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Ebenezer Baptist

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REFERENCE

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Ebenezer Baptist Church

## 100th anniversary marked

By TERRI JONES

Ebenezer Baptist Church which celebrated its 100th anniversary in March, was founded by an ex-slave who had vision, faith, hope, love and determination to do service for God and mankind. This ex-slave with these virtues was sold from a slave pen in Alexandria, to a slave master in Texas. At the age of 21, Lewis Henry Bailey was freed and found his way back to Alexandria. Looking for his mother and after finding her, he received a job helping to cut the R.F.&P Railroad.

Through a white railroad worker's kindness, he was taught his alphabets. Later, he met a philanthropist who wrote the American Baptist Publishing Society enlisting their aid to educate this young ex-slave, whom he felt would be an asset to his race if he became educated. He received this aid and entered Wayland Seminary, which later merged with Union University. After finishing his education, he was called to the ministry, so he returned to the school of Theology to study.

Later, Rev. Lewis H. Bailey was told of a village called Occoquan that needed spiritual and moral guidance.

But due to lack of money for train fare, he walked many times from Alexandria to Occoquan. In so doing, he found one Christian in the community, Sister Jenny Scott. He was also encouraged by the white citizens, who said they would see tht he got property to build a home, if he would settle in the community.

We are now privileged to continue to build on th foundation of the founder, Rev. Lewis H. Bailey, and the unselfish devotion and labor of many others who gave unstintingly of themselves.

Among those first families were many whose descendents are still members of Ebenezer.

Ebenezer's cornerstone was laid the first Sunday of May 1883 in Occoquan. Each year, the first Sunday in May has been a day of Thanksgiving. On it, members and friends express their gratitude to God for His goodness.

Pastors in the order of their service are REV. L. H. Bailey, founder; Rev. Wesley Jackson, Rev. J. E. Peterson, Rev. Francis E. Pree, Rev. Bush, Rev. Roots, Rev. Reuben Hall, Rev. J. E. Morris and Rev. James P. Russell.

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