



**120th Anniversary**  
**Wilksburg Baptist Church**  
September 17, 2017

# 2017 Homecoming Service

## Celebrating 120 years of Wilksburg Baptist Church

Prelude to Worship		Becky Doster
Call to Worship	The Family of God	Choir
Welcome		Sammy Mixon
Time of Prayer		Sammy Mixon
Hymn #514	When We All Get to Heaven	Congregation
Worship the Lord through Tithes & Offerings		Congregation
Ushers: Eddie Thomas & Steve Harris		
Doxology		Congregation
Choir Special	Glad Reunion Day	Choir
Special Music		Crossed Hearts Angie Morrison
A Time of Reflection		Taylor Thomas
-Candles		
-Power Point Presentation		
-Testimonies		
Message	We Shall Be Like a Tree	Rev. Ray Belue
Invitation Hymn #307	Just As I Am	Congregation
Group Photo		
Fellowship		

The alter flowers are given in loving memory of Margaret Cassels by the Cassels Family

A copy of the full church history is available upon request to Taylor Thomas.



# Wilksburg Baptist Church

Est. 1897

# The History of Wilksburg Baptist Church

## The Early Years

Wilksburg Baptist Church was organized in 1897 with 20 charter members. The first church building was located near the Melton homestead. On November 4, 1897, the Chester Baptist Association admitted our church to the association as its eleventh member church. The first pastor was Rev. Curtis. Within the first 10 years, the original church building was moved to Woods Ferry Road adjacent to the current cemetery. The land for the church was donated by Major Wilkes, the namesake of the Wilksburg community. After the relocation, church members raised money to make repairs to the building.

Wilksburg Baptist Church began holding summer revival services as early as 1918. At that time, the services were called “protracted meetings” that lasted several days with services held twice daily at 11:00 AM and 8:30 PM. Over the next 20 years the church grew in membership through baptisms and letter transfers. Starting in the 1940s the “protracted meetings” began to be known as revivals.

## The Expansion—Physical & Spiritual

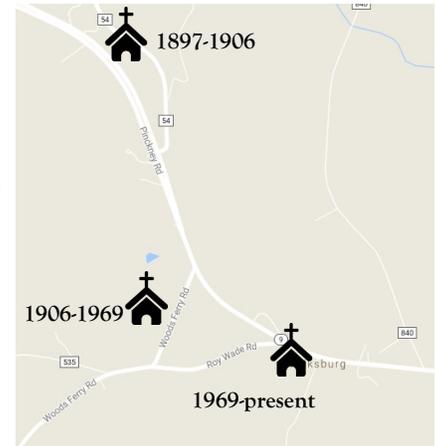
In the early 1950s, under the leadership of Rev. Truett Willis, the congregation decided to renovate the auditorium and add classrooms, a nursery, and new pews. In addition, a front porch was added to the building. This expansion and update was needed due to the increase in church membership and was funded primarily by member donations. The remodeled auditorium was dedicated on June 14, 1953 to the service of the Lord. In 1955, the congregation began discussion about the possibility of starting a cemetery to serve its growing membership. In 1957, the congregation voted to establish a cemetery on land donated by Roy and Margaret Wade. A fence was erected around the property, and layout for grave placements was developed.

Wilksburg Baptist Church hired Rev. Otis McCluney as its first full-time pastor in 1957 who initiated Wednesday evening prayer service and Sunday night training union. Under his leadership, Wilksburg began to offer Vacation Bible School during the summer months. Rev. McCluney decided to leave the area, and Rev. Elton Hunter was called to the church in 1959.

Shortly after Rev. Hunter’s arrival, the church began discussing the need for a parsonage to house the pastor’s family. In 1960 the parsonage was completed and shortly thereafter, the church voted to buy 13 additional acres of land around the parsonage for future expansion. In 1962 the church membership exceeded 100 members.

When Rev. Hunter resigned as pastor in 1967, Rev. Thomas Rawls accepted the call to our church. Under his leadership, interest grew to support a new church building on land adjacent to the parsonage. After a goal of \$10,000 was reached, the congregation started developing plans for the new church and how to finance its construction. After securing a loan, a contractor was hired and the new building started. Work on the new building progressed quickly with church members and the pastor doing some of the work. On November 9, 1969, our first service was held in the new building. The dedication was held on June 14, 1970 when a time capsule was placed in the cornerstone of the building. Within four years the church was paid off.

Under Rev. Rawls’ long tenure, the church continued to grow and make upgrades to the new building and add other facilities to the complex.



## The Last 25 Years

Over the last 25 years, Wilksburg Baptist Church has continued to serve the community as a place of worship and community gathering place. Starting in the 1990s, the church began to focus on being a visible and instrumental part of the community. The church financially contributed to special projects for West Chester Fire Department, volunteered for adopt-a-highway litter cleanup, participated in a church softball league, had an ongoing team in Relay for Life, and took two mission trips to Connie Maxwell Children's Home. During this same time, the church continued to make improvements to the facilities, including adding basketball goals, purchasing a new sound system, building a handicap ramp to the church, and making several upgrades to the parsonage. Many of the new programs and additions focused on ways to attract and serve young people in our church.

In the 2000s, the church bestowed its first Deacon Emeritus by honoring one of our legends, Otis Gregory. The church also honored Mrs. Mildred Rawls, who served as church pianist for 33 years, by purchasing a baby grand piano in her memory. The church cemetery expanded over an acre through the donation of land by George and Besie Vastis. Missions were an important part of the church, and contributions have exceeded \$245,000.

This homecoming service marks the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wilksburg Baptist Church.



(Summary history compiled by Taylor Thomas.)

## Pastors Who Have Served Wilksburg Baptist Church

1897 -	Rev. Curtis	1959-1967	Rev. Elton Hunter
1910-1913	Rev. J.H. Yarborough	1968-1986	Rev. Thomas T. Rawls
1923-1925	Rev. D.W. vin	1987-1988	Rev. Arthur Smith
1925-1928	Rev. A.L. Willis	1989-1992	Rev. Chris Garrison
1929-	Rev. R.A. Thompson	1992-1994	Rev. Mike Woods
1930-1936	Rev. C.L. Norman	1995-1996	Rev. George Jefferys
1937-1942	Rev. J.T. Dabney	1999-2001	Rev. Jamie Billings
1943	Rev. R.A. Griffin	2001-2003	Rev. Kevin Ogle
1944	Rev. Chewning	2004-2008	Rev. Charles Terry
1945-1950	Rev. Paul K Drum	2008-2013	Rev. Cecil Johnson
1951-1957	Rev. Truett Willis	2013-2017	Rev. Sean Sellars
1957-1959	Rev. Otis McCluney		

Thank you for joining us in  
this anniversary celebration!



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