

Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church History 1874 - 2008

The Belief in God and the ultimate goal to worship and serve Him was embedded in the hearts of all mankind for many, many years. The forefathers of the Shady Grove Community were no different. For years they traveled from this community to the Mount Moriah Baptist Church for services. For three years the bond and fellowship at Mount Moriah grew and this fellowship served as background for the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church. As the Shady Grove Community grew, the need for a spiritual center became more evident. This is when the idea was born for Shady Grove Baptist Church.

In 1874, under the leadership of Rev. Samuel Small, and a few faithful pioneers, Shady Grove Baptist Church got its beginning. The first structure was a brush harbor, but the faithful few never took their minds and hearts away from God.

At Shady Grove Baptist, we are fortunate to have had and still have capable religious leaders. Rev. Samuel Small, our first pastor, was followed by Rev. Pompie Simmons, Rev. Irvin Simmons, Rev. Zachariah Glymp, Rev. Madison Stewart, (who in 1919 was also Moderator of the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association and Vice President of the Florida General Baptist Convention), Rev. Andrew Tucker, Rev. S. McNeal, Rev. August Ayers, Rev. James Belton Lake, Rev. A. Bradley, Rev. C. P. (Pink) Brown, Rev. W. M. Pelote, Rev. Randolph Lee, Rev. E. H. Walker, Rev. E. F. Broxton, Rev. Michael Warrene and presently Dr. Fred Maeweathers, Sr.

Some of the members who played a very important role in the history of Shady Grove Baptist Church were and are: Brothers Joseph Wise, W. O. Wise, Ellis Hawkins, Mose Jacobs, Charles Johnson, Whitfield Anderson, P. J. Smiley, Sherman Taylor, Sam Steward, Ed Woodard, Lloyd Williams, Robert Johnson, Reuben Mosby, Willie Finley, Alfred Finley, Alphonso Finley. Sisters Mary Graham, Mary Norman, Martha Counts, Martha Gillum, Mary Akins, Lela Johnson, Amanda Jacobs, Ella Steward, Katie Mosby, Margie Ann Taylor, Maple Johnson, Elisa Hawkins, Julia Hawkins, Mary Johnson, Ophelia Williams, Martha Jacobs, Sarah Taylor Hedgeman, Elizabeth Fleming, Armenthia Norman, Carrie Dock Felder, Florence (Babe) Cunningham, Lela Mayo, Rebecca Woodard, Clara Wise, Hassie Burley, Rosa Lucus, Rosa

Williams, Marion Nimmons, Essie Jacobs, Agnes Starker and Clara Johnson, just to mention a few.

Some of the church clerks were: Brothers Joseph Wise, P. I. Sims, Whitfield Anderson, Augusta Small, Reece Felder, Sisters Amanda Jacobs (1954-1970), Brenda Gillum (1970-1978), Edna Simmons (1978-1986), Sherikey Collins (1986-1989) and Edna Simmons, 1989 to the present time.

In citing the history of our church, one must mention the outstanding accomplishments of some of our leaders: Rev. W. M. Pelote was considered the "Father of the Faithful", serving more than ten years. Under the pastorate of Rev. Pelote, the church was moved from the old site to the present site.

The idea of a new Shady Grove was born in the mind of Rev. Randolph Lee. His short tenure of service hindered him from seeing his goal realized.

Rev. E. H. Walker accepted the pastorate, June 1959. His success here was considered outstanding. During his stay with us God helped us to do many things that will always be remembered. It was his dream to add to the existing structure. The dinette and educational buildings were completed. Rev. Walker dreamed of building a new church that would compare favorably in structure with any church and also would be a physical and spiritual asset to Marion County. We are proud to recognize the efforts of such a pastor. Working together, we were able to plan and finish the church he started. You don't replace ministers like Rev. Walker, you succeed them.

January 1967, Rev. E. F. Broxton was called to provide leadership for us and to finish the building started by Rev. Walker. Rev. Broxton served as our leader for 17 ½ years. With distinguished leadership qualities and a spirit filled background, he was able to complete the existing building. Many dreams were accomplished under the leadership of Rev. Broxton. He increased the membership tremendously, purchased a church bus and van for the busing ministry; started a unified budget which consisted of tithing, pledging and sacrificial giving as a means of supporting the church. He received and licensed Rev. William "Billy" Hawkins. As host of the Middle District Congress of Christian Education, Rev. Broxton initiated many religious and physical changes at Shady Grove. We thank God

for having a minister, leader, and a friend like Rev. Broxton. May God forever smile on him.

January 1985, the Shady Grove Baptist Church accepted the Rev. Michael D. Warrene as pastor. Under his pastorate, the church continued to grow as in past years. Some of his accomplishments were liquidating all existing debts, starting worship services on Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving and Christmas morning. He increased the membership and enhanced religious services. As time progressed, Rev. Warrene's pastorate came to an end at Shady Grove.

For approximately six months, Shady Grove found itself without a pastor. On November 12, 1988, our prayers were answered when Rev. Fred Maeweathers, Sr. accepted the pastorate of Shady Grove Baptist Church. Rev. Maeweathers is a man of God whose teaching is geared toward the development of a healthy church.

The physical building has been improved – a kitchen has been added, paneling has been placed in the Fellowship Hall, a Bar-B-Que pit has been built on the grounds, and much, much more. Under his pastorate we have watched our church grow both physically and spiritually. Fifteen deacons have been added to the Deacon Ministry. Members have been added by baptism, letter, Christian experience and restoration. Rev. Maeweathers conducts many workshops at our church and throughout the state. He is a teacher/pastor. He is also the administrator for the ministers and laymen seminary.

In an effort to meet the challenge, and a self-fulfillment, Rev. Maeweathers successfully completed the requirements and was awarded the Doctoral of Divinity Degree. During 1994 and 1995, Shady Grove continued to flourish. The membership increased and our ministries were blessed.

On May 26, 1995, Rev. Robert Hamilton, Associate Pastor, was called to pastor Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, (Highway 200), Ocala, Florida.

In 1986, Sister Lucille Potter became the first female trustee chairperson at Shady Grove Baptist Church.

The church purchased 7.1 acres of land adjacent to the south side of the church cemetery May 4, 1996 at the cost of \$39,000.00. A new Dodge van was purchased for the church busing ministry.

The church decided that when a deacon becomes 70 years old he will be given the title of deacon emeritus, meaning retired from the active deacons' service with an honorary title.

Dr. Fred Maeweathers was elected moderator of the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association in 1996.

On March 22, 1998, Michael S. Maeweathers, grandson of Dr. & Sister Maeweathers, confessed his calling to the ministry. He preached his trial sermon on April 5, 1998. He was called to pastor Saint Mary Missionary Baptist Church, Silver Springs, Florida on March 29, 1999. Minister Maeweathers was ordained March 29, 1999 at Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church.

On April 4, 1999, Delbert Thompson, confessed his calling to the ministry. Brother Thompson preached his trial sermon and received a license to minister the gospel on June 6, 1999. He was appointed the first Youth Minister of the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church on December 5, 1999.

On July 16, 2000, Cleveland Robinson, confessed his calling to the ministry. Brother Robinson preached his trial sermon on September 24, 2000 and received his license to minister the gospel.

On April 5, 2001, Deacon Howard Gunn, confessed his calling to the ministry. Deacon Gunn relinquished his service as a deacon on that date. Deacon Gunn preached his trial sermon on June 3, 2001 and received his license to minister the gospel.

In July of 2002, the church purchased a fully equipped Ford F-450, 27 passenger bus.

In August 2002, after the death of Dr. Arthur Jackson, our pastor Dr. Fred Maeweathers, Sr. assumed the presidency of the Florida General Baptist Convention. This is Shady Grove's first pastor to have this honor bestowed upon him.

During the year 2002, our church membership increased by 23 believers. Among the 23, the Rev. Charles Perry was added to the staff of Associate Ministers.

Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church continued to grow spiritually and humbly. In 2003, the membership increased by 17. The church purchased ten acres of land at the cost of \$150,000.00 adjacent to the existing property.

Pastor Maeweathers was inducted into the Florida Religious Hall of Fame in Jacksonville, Florida, on January 26, 2003. Mrs. Criswell from Jacksonville came to Shady Grove and pinned Dr. Maeweathers into the Religious Hall of Fame. He was also appointed President Emeritus of the Florida General Baptist Convention.

In July 2003, tile was installed in the foyer of the church in memory of Rufus Fuce, Jr., with funds willed to the church by him.

September 21, 2003, Rev. Howard Gunn, fifth son of the house was installed as Pastor of the East Lake First Missionary Baptist Church, Hampton Beach. In November 2003, a shed for the church's three vehicles was purchased and erected at a cost of \$8,500.00.

In 2004, the membership increased - baptism (4), restoration (3) and by letter (2).

Due to hurricane Francis on September 5, 2004, the church doors were closed. No service was held on this date, which was the first time in history this has happened.

The church's pulpit furniture, communion and collection tables were replaced with donated contemporary custom made furniture.

God is continuing to bless our church with growth. In 2005, membership increased by 20 - baptism (12), restoration (6) and by letter (2).

It has been 132 years since our humble beginning. As we pray and continue to hold the faith, love, peace and joy of our forefathers, we stand boldly proclaiming "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

In the year of our Lord 2006, Sisters Chandra J. Simmons and Bessie Cotton established a web site for the church. This establishment had its initial beginning in November.

Rev. Michael L. Maeweathers joined the associate Pastoral staff in November 2006 after retiring from the Military.

Minister Melvin Cotton was ordained into the Ministry on December 3, 2006 at the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church.

The blessings of the Lord enabled the church to become the owner of the Ford F-450 27 passenger bus on December 24, 2006.

During the past year, the membership increased - baptism (24), letter (4), restoration (5) and Christian experience (1).

Rev. Michael L. Maeweathers was installed as Pastor of Greater New Bethel Baptist Church, Flemington, Florida - July 8, 2007.

Rev. Abraham Robinson, a cross over from Pentecostal, was licensed by the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church - October 28, 2007.

During the past year, membership increased: Baptism (16), Letter (5), Restoration (3) and Christian Experience (6).

Rev. Abraham Robinson was installed as pastor of New Second Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. Dunnellon, Florida, June 8, 2008.

Rev. Melvin Cotton was installed as pastor of the Ramah Missionary Baptist Church, Belleview, Florida, December 21, 2008.

Fellowship Hall interior was refurbished December 2008. Church membership continues to grow. Baptism (19), Christian Experience (2), Restoration (3).

Through all our suffering, pain and prayers as a people, God has blessed us to have the first African American President, Barack Obama, sworn in on January 20, 2009, as our 44th president of the United States.