

Spreading the Word, Keeping the Faith

Antioch Baptist Church marks milestone anniversary

by John T. Toler

The original Antioch Baptist Church was built of stone, and served from 1842-1901, when it was replaced by the present structure.

On Sept. 30, Antioch Baptist Church in the village of Waterfall west of Haymarket, will observe the 175th anniversary of its founding with a day of prayer, recollection and song. Present at the celebration will be congregants with roots in the church going back many years, if not generations.

In many ways, the history of Antioch Baptist Church reflects the Christian traditions celebrated there: birth, teachings, trials and suffering, a temporary death, and rebirth.

The church was established on April 22, 1837 by nineteen members of Long

Branch Baptist in Halfway, Va., who wanted to have a Baptist church closer to their community. The organizers were John C. Herndon, who would serve as the first pastor; George Love, Church Clerk Pro-tem; and Elder William F. Broaddus.

The congregation of six males and thirteen females first met in a small log cabin on the property built by William E. Foley, and previously used as a schoolhouse at Poplar Hill, the Foley property east of Waterfall.

Pastor John Herndon served Antioch for just one year, before moving to

Missouri with his family. However, his eldest son Thaddeus Herndon stayed on, serving as pastor until his death in 1878. Among his accomplishments at Antioch was the building of the original church, a stone building, dedicated in 1842.

Over the years, the church was renovated to meet the needs of the congregation. No longer needed, the old log cabin was sold to Joseph Sinclair in 1851. For the next 75 years it remained in the Sinclair family, and was referred to as the "Sinclair House."

True to his calling, Rev. Herndon also preached regularly at North Fork

Baptist Church in Loudoun County, which meant that he traveled over 1,000 miles each year on horseback between churches.

"As my eyes surveyed the old photograph, a mental image developed of a Christian servant of old who felt compelled by some higher calling to spreading 'the old, old story of Jesus and his love,'" wrote Fred Anderson in the Religious Herald. "Herndon was the same at home and at church. His son, C. T. Herndon once wrote, 'Most persons mask themselves. They do not present the same person their families see every day. Thaddeus Herndon wore no masks.

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Summer Surprises

I love roaming my land in the early spring looking for any sign that the cold is ending and green is returning. Swelling treebuds, a red Peony tip and a single Snowdrop are all exciting finds. As the season progresses my garden keeps giving me new buds and flowers to discover and anticipate. Late summer is a different story. The Daisies are done, the Roses are feeling the heat, the hanging baskets look as lush as they did yesterday and the Chrysanthemums started blooming last month. There are two cures for late summer boredom: Abelia and Clethra.

Abelias are mid size shrubs with small, shiny green leaves. They are covered with little, white, heatproof flowers during the summer lull. When the rest of my garden looks tired and baked the Abelias are fresh and happy. Clethra is also known as Summersweet. And, "how sweet it is!" Loaded with 2 to 3 inch candles of deliciously fragrant flowers, Clethras delight me just like the Abelias.

The sad irony of these two shrubs is that they don't look like much when everyone is racing to the garden stores in the spring, full of planting fever. People go home with trunks loaded with Hydrangeas and Roses, having walked right by the plain green Abelias and Clethras. You still might be able to find these now. Or make a note to get them next spring for a summer surprise.

Lynne Galluzzo and her husband, Gary, moved from Centreville to Haymarket eight years ago. They live on ten acres where they garden extensively. Lynne applies what she learns in her gardens to her garden maintenance business - The Garden Lady. Contact her at: Lgalluzzo@comcast.net or www.TheGardenLady.biz.



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He was courteous and gentle when alone with his family as when in the presence of visitors."

"In ante-bellum days, services were held at Antioch on Saturdays for Negroes, so that the slaves might be at home on Sundays to care for the white folk, who apparently did most of their visiting on the Sabbath," according to Prince William: The Story of Its Places and Its People.

Hard times in Waterfall

Even with the stability brought by good, consistent leadership and a devoted congregation, the first 50 years were difficult. The last three years of the Civil War were particularly hard, as many of the men had gone off to fight, and services were held just once a month, or less. Even after the war, times were hard.

Wrote Church Clerk John A. Harrison in 1893, "...the church struggled on, and was at times sorely tried, but of them all, the Lord delivered, and brought us, trusting in his mercy and abiding in his love, safely on to the present time."

In 1894, twenty-eight members of Antioch Baptist Church left the church to start the Haymarket Baptist Church, which became the "daughter church."

With the stone church too small and in deteriorating condition, plans were made for a new church to be built on the site. A frame building soon rose in its place, appearing today much as it did a century ago.

The Antioch Baptist Church Cemetery holds

well over 100 graves. Among those buried there are Confederate soldiers and veterans, resting alongside such prominent Haymarket names as Gossom, Smith, Jordan, Foley and Pickett.

Antioch Baptist Church held its first Homecoming (originally called the "All Day Meeting") in 1922, "...followed by a week of protracted meetings, with services at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m., at which time 27 people united with the church by baptism," according to church records. "Baptismal services took place in the creek that flows through the churchyard, by damming the stream with rocks to get the depth of water needed."

In January 1926, the Sinclair heirs put the old log cabin up for sale, and it was purchased by the Antioch Baptist Church Women's Missionary Society, which held the property in trust for the church. The building was deeded to the church in January 1957 and renovated for use as a rental property.

Closed, but only temporarily

Changes in the demographics wrought by World War II and the loss of long-time members took their toll on Antioch, and by the mid-1950s, the church had no full-time pastor.

"Due to an ever-dwindling congregation, we were unable to continue services," according to church records. "The church was closed on Oct. 1, 1962, except for the Annual Homecoming Service on the second

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REV. THADDEUS HERNDON
served as Antioch's pastor from 1838 until 1878.



Attending Sunday School at Antioch in the early 1950s were (front row) Richard Haynes and Lewis Smith. Back row: Eddie Bell, Kathy Bell and Richard Bell.



Rev. Dr. Billy Tatum has been the pastor of Antioch since March 2010.

Sunday of August each year. In 1965, the remaining members were dismissed to unite with a church of their choice, the greater number going to Haymarket Baptist."

In addition to petitioning the Haymarket Baptist Church to receive "into full membership" former members of Antioch who wished to join, the agreement signed July 14, 1964 also gave Haymarket title to the property, and "such funds as may be in the church treasury."

A special provision was included addressing the possibility that Antioch might be re-opened some day, calling for "...the present membership to be in a position to actively engage themselves in the care, upkeep and control of our property and funds."

This arrangement remained intact until 1996, at which time a division was developing within the congregation of the Haymarket Baptist Church.

"Over the past several months it has become apparent that there are two separate and distinct congregations at the Haymarket Baptist Church," wrote Bob Mayer in a July 10, 1996 letter to the general membership. "We the members of Haymarket Baptist Church who will be forming the new congregation at Antioch will be presenting a 'Petition for Acceptance and Blessings' at the July 17 business meeting of Haymarket."

At the business meeting, those staying with Haymarket voted unanimously to grant their blessing to those seeking to

reopen Antioch and start a new congregation there.

On July 22, 1996, the new congregation held a follow-up meeting where critical issues including the re-election of trustees, church organization, and a visit to the church were discussed. Former Haymarket Baptist Church pastor Rev. Larry Lee addressed the 28 people assembled there, touching on the theological issues that caused the division, and urging the two churches to work together.

Later, Rev. Lee was asked to serve as interim pastor until a permanent pastor could be found. He accepted the call, and would serve the church as Antioch's pastor until 2007.

Improvements to the church building began as soon as title to the property was transferred. Electrical power to the building was upgraded so that a new heating and air conditioning unit could be installed, and church members spent an evening insulating the attic. By November 1996, work began organizing the Sanctuary Choir, and the Sunday school was started, with 41 children enrolled. The following spring, plans were made to convert the old log cabin for use as Sunday school space.

Following Rev. Lee's resignation in March 2007, Rev. John Carey became the pastor. Ordained in 2004, Rev. Carey and his wife Patty had been active in the Haymarket Baptist Church. Focused on revitalizing the church and adding new members. Rev. and Mrs. Carey reopened the Sunday school and started various outreach programs.



Under the weatherboard siding is the original log cabin where the first service was held in 1837.



In the 1980s, long-time church member Peggy Gardner assembled this quilt from squares produced in the 1920s by Antioch's Women's Missionary Society Quilting Group. It will be displayed at the Sept. 30 Homecoming.

Rev. Dr. Billy Tatum, who served as pastor of Long Branch Baptist Church from 1990 to 2004, became pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in March 2010. Ordained in 1971, Dr. Tatum holds a bachelor of arts, master of divinity degree, and a doctor of philosophy degree. "Yes, 'Billy' is my first name, not William. And I have a brother who is 'Bobby,' not Robert," said Rev. Tatum with a smile. "It's a Southern thing!"

In addition to the regular Worship Service on Sundays at 11 a.m., a fellowship luncheon is offered once a month, as well as other special activities, especially around the holidays. Visitors are always welcome at the church, which is located at 16509 Waterfall Road. For more information, visit the Web page at www.AntiochBapchurch.org or call (703) 754-4682.

Celebrating 175 Years

Antioch Baptist Church will begin its 175th Anniversary Homecoming with a worship service on Sunday, Sept. 30 starting at 11 a.m. Rev. Dr. Tatum will give the sermon, and former pastors of the church have been invited to take part in the service.

The choir of the nearby Olive Branch Baptist Church will provide music for the service, and Bonnie Gardner MacKenzie will give a solo performance. Following the service, lunch will be served on the grounds, concluding with a sing-along.

For the Homecoming, the Virginia Baptist Historical Society has loaned artifacts it holds from the early Antioch Baptist Church, including the original communion set. A history of Antioch Baptist Church written by Anne G. Pace will be offered for sale during Homecoming.

Author John Toler is a writer and historian and has served Fauquier County for over 50 years, including 4 decades with the Fauquier-Times Democrat. He has written and lectured about many legendary characters in Fauquier County's history. Toler is the co-author of *250 Years in Fauquier County: A Virginia Story*, and author of *Warrenton, Virginia: A History of 200 Years*.



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His focus is small to medium businesses in the community, helping them reach their target market at the right time through repetition and consistent brand messaging. He has worked to help drive more traffic to businesses on slower days, raise average orders and fill seats. He has found his greatest pleasure is the gratitude he receives from his customers which motivates him to work harder.

As Ken continues to help businesses in our area he has three business tips that he'd like to share:

1. Be honest about your goals and intentions.
 - Being genuine is important no matter what you do.
2. Remember to run your business.
 - Don't let it run you. Have a plan.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for help, nobody knows it all.



To learn more about Ken please visit our website at www.hgba.biz.



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