered a fervent prayer. An invitation was extended to those who had no church home and the unsaved. Rev. Johnson said he was encouraged by how his fellow ministers came to help in the organization. There were 75 people present and the offering was \$40.10.

Through the grace of God, the Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church gradually grew. At that time, we were in a small house for approximately two years. Through the prayers of Rev. M. L. Johnson and the members, the Spirit of God moved and showed the way to buy a larger house which was remodeled into a church house. As God added members, we kept the faith and did not forget where our help came from. In 1965, God moved through Rev. M. L. Johnson to construct another building. The pastor discussed it with the deacons and members, and with God's blessings the work faithfully began. The pastor and some brothers labored while the sisters encouraged, showed support and served food.

In September 1967, we moved in the new building with joy and full of the Spirit of God. Again, we looked back and saw where our help came from. Curtis Johnson once told us his father said, "I want a place for my people to come." Subsequent to the completion of the new building that year, a massive entrance of members from the state of Louisiana and other places united with the Good Shepherd family. Under the untiring ministry of Rev. M. L. Johnson, Rev. Oates, and Rev. Onezene Wilson preached their first sermons. On January 20, 1973, Rev. M. L. Johnson finished his course and departed from this life to be present with the Lord.

In June 1973, Rev. Onezene Wilson was elected as the new pastor. The membership grew as God continued to be faithful. Deacon Charles Hester served as the church secretary and later became the Chairman of the Deacons. Under the powerful preaching ministry of Rev. Wilson, Alves LaFleur, Melton Wayne Johnson, Daniel Ferdinand, McClyde Wilson, Lee Skinner, J. T. Collins, Phillip Wilson and Linton Jason answered the call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 1984, the Spirit of God moved in Rev. Wilson to build our current place of worship. He prayerfully discussed it with the deacons and the members. Bro. Wallace Johnson was Chairman of the Deacons, along with Bro. James Phipps serving as secretary. On January 14, 1985, the foundation was laid. On May 19, 1985, we marched from the old building to the new building rejoicing in the power of God. Through the years, we have had challenges and tests which brought both joy and success. By God's grace, we have come this far by faith. On August 22, 1990, Rev. Onezene Wilson finished his course. He preferred to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. We thank God for keeping the membership together.

In December 1990, Rev. Lee E. Skinner was called to pastor the Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church. God continues to have His way in His church. Through prayers, praise, preaching and teaching of God's love and mercy, we are still growing spiritually. There have been ministries added under Rev. Skinner's leadership designed to enhance what our forerunners implemented, such as Johnson-Wilson-Hester Scholarship Committee, Silver Saints, Positive Greeters, Da Flock Youth ministry, Youth Camp, CHANGE Children's Ministry and The Lamb's Worship Children's Church. In addition, single adults and married couples meet regularly for prayer, encouragement and fellowship.

Under Pastor Skinner's leadership, Allen Johnson, Timothy Johnson, Phillip Johnson, Ronald Ben, Jerome J. Johnson, Deon Archer and Stefan Skinner preached their first sermons. The Pillar of Truth Church, Equippers Bible Fellowship and A Safe Place Christian Center are churches that extend from the Good Shepherd Family. God has been faithful to Himself and this ministry.

ADDENDUM 2018

The Lord God has blessed us with a wide variety of ministries that encompass all humanity from our Silver Saints to our babies yet to be born. Sis. Helen Freeman graciously leads our effort to provide school uniforms for our children in the church and community. The Community Food Pantry is now in the capable hands of Bro. Frank Smith, Sisters Sonya Evans, Sybrina Wilson, Donna Pearrie, Nell Carter and Charlene Scott. The Food Bank provided by and for our members continues to faithfully function through The Doucets, Ardoins, Velma Eaglin and Nell Carter. In July 2016 we launched our "Reading to Remember with Rewards" summer program where our children read a certain amount of books and receive cash rewards for their efforts. In 2017 Phyllis Nervis and friends donated bicycles as an added bonus to those who read the most books. Grant money requested by Hope Ellison and awarded by Walmart makes this venture possible.

The persistent volunteer services of Gail Stamps, Wanda Williams, Ethel Edward and the supporting teachers and helpers to our children continues to grow and excel. In October 2017 God blessed us to include the addition of Rev. Stefan J. Skinner as full time minister of our Youth and Children. We are thankful for his service from then until today. We have been blessed to purchase substantial properties, pay off loans and acquire buildings which serve in conducting Sunday school classes, Community Outreach including Youth and Children's Ministries. We are currently debt-free and we praise God for it. We continue to pray for and give to the "One –A-Day Plan" to construct a building for Community events, Education, Children's Day Care or maybe even a "New Church Building."

In our 59th year of celebration, Rev. Timothy Johnson continues his faithful service as assistant pastor. We currently have 8 associate preachers who serve this congregation in a variety of ways including teaching the Bible and theology. The combined efforts of 50 servant leaders as preachers (10), preacher's wives (7), deacons (17) and deaconess (16) serve this membership from birth to death. We will certainly miss the relationship and 54 years of ministry with our longest serving deacon, Bro James E. Phipps who now sleeps in the presence of Jesus awaiting his resurrection. Sister Julia Johnson his long time capable co-worker will have faithfully served as Secretary/Office Manager/Pastor's Schedule Keeper for twenty six years this September, Lord willing. Her partner in ministry Sister Mary Wiltz has served as our Budget Coordinator/Secretary on a regular basis since 2003, although she did some contract work as early as 1994. Mary is planning retirement at the end of this year. Her stalwart desire for having us in compliance with the government and protecting her pastor will always be remembered.

Warren O. Johnson, Judy Ferdinand, Kenneth Turner and our newest musician Damon Ardoin consistently provide us with worshipful music. The three choirs and the Praise Team assist us in giving God proper praise weekly. This year was a changing of the guards "so to speak" in several ministries. The long time leadership services of Eldridge Doucet (Sunday School Superintendent), Keith Harris (Men of Courage), Louanna Johnson (Silver Saints), Velasta Phipps (Ushers and Nurses) and Marcia Skinner (Sister Love) have been and will forever be appreciated and applauded. They laid out the pattern and example of what a servant leader must be and practice. PRAISE THE LORD!

We have focused on the continual development of our Outreach ministries and have served the people of the homeless communities at Open Door Mission, The Beacon Center and Star of Hope. We have also expanded our mission support to Charles Allen, III of the Navigators along with our long standing relationship with Word on the Street, Rev. Steve Graves and World Venture, a foreign mission effort to the people of Ghana, West Africa.

In August of 2017 Houston and Southeast Texas experienced Hurricane Harvey and an unprecedented rain event that shut down a city of four million people. For the most part this included NO Churches gathering together on August 24th. The period of service to our community in the aftermath of Harvey was quite substantial. We began by going to the houses of members who had been flooded out. We tore out wet carpet, cut out sheetrock, carried water damaged furniture to the curbs and cleaned up in preparation for restoring their homes. Then with a request from people hard hit in Settegast for “a hot meal” another wonderful opportunity for service commenced. We received hot meals for several weeks from Free Indeed Church International @ 7111 Homestead Rd. and the Red Cross.

These efforts were primarily coordinated by Sisters Andrel and Aleisha Stamps. In some cases we picked up plates already prepared, other times we had to prepare them ourselves. We packed up our vehicles and delivered hot meals primarily to the people of Settegast and Lakewood Communities where it was received with joy and thanksgiving. We also received cleaning supplies and clothing from Higher Expectation Church, Pastor Brian Lee and Rev. Deon Archer. Mr. Jimmy Poole gave us the use of a U-Haul truck free of charge a couple of times to pick up the items. Pastors of the LEVITE Fellowship and Marcia Skinner assisted in unloading it. Sister Yvette Blackwell donated items from her home, delivered by Rogers and Rev. Jason to help another family in need. Clothes and cleaning supplies were received from Freedom Fellowship of Corinth Mississippi, Pastor Gary Caveness, by way of Pillar of Truth Church and Elder Phillip Johnson. Brother Eric Bell and his partner from Miss. delivered it with a few problems in their travels. Pastor Johnson, brothers from Pillar, Derrick Waites, his friend and another mailman helped with unloading it.

For a time we became a Distribution Center that was organized and run by members of the congregation. People came from various communities for food water, baby diapers, clothes, shoes and cleaning supplies. When the restoration process began we provided sheetrock for the members’ homes that were flooded. Our efforts were combined with a generous donation of \$1500.00 from the people of First Baptist Church, Salem Virginia, Pastor Melton Wayne Johnson a son of Good Shepherd.

Prior to this ministry effort we had begun training on Becoming A Disciple Maker. Some 40 plus members stayed after church for several weeks learning a way of keeping the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations.” This marks a new venture in the life of the Good Shepherd Church Family for the rest of time our Lord will allow us to exist. God is good to the Good Shepherd Missionary Baptist Church and we celebrate this 59th Anniversary thankfully and appreciatively. He continues to add members as he sees fit for the growth of all. Our vision is to be transformed by the Spirit into the image of Jesus Christ for the glory of God, Romans 12:1-3, 2 Corinthians 3:18.