

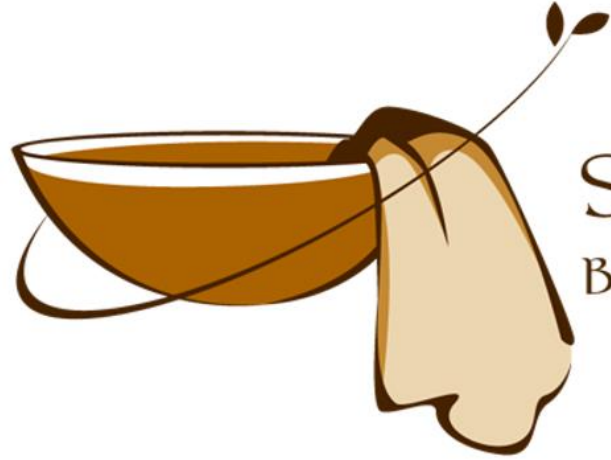


STARLING AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Congregation Profile -2021



ESTABLISHED
1935



STARLING AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

New International Version (NIV)



Congregational Profile

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Introduction to Starling Avenue Baptist Church

Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Henry County and the city of Martinsville are located on the Virginia/North Carolina border and conveniently positioned within a day's drive of 60% of the U.S. population. Starling Avenue Baptist Church is located on the south side in the city.

Starling Avenue is a church, deeply rooted in the practice of the priesthood of believers and servant leadership. As part of the family of God, with Christ as our head, we seek unity and harmony as we serve and minister together to each other, the greater community, and the world beyond our doors. We are affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

As stated in Isaiah 54:2, we believe in enlarging the place of our tent and stretching wide our tent curtains. We warmly welcome those who choose to worship with us. We believe that an informed congregation is a wise and discerning congregation. By being open to diversity, we gain knowledge and perspective. All voices are sought, heard, and respected as we work for the greater good of the Kingdom, the community, and Starling Avenue.



What We Believe and Value

Mission

We desire that all things may be done decently and in order, consistent with the New Testament model of the church of Jesus Christ.

Purpose

This church, acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus Christ and accepting the Bible as the authority for faith and practice, declares its purpose is to glorify God through the following practices:

1. To maintain regular services of public worship, devotion and prayer.
2. To proclaim earnestly the Gospel message and urge its personal acceptance.
3. To promote systematic Bible study and training for Christian service, and to encourage the fullest stewardship of life and possessions.
4. To cooperate through prayer, gifts, and service with the churches of the Henry County Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and/or other Baptist associations as the church may choose in an effort to carry the Gospel of Christ throughout the world.
5. To promote fellowship and cooperation among all Christians.

This is a sovereign and democratic church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the rights of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

Starling Avenue Baptist Church Covenant

Rejoicing in the grace of God and surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ, we are led by the Holy Spirit to joyfully and reverently covenant with God and one another. As a member of this body of believers.....

- I will glorify God through worship, prayer, and the study of scripture.
- I will live in Christian love and forgiveness in my family and in this Congregation. I will encourage and support others and lift them to God in prayer.
- I will be a faithful steward of all God's gifts, joyfully using all that I am and all that I have in sacrificial service to the glory of God. I will affirm and celebrate the Christian growth and service of others.
- I will demonstrate God's love and mercy through words and actions to everyone whose life I touch. Working with others, I will provide the resources to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

Adopted October 29, 2000

Baptist Identity

We affirm four historic Baptist freedoms:

- 1. BIBLE FREEDOM:** the historic Baptist affirmation that the Bible, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, must be central in the lives of individuals and the church. The Bible changes our lives, replaces any form of creed, and frees the individual to interpret scripture as the Holy Spirit leads. We are both obligated and free, with the best and most scholarly tools of inquiry, to study and obey the Scripture.
- 2. SOUL FREEDOM:** the historic Baptist affirmation that an individual's faith is personal, experiential, and voluntary. Baptists affirm that each individual is created in the image of God. Each individual, therefore, is competent and responsible under God to make moral, spiritual, and religious decisions without the imposition of creed, the interference of clergy, or the intervention of civil government.
- 3. CHURCH FREEDOM:** the historic Baptist affirmation that local churches are free under the Lordship of Christ to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, and to ordain whom they perceive as gifted for ministry, male or female, and to participate in the larger body of Christ, of whose unity and mission Baptists are proudly a part. No one (no pastor, no civil magistrates, no convention of churches) can dictate to the local church. A local Baptist congregation is free to design its own servant ministry; moreover it is responsible for the members to do so.
- 4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:** the historic Baptist affirmation of freedom **OF** religion, freedom **FOR** religion, and freedom **FROM** religion (the separation of church and state). Baptist anchored their passion for religious liberty in (1) the nature of God, (2) the nature of humanity and (3) the nature of faith.

We hold the following values to express the character of Starling Avenue Baptist Church.

Worship We believe worship is essential to the life of individuals, our community of faith, and God's Kingdom on earth. To glorify and praise God, we worship in a traditional style service on Sunday mornings and provide translation for the deaf.

Discipleship We believe Bible study, prayer, the study of Baptist doctrine and theology, and life application results in a servant heart and service for the greater good of The Kingdom. We offer Sunday School, a Wednesday Bible study and prayer group, and other small group opportunities for discipleship training.

Outreach We believe we have an obligation to reach the community around us. We provide entry points by providing a community meal each month, through participating in Hope Garden, and partnering ecumenically in the community. Community wide outreach events are held throughout the year

Missions We believe in expressing a servant heart as we minister to those beyond our doors. In partnership with other congregations and benevolent non-profit organizations of the community, members of all ages are encouraged to be involved in local mission opportunities. We financially support and encourage participation in mission endeavors at the state, national, and international levels.

Fellowship and Caring We believe fellowship opportunities build unity and harmony as we gather in casual settings. We also provide opportunities for international caring for members and their extended family through our deacon ministry, the homebound team, and bereavement team. We extend fellowship to the community by sharing a meal each month and other events during the year.

Equality We affirm the giftedness and leadership abilities of all persons who feel the call of ministry, in all area of service, for the up-building of God's Kingdom. We welcome all who wish to worship our Lord and Savior.

History and Heritage

The roots of our identity lie in our heritage. Starling Avenue Baptist Church had its beginnings in a 1929 revival held on the property where the church now stands. On November 24, 1935, the mission became a church and the congregation moved quickly to call its first pastor. Times were hard for many in Martinsville. When the congregation attempted to secure a loan for the construction of the present sanctuary, the attempt met with rejection. But the members believed God was leading them in this venture. Many put up their homes and insurance policies as collateral for the loan. Others contributed the labor to erect the sanctuary. The shared faith and personal sacrifice of these first members became a pattern as well as a symbol of faith for the coming decades.

The Beginning: A Heritage of Faith and Stewardship

Early twentieth century Martinsville, Virginia, was growing but still a small, close-knit community of people. A large portion of the people in the newly developed “Southside” of town depended on their feet for transportation. Most of their destinations were within a few blocks of factories, stores, entertainment, and banking. Some saw the desirability of a neighborhood church. In the summer of 1925, a tent revival was held on Askin Street with Reverend J.S. Riddle of Danbury, North Carolina, an independent evangelist with the Methodist Protestant Church. It was an interdenominational effort with the hope of a neighborhood church being the results, but no plans for a future church came out of it.

Nevertheless, this planted the seeds for a second revival to be held in a tent in June of 1927. It was held near the intersection of Starling Avenue and Memorial Boulevard. At the conclusion of the revival, First Baptist Church, led by its pastor Dr. J.P. McCabe, purchased the property on Starling Avenue where the revival had been held. One lot was bought for \$1200 from S. D. and Lucy English, and later two more lots were bought from F. E. Sites for \$1000. Part was paid in cash and part was financed. It was stipulated that a “Missionary Baptist Church” would be built on the property.

In 1929, a one-room tabernacle was built and called “The Starling Street Baptist Tabernacle.” On September 15 a union revival was begun in the Tabernacle. Protestant ministers from churches in Martinsville conducted services. At the conclusion of the revival, a mission Sunday School was organized. Sunday School was conducted on Sunday afternoons with teachers from different churches coming to teach, and it continued for four years.

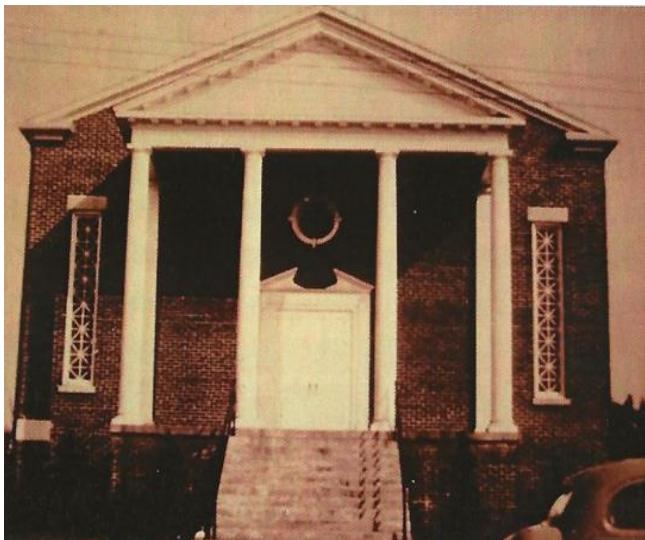


In 1934, Sunday School was moved to Sunday mornings with worship services following. November 24, 1935, was the date set to organize a Baptist Church. In 1936 after the charter roll was adopted by the church membership, the church name was changed to Starling Avenue Baptist Church.

In 1936, the deacons served as the first pulpit committee. They recommended that the church call Reverend Thomas Waitt Fryer. The pulpit committee offered him the position of pastor of the church, and on February 15, 1936, Reverend Fryer preached his first to the congregation that packed the tabernacle. The young and energetic pastor took the helm of the new congregation, and the church grew rapidly. The Sunday School was modernized, a graded Baptist Training Union was organized, and the Women's Missionary Union was started.

Martinsville had not felt the immediate effect of the economic depression that was raging through the nation. The Tobacco Market was doing well with record sales as well as the furniture factories and textiles. The city and county may have had a dark cloud hanging over them, but not the pastor of Starling Avenue Baptist Church.

Reverend Fryer wanted more for the church members than just shaking hands with the pastor and having their names written in the church records in order to become members. A church covenant was written. As people came for membership in the church, they were given a covenant card to pray about and see if they wanted to covenant with the church. The charter members were also asked



to sign a card. Upon signing the covenant card, the person was accepting fellowship into the church to work and carry out the teachings of Christ and act in accordance with the church doctrine. Early members were not daunted by Reverend Fryer's forceful preaching; instead, the Tabernacle was overflowing. People were standing at the door, the windows and in the yard in order to hear his sermon.

June 21, 1937, the church hired a local architect to draw up the plans for a new structure. The plans called for a spacious building with an auditorium over a full-size basement. The cost was estimated at \$40,000. A committee was organized to get bids for material and construction. It was agreed that after the foundation was poured, construction would go as far as the cash would allow. The finance committee presented a paper to each church member to sign, committing their all to backing the building fund. Seventy members signed and the church decided to borrow the remaining money. Many members followed scriptural teachings by bringing their tithes, offerings, and dedicated gifts. The church borrowed \$15,000 from Jefferson Standard to complete the building.

In the fall of 1932, Dr. J.P. McCabe had extended an invitation to a small group to establish a Sunday School for the deaf at First Baptist Church in Martinsville. Mr. Gerner Bondurant served as the first teacher for more than a year before relinquishing the post due to his health. Mr. Obie Nunn took over the class in 1935. In 1937 the Silent Bible Class decided to move to Starling Avenue Baptist Church since most of the members lived in the Southside area. In 1972, Mrs. Catherine Stone became the first interpreter for the deaf during worship services. Becky Woody Camden and Joan Joyce learned to sign in 1974 and became interpreters. They shared this ministry until 1979. Joan Joyce continues to lead this ministry today.

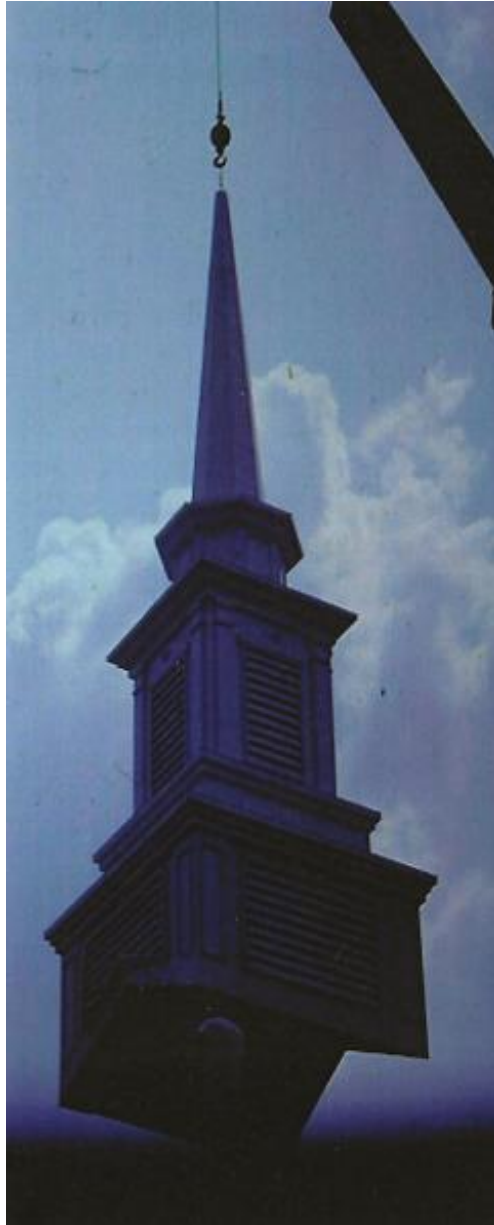


The church building was completed March 20, 1938, and Starling Avenue Baptist Church held its formal opening with an all-day service. Praises and thanksgivings were given to God and to Jesus Christ for making a way for the church to become a reality. It was noted as one of the most beautiful brick structures in this area of the state. In the Southern Colonial architectural style of some of the older Virginia churches, the new structure was a great asset to the community, seating around 450 people. On opening day of the new building, there were 226 church members. The Sunday School had grown to between 325 and 350, and Training Union had an attendance of 120. The church led the Blue Ridge Association in giving to missions and was regarded as one of the most progressive churches in the entire state.

In eleven years, in the mist of the Great Depression, Starling Avenue Baptist has grown from a large one-room frame tabernacle into a brick church building. The church had built a parsonage in Chatham Heights, sold it, and was in the process of building a brick home beside the church. The church was growing by leaps and bounds. People of faith and hope were walking with the Lord and putting God in the center of their lives. People who called each other brother and sister pulled together to make a close-knit church family of believers. The foundation of faith and stewardship has been passed to each generation in the church.

Renovations and Additions

While the original part of the church facility is over eighty-five years old, members have been faithful in planning and carrying out aggressive maintenance and building projects. Over the years, the church has sought to renovate the property with more efficient use as the main goal. Each renovation or addition at Starling Avenue Baptist Church has either been paid for with funds on hand or loans that were paid before the due date. The church has always been a financially healthy church, and today is debt free.



In 1950, the church borrowed money to build a three-story addition to be used for expanding educational classroom space. The lower level provided a fellowship hall and kitchen. A library and church offices were housed in the addition.

During early 1976 the building and grounds committee added a handicap ramp to the sanctuary level of the church. For many years, it had been the desire of Mrs. J.A. Miles to see a steeple on the church. At her passing in 1976, she left money for that purpose. The bequest became seed money toward that project. On August 14, 1981, the new steeple was constructed and installed on the church.

In 1982 the church agreed to replace the roofing, gutters, downspouts and install ventilation on the roof.

In 1983 the renovation committee asked that the vestibule on the second level and the sanctuary balcony be renovated before the November Homecoming. The church also proceeded with renovations of the Fellowship Hall.

In 1984 extensive renovation was done on the floor beneath the sanctuary and to the second floor of the education building.

In 1985 the church purchased property on the corner of Starling Avenue and Route 220 (Memorial Boulevard) for \$60,000. The membership raised over \$28,000 before the end of the year.

In 1986 it was recommended that a pipe organ be built and installed to replace the existing organ. There was an enthusiastic response, and by the end of the year, the new pipe organ had been ordered, commitments amounting to 99% of the project had been returned, and \$95,115 of the \$155,000 required had been received.

In 1990 the church voted to have an elevator installed, and members were asked to make pledges toward its purchase and installation. The elevator provided handicap accessibility to all levels of the church.

In 1994 the renovation committee asked that the church proceed with renovation of the third floor and new carpet for the sanctuary. By the end of the year, the indebtedness for the project (including a new roof on the office building) was \$52,500. Gifts and pledges to the renovation fund was used to retire the resulting debt.

In 1997 the church voted to purchase the Sara Lee property, located on the other side of Starling Avenue across from the church at a cost of \$150,000. The church envisioned this property as being used as a parking lot or new educational building. Members of the church made pledges to help pay for this purchase.

Until 1973 Starling Avenue provided a parsonage by first renting an apartment, and then in 1939 building a home in the Chatham Heights area. The parsonage was sold, and a new brick home was built next door to the church in 1941. In 1957, needing space for more classrooms, the church bought a larger home on Starling Avenue to serve as the parsonage. The old parsonage became an educational annex. In 1973 the parsonage was sold, and a housing allowance was added to the pastor's salary package in accordance with IRS guidelines.

Between 2010 and 2011 the church office building was completely renovated. Volunteers from the church did the labor themselves, keeping the cost at approximately \$20,000. Money was drawn from a special improvement gift earmarked for the project.

In 2012 the church parking lot was revamped. Landscaping was added, parking space was rescaled, and new lighting was installed to provide more safety at night. This project is a current example of the value placed on stewardship. Funds for the project were collected in advance, and where possible, funds on hand were used rather than incur debt.

Our Heritage of Equality

Despite early examples to the contrary, Southern Baptists as a whole were slow to recognize the gifts of women. However, in 1885, one Baptist man cautioned against hampering women's efforts to lead: "The good sisters have too much sense and are too much in earnest to be satisfied with flattering platitudes and empty compliments." When women did organize three years later it was as an "auxiliary" to the convention. (Southern Baptist Sister: In Search of Status, 1845-2000, by Daniel Morgan, Mercer, p. 117)

During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s Starling Avenue Baptist Church had many gifted women who served as Ministers of Music and Education, youth directors, choir directors, and various other leadership roles in the church.



In the 1950s the WMU boasted strong leaders in the church, the association and the state. After serving Virginia Baptists on staff in the Training Union Department, Marcella Winn Minter, a member of Starling Avenue Baptist Church, trained at the Carver School of Christian Social Work at a time when its partner Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was not accepting women students for the ministry.

In the 1970s as more women felt called into the ministry, factions in the SBC sought to reverse the tide. There were efforts to bring the WMU under its control, and the revision of the Baptist Faith and Message in 2000 explicitly restricted the role of pastor to men. Starling Avenue Baptist Church, however, has long recognized the gifts of women and affirmed their ministry.

In keeping with the tradition, in 1980 Starling Avenue became one of the first churches locally to ordain women as deacons. The first women deacons were Emma Washburn and Rhoda Lancaster.

On May 31, 1980, Vicki Brodie became the first woman ordained to the ministry by Starling Avenue Baptist Church. She accepted the call to serve as Minister of Education at Wake Forest University Baptist Church.

On October 22, 1995, Bonnylee Witt was ordained and went on to use her pastoral care training as director of Citizens Against Family Violence, the Mental Health Association, and as Director of Church and Communities Ministries for the Henry County Baptist Association. She later served as chaplain at Memorial Hospital of Martinsville and Henry County.

On June 18, 2005, Kristin Adkins Whitesides was ordained to the gospel ministry. She presently serves as Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church in Winchester, Virginia.

The church desires to make all individuals, regardless of gender, ethnic, culture, or socio-economics background feel comfortable in all phases of the church activities. Through the years of strong lay and staff leadership, Starling Avenue Baptist Church has become a church with warm liturgical worship and missionary vision, one which is in touch with contemporary trends, devoted to lifelong Christian nurture, and the celebration of fellowship. The church recognizes and defends the uniqueness of each person's journey in faith; there is unity in our diversity. The church is drawn together by the common belief in the Lordship of Christ. Cherishing the freedom of its Baptist roots, yet open to ecumenical opportunities, the church has become a home to Christians from many traditions. The church sees itself as a family. The congregation cares about each other and shows love throughout each part of the church's program, as well as in the individual acts of caring. The congregation encourages each other to use the gifts God has given them.

The tenacity and perseverance of its founders and charter members inspire the church to continue to attempt that which in the world's eyes seems impossible. With worship of God and love of each other as the foundation, Starling Avenue will continue to reach beyond the walls of the church to the larger community, to carry out the Great Commission of the Lord.

Our Heritage of Missions

In 1937 Reverend Fryer challenged the church to tithe the first three months of the new year with one third to be designated for missions. In 1940, 20% of the tithes and 20% of all loose offering were designated for the Cooperative Program.

Women's Missionary Union had been organized in 1936 for the mission education of children and women. In 1938, the church led the Blue Ridge Association in giving to missions. In 1939 the growth of the church was in the organizations of the Women's Missionary Union and the Sunday School. Women's Missionary Union leaders inspired children, women, and the entire congregation to be involved in mission education and endeavors. They organized the first Royal Ambassador group for mission education for boys. In 1954 they began collecting three annual offerings for missions.

In May 1942 a mission Sunday School was started in the Chatham Heights area. The attendance grew quickly to 60 and in September a request to build a tabernacle on property owned by SABC was presented to the congregation. The request was approved, and the tabernacle was completed in 1943. SABC "mothered" the new mission by paying half of the cost for a piano, providing literature, and providing teachers and other support. Chatham Heights Baptist Church was chartered in 1944 and grew to become the strong church it is today.

In 1947 the men of the church organized a Men's Fellowship club, later known as the Brotherhood. In addition to mission study and support, the men participated in local mission projects. The ladies of the church prepared and served supper for the meetings because these were the days when the men did not do kitchen duty. The men assumed leadership for Royal Ambassadors soon after.

In 1960 the church organized a food and clothes closet. The church has always been compassionate of the needs of the less fortunate. In order to best leverage resources, Starling Avenue became a participating partner in 2006 with the newly organized Grace Network, MHC, INC. Contributions previously designated to a benevolent fund were voted to be given to Grace and that organization is included in the budget. The food and clothes closet closed, and food is now collected for the client self-serve pantry operated by Grace.

Starling Avenue Baptist Church

MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA
REV. THOMAS W. FRYER, Pastor



"THE OLD AND THE NEW"
Formal Opening Services
SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 1938

1938 Church Bulletin



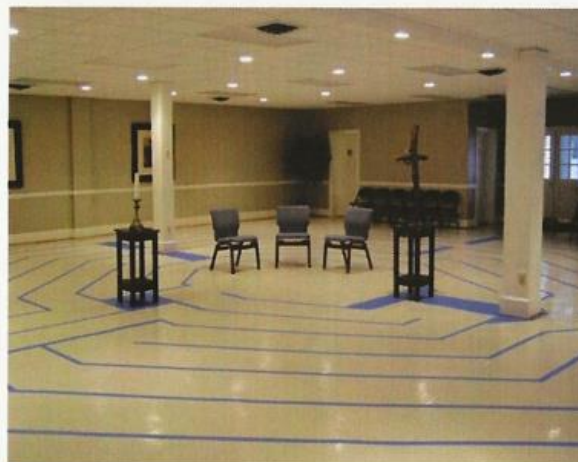
First Sanctuary



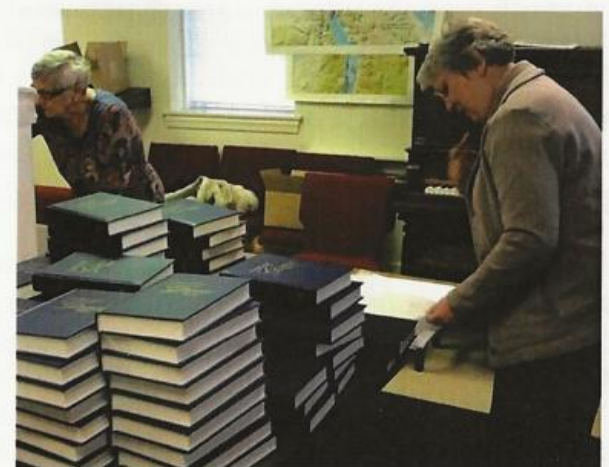
Modern Sanctuary



Handbells



Holy Week Labyrinth



Unpacking New Hymnals 11/2014

Pre-pandemic

Today, worship of God is central to the Christian life of Starling Avenue Baptist. Whether we gather in the sanctuary, in a park, or at a retreat, at that moment our congregation unites with all people of our Maker and Redeemer. In 1999, with the closing of furniture factories and textiles mills which provided the economic base for the area, many families in the community relocated to other areas. That began a decline felt in our congregation as well as in the community. During the last 20 plus years, the Martinsville/Henry County area has been in transition and working to re-invent itself. Starling Avenue, while experiencing an exodus of many younger families, and the Covid Pandemic, has remained committed to our heritage of faith and stewardship and has remained hopeful for whatever lies ahead. Since March of 2020 the church has been creative in keeping the congregation and missions active, but many of the programs and ministries listed below have had to be modified or suspended.

Worship

Starling Avenue offers two ways to worship on Sunday morning, in person and virtual streaming through Webex, Facebook, and YouTube. The traditional worship service includes ecumenical liturgy and litanies and follows the Liturgical year. We celebrate and worship together services of Covenant Sunday (first Sunday of the year), Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Tenebrae, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints Sunday, Hanging of the Greens (an evening service observing beginning of Advent), special services during Advent, and Christmas Eve candlelight communion. We also have an annual informal outdoor service for the Blessing of the Animals. We observe open communion and welcome all believers in our Lord to the table.



Ministries

Starling Avenue is a relational church and firmly believes in the caring for and ministry to our members, their extended families, and those who regularly worship with us. The church provides a variety of ministries for the purpose of spiritual development. We believe that the participation in these ministries grows the unity, harmony, and respect that characteristic of SABC.

Sunday School: One of the most important tools in the church for outreach, discipleship, evangelism, and ministry is a lifelong process. Sunday School workers have one of the most important jobs in our church. By the 1990's there were classes offered for all ages from cradle to Senior Adults. With the loss of job opportunities, ensuing exodus of younger families, and a pandemic, our Sunday School and church membership have experienced a decline in attendance. However, we remain committed to growing the church and trusting God to guide us.

Deacon Family Ministry: Annually, each active deacon chooses a number of families to whom they serve as a point of contact. Deacons contact their families by card, phone, email, or a personal visit throughout the year. In times of illness, death, or other crisis, the deacon serves and supports the member and their extended family and keeps the congregation informed as deemed appropriate and/or requested by the member or their family. If someone is unable to attend worship, the deacon serves communion in the home or care facility at least once a year.

Homebound Ministry: In 1994 a Homebound Ministry was established. Volunteers of the Homebound Team serve as friends and visitors and ensure that those who are not able to be active in the life of the church stay connected. They also lend support to caregivers as appropriate. They use avenues of phones, written communications, as well as visits. Since the Pandemic, streaming to YouTube, Facebook, and Webex (which provides audio by phone as well as visual through a computer or cell phone) has enhanced the contact with the homebound and the ability to share the Sunday morning worship with them.

Bereavement Ministry: In 2001 a group met to explore the possibility of preparing a meal for bereaved families following the funeral service of a church member. The group decided to go forward, and the Bereavement Team was formed. The first family served by this ministry was Emma Washburn's, one of the first women ordained as deacon. Today it remains as one of the greatest acts of caring provided to grieving families.



Youth and Children's Ministry: Our youth have been active in missions through Sunday School, choir, a weekly "Detour" program, mission trips and community ministries. They have brought their friends to be a part of some of these programs which reached youth outside of our church.

Children have participated in Sunday School and a Wednesday afternoon program that included music, mission study, and spiritual development. They also spearheaded the church's participation in mission projects such as "More Than Nets," and annually they have worked with the youth on Easter egg hunts at a nursing home facility and a Halloween Trunk or Treat party for the community.

Music Ministry: Music is an integral part of SABC's worship. Adult, youth and children have led the congregation in worship through music. There have been an adult handbell choir and music ensembles that perform at various services throughout the year.

C.A.R.E. Group: Caring Adults Reaching Everyone is a women's group of the WMU that has met monthly. The group did projects within the church and community. They sponsored a mission luncheon for the congregation with donations being given to the Annual Mission Offering. Other projects included making stockings for nursing homes, giving baby showers for the Pregnancy Center, and providing Christmas gifts for the ladies at the Horne Home.

Missions and Partnerships: The church encourages and supports involvement in missions locally, state wide, nationally, and internationally. Its belief is in the Great Commission as stated in Acts 1:8. The church encourages members to volunteer for hands-on mission opportunities locally and beyond. For three decades the church has observed World Hunger Sunday and contributed an offering for relief of people in hunger or poverty.

Members have participated in Disaster Relief in Tazewell, VA; Poquoson, WV; New Orleans, LA; and Punta Gordo, FL. Members have volunteered for projects of Virginia Baptist Partnership Mission in Tanzania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Hungary, Austria, Panama, and South Africa. Volunteers working with other entities have been to Cuba, Monserrat, Honduras, Chicago, and Pine Ridge, SD.

Youth on mission trips have worked with hurricane victims, done crafts with inner city children, conducted Backyard Bible Schools, worked on home repairs in low-income housing, worked in food pantries, and ministered to nursing home residents. Some places they have been are Louisiana, Maryland, Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania, Williamsburg, VA, the Eastern Shore of VA, North Carolina, Tennessee, and New York City.

Community Meals began in January 2014. A Feed America report on the area indicated that a large portion of the community was “food insecure”. Realizing also, there are many elderly and lonely residents in the area, a ministry team was formed to provide a community meal once each month. Volunteers provide and serve the free meal at fully dressed tables for anyone wishing to attend. They also eat with the visitors and engage them in conversation. Pray boxes are placed on each table, and all are encouraged to place their anonymous prayer requests in the boxes. These requests are shared with the Wednesday prayer and Bible study group.

Hope Community Garden is located on the property across from Starling Avenue from the church. Raised planting beds are provided and prepared by volunteers. Residents in the area are encouraged to plant a garden for the use of their household. Gardening advise, water, some tools and materials are supplied by the church volunteers. Produce from the beds planted and tended by volunteers is donated to Grace Network.



Grace Network is an ecumenical faith-based non-profit organization. It began offering services to the community in 2006. Supported by over 90 congregations, Grace Network pools money, food, hygiene products, volunteers, leadership, and expertise from churches, individuals, groups, businesses and grants to create a “one stop” location for people in crisis in the Martinsville and Henry County area to find help. Their mission statement: “Short term help for long term solutions.” Many SABC members serve as volunteers and supply food donations for the quarterly assignments Grace sends to the participating churches to keep the self-service food pantry filled.

Good News Jail and Prison Ministry provides Bible studies to inmates and support to their families. Several members are involved in visiting local jails and prisons. They provide Bible studies and have conversations and prayer with the inmates. They often provide support to newly released inmates as they re-acclimate into society.

Habitat for Humanity in Martinsville and Henry County began at Starling Avenue in 1988 and continues to maintain an office in the church office building. SABC members volunteer in the construction of homes and work alongside the future homeowners as they invest “sweat equity” in their home.

Entities with Which We Have Connections

Community	State	National and International
Back2School	Baptist General Association of Virginia	Alliance of Baptist
Good News Jail and Prison Ministry	Cooperative Baptist Fellowship VA	Baptist Joint Committee
Grace Network MHC, INC.		Baptist World Alliance
Habitat for Humanity		Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Henry County Baptist Association		House of Baptist Studies, Duke
Open Arms Ministry		Wake Forest Divinity
Warming Center MHC		



Community Meal



Operation-In-As-Much



Back2School



Grace Network

Organizational Structure

Our strong heritage of collaborative relationships creates an environment where all work together using their gifts, talents, and skills to create an effective, respected, and appreciated administration and ministry process. We are in the process of building our staff, strengthening our support ministry teams, and other leaders to continue the tradition of providing loving, cooperative, respectful, and proactive leadership. The pastor will join in these efforts at whatever point we may be and lead the congregation in fulfilling the call of the church.

Rev. Ed Spencer and his wife Kay led the music program until Kay had to step down due to medical issues. Ed retired in 2020 to take care of Kay. Due to the pandemic this position has not been filled.

Susan Spangenberg served as Minister of youth. Susan is a veteran in ministry and served on the staff of Starling for 16 years. She was called to be Senior Pastor at Pocahontas Baptist Church in Bassett, VA in 2016. The youth ministry was filled by France Stegall, one of our church members. When the pandemic started this ministry dissolved. This position is vacant at this time.



Administrative Support

Barbara Rakes joined the staff of Starling Avenue Baptist Church in January of 2019. She is a graduate of Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Barbara held the position of Director of Admissions at American National University's Martinsville campus for over 20 years prior to joining the staff at SABC.

Barbara lives in Fieldale, VA, with her husband of 44 years, Gerald. She has three daughters, Sarah, Mary, and Anna and two granddaughters. Her people and administrative skills have made her a great asset to the church.

Support Ministry Team: Sarah Fain, Pianist

Joan Joyce, Interpreter for the deaf

Trustees

Six trustees serve to hold all church property in trust for the congregation, to insure that all properties are properly insured, to anticipate future property and land needs, to execute legal documents as instructed by the church, and to bring appropriate recommendations to the congregation as needed.

Each year, one trustee is nominated for a six-year term by the Nominating Committee and elected by the congregation. If no active deacon is a trustee, one may be appointed by the chair of the deacons to serve a one-year term to expedite communication and coordination.

Deacons

Deacons serve in cooperation with the pastor and staff in overseeing the work of the church. They are especially charged with the spiritual advancement and interest of the church. A key component of their service is care and ministry to the members of the congregation and their families. They are also responsible for the distribution of the Lord's Supper.

The diaconate consists of one person for each 25 resident church members. Deacons are nominated and elected by the congregation/membership in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws. Each deacon serves a three-year term with one-third of the ministry being elected each year.

Councils, Standing Committees, and Ministry Teams

Members of committees, at-large members of councils, and team leaders are nominated and elected to serve as established by the Constitution and By-Laws. Committee members serve a three-year term with one-third being nominated each year.

Ministry Teams are formed around temporary needs as seen by the ministers, deacons, or laity and cover a broad spectrum. Team Leaders are elected for a one-year term. Team members volunteer and are not elected.

Councils

Church

Christian Education

Mission Development

Standing Committees

History Committee

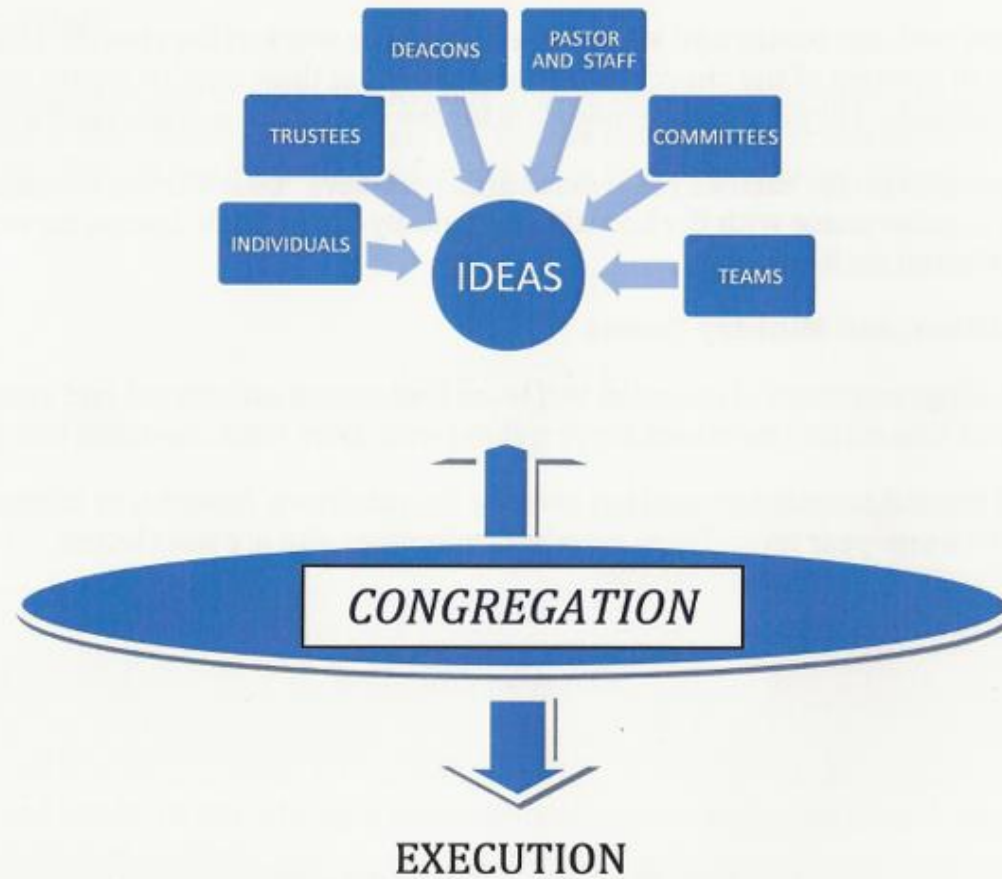
Nominating Committee

Personnel Committee

Stewardship Committee

Worship Committee

How We Make Decisions



Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have made a profession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; who desire to be numbered among His disciples; who have been baptized and who are in sympathy with the faith and practices of this church.

Constitution of Starling Avenue Baptist Church, revised 2010

Members are received by profession of faith and baptism, transfer of membership by letter, or upon statement of profession of faith and church membership where no letter is obtainable.

Currently, the church is working through the effects of the Pandemic and in order to return to some form of normalcy. People in our congregations have stepped up to the challenge of being the church God intended us to be and trusting him to lead us through these trying times.

Starling Avenue Baptist Church Congregational Profile

*Members Active -104

*Non-members Active -12

*Youth/Children - 21

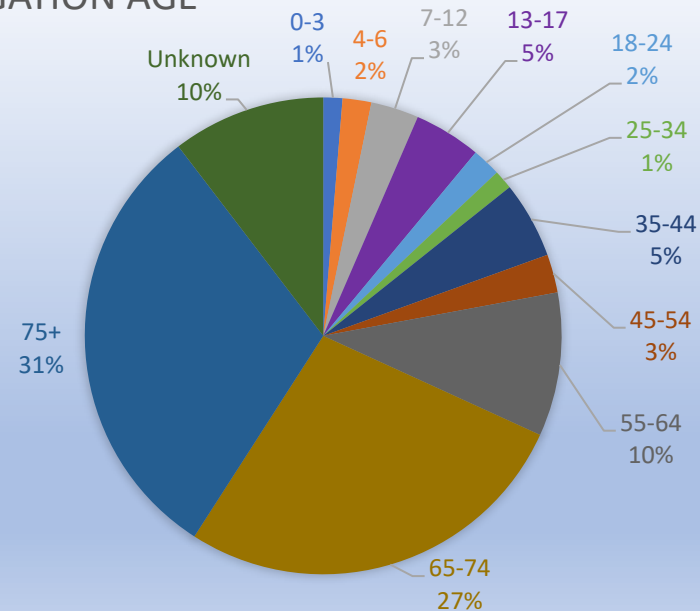
*Homebound/Nursing Home -19

These numbers plus 16 unknown birth dates make up the chart

There are about 116 inactive resident members. We have 9 people who are 90+.

The average attendance has been very low due to the pandemic, but we hope to remedy that soon.

CONGREGATION AGE



The breakdown of the congregation shows that about 58% are retired folks (65 and above), but many are amazingly active.



Annual Valentine Day Dinner



Blessing of the Animals



Easter -Flowered Cross



*Hanging of the Greens -
Chrismon Tree*

*Parent-Child-Church
Dedication (2022)*



SABC Today and Going Forward

God has blessed Starling Avenue Baptist Church with people who are willing to step up and do their very best to keep the church united. We strive to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We're blessed with nice facilities and the financial and spiritual stability to serve God's purpose in our community or wherever God leads. Congregants deeply love God's church and are compelled to serve those who are hurting and to share the love of Jesus.

SABC has been described as friendly, caring, and loving. We are primarily traditional, but a church that desires to serve the Lord to the best of its abilities. Our best assets are our people and their willingness to give of themselves and their resources.

Most of our congregants were drawn to SABC by family ties, close friendships, and a spirit of heartfelt love. We are a Christian family where ALL are welcome. We feel called to connect with our community and beyond through mission action. We intentionally reach out to the elderly who can no longer attend church.

We began as a community church with the congregation being the community surrounding it. Today, very few of our congregation live in the area of the church. We are still a community church, but with a different mission. Opportunities to reach out are at our doorstep.

Like most churches around the country, membership of SABC is aging. We have fewer young families and children. No doubt, the changing culture around us and the prolonged season of COVID-19 have changed us.

The church has entered the age of technology. We are streaming Sunday morning worship to reach our community, spread the Good News, and to serve those who do not or cannot attend church.

These difficult times have changed our church and the world around us, but we believe with love, understanding, patience, and determination, we can move forward and fulfill God's calling for SABC. It's time to look at the church as a new beginning - to move forward and use the precious time God gives us to make a difference in God's world.

Part of the content of this page reflects the input received from those in the congregation who responded to a questionnaire about how they see the church and how the community sees it

Who Will God Call?

Starling Avenue Baptist Church is excited to welcome and labor alongside the next pastor. Congregants desire a pastor who is a truly a God-led preacher and teacher who delivers messages that inspire and encourage his or her listeners and help lead the congregation to recognize – together and individually – their God-given gifts and talents.

We desire a pastor who values taking the time to nurture relationships with members of the congregation and develop deep connections so the congregation can relate to him or her better. A shepherd/leader who leads by example and is willing to work alongside the people (the congregation, community, and other churches or faith organizations). Our new pastor should be willing to visit those who are unable to attend church, allowing them to stay connected to the church.

Our church is primarily traditional and our hands-on outreach is our community meal, a partnership with The Early Learning Center, and working with other Christian organization in our community. Outreach is very important to SABC and we are called to be Jesus' hands and feet in our surrounding area. We pray for a pastor who has the patience and demeanor to help us discern and live into where God is leading us.

Change does not come easily for most people, but a pastor who has the skills to relate to people and listens to concerns can make a difference on how we see, accept, and participate in necessary changes.

Our next pastor should be skilled and equipped to work well with all ages and be able to counsel with those in our congregation when needs arise.

The content of this page reflects some of the key input received from the majority of the respondents in the congregation to the questionnaire regarding what leadership was most important in our next pastor



Martinsville Speedway



Philpott Lake



Piedmont Arts



Virginia Museum of Natural History



Smith River Sports Complex

The Community We Serve

Located on the southern border of Virginia, Martinsville – Henry County is positioned 50 miles south of Roanoke, Virginia and 50 miles north of Greensboro, North Carolina – home to the Piedmont Triad International Airport. With our roots in furniture and textile manufacturing, we have undergone a transformation of our economy over the past 15 years. We are now home to plastics and polymer processors, logistics and distribution companies, food processors, call centers and more.

Henry County was founded in 1777 and named for Patrick Henry who once resided in the area. Martinsville, named for General Joseph Martin, a Revolutionary hero, was incorporated in 1879 and became the county seat. It became a city in 1929. Martinsville-Henry County is saturated with history, and a visit to these sites will show a brief glance into the days of yesteryear.

The Martinsville Historic District is a 45-acre area encompassing 96 historically contributing buildings reflective of a number of architectural styles dating from 1791 to 1948. The district was listed in both the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

History buffs will be intrigued by visiting our museums and historic cemeteries. These locations are filled with interesting architecture and memories of days gone by. The Bassett Historical Center is sought by both national and international families seeking their roots and is renowned for its rare genealogical records.

Arts and Culture

Martinsville-Henry County offers an array of artistic and cultural entertainment. The area is home of the Virginia Museum of Natural History (a Smithsonian affiliated Natural History Museum), FAHI African American Heritage Museum, MHC Heritage Center and Museum, TheatreWorks, Walker Fine Arts Theater at Patrick & Henry Community College, Piedmont Arts Association, and the Southern Virginia Artisan Center. Public art is on display in many murals and fun sculptures around town.

Recreation and Sports

Recreation and sports abound. A 44.5-mile section of the Smith River bisects Henry County, Virginia, as it travels from Philpott Lake down to the North Carolina border. The Smith River Trail System is a network of easily accessible trails which includes a scenic blueway with 10 river access points and more than 20 miles of greenway. Two businesses offer equipment rentals, shuttles and guide services. The Bike Barn on the Dick and Willie trail section, within the city, provides bikes and equipment free of charge.

Fishing and boating take place on the lakes in the Martinsville and Henry County area. Philpott Lake is a 3,000 acre reservoir located in the northwest corner of Henry County and is home to the area's newest attraction, Philpott Marina. Fairy Stone State Park features a 168-acre lake that adjoins Philpott Lake. Beaver Creek Reservoir offers 165 acres of water for boating and on-site canoe rentals.

Numerous parks, golf clubs, and other recreational facilities are conveniently located throughout the city and county. Both the city and county offer recreation programs for children, youth, adults, and seniors.

Martinsville Speedway is NASCAR's most historic and shortest track on the Cup Circuit. Two NASCAR Cup and Truck Series races are held at Martinsville Speedway each year, along with an annual Late Model Stock Car Race in the fall.

The Smith River Sports Complex offers a 90-acre multi-use sports development facility with two picnic pavilions, a paved trail along the river, and an Evos Playground.

Hooker Field is home for the Martinsville Mustangs. They are members of the Coastal Plains League, and players are hosted by local families for the season.

Music

Music is an integral part of the area, and residents and visitors can enjoy many events throughout the year. There are weekly, monthly, and seasonal venues for music of all styles, from Bluegrass to Symphony and everything between.

Education

Martinsville and Henry County are served by two separate public-school systems and one private school for preschool through 12th grade. There are two colleges in the city and county and easy access to an additional 30 schools within a 60-mile radius.

The Martinsville City Public School System is a small yet innovative system of five schools which attracted state and national recognition. Serving 1817 students in preschool through grade 12, the standard for educating students is excellence through a rigorous academic curriculum, as well as a full array of arts, music, and sports programming. Advanced learning is present throughout the system. The Middle School is home to the only NASA Science, Engineering, Math, and Aerospace Academy (SEMAA) lab in Virginia.

The Henry County Public Schools System is a high performing school division with 7025 students enrolled in 13 schools for preschool through grade 12. Critical thinking is expected, creativity is encouraged, technology and innovation are embraced, and learning is celebrated. The system has been awarded the Apple Distinguished Program Award for innovation, leadership, and education.

Carlisle School is an independent college preparatory school that provides an environment for academic excellence and character development, while embracing diversity and preparing students to become leaders as citizens in a global society.

It is accredited by: Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS) and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), Members of Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), and Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE).

Patrick & Henry Community College is a 2-year college located in Henry County. Tuition and fees for in-state students attending this college in the 2021-2022 school year is \$4,720.

Patrick & Henry Community College offers 30 associate degree programs, 9 certificate programs, and 40 career studies certificate programs. It is a member of the Virginia Community College System and is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

New College Institute is a state funded educational entity that provides access to bachelor's degree completion programs, master's degrees, teacher endorsement programs, teacher recertification courses, and more through academic partnerships with six colleges and universities.

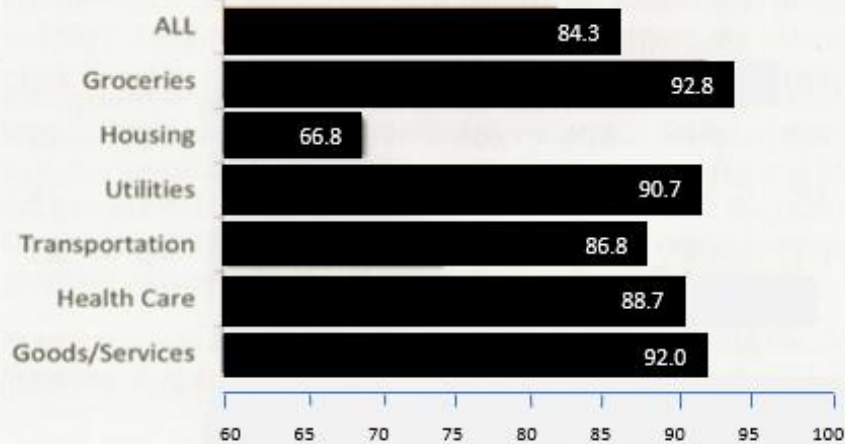
In addition to college-level degree and certification programs, NCI offers experiential learning opportunities, summer camps, non-credit lectures, financial aid resource events, and community programs to promote educational access.

NCI's state-of-the-art facility is a hub for education, technology, and public-private partnerships.

By The Numbers

2019 Q3 Cost of Living Index for Martinsville-Henry Co.

(National Average = 100.0)



Real Estate Tax Rates

Martinsville \$1.040 per \$100.00
Henry County \$0.555 per \$100.00

Median Income \$35,497



Combined Population 64,433



Martinsville 13,485

Henry County 50,948

Median Home Value \$127,000



Climate

The climate in Martinsville-Henry County is perfect for those who enjoy the full scope of four seasons. Listed below are the monthly averages for Martinsville and Henry County, Virginia:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Avg. High (°F)	47°	51°	60°	70°	77°	84°	87°	85°	79°	70°	60°	50°
Avg. Low (°F)	24°	26°	32°	41°	50°	59°	64°	62°	55°	42°	32°	26°
Avg. Precip.	3.5"	3.1"	4.2"	3.5"	4.0"	3.8"	4.5"	3.9"	4.6"	3.3"	3.4"	3.4"

Average of 213 clear days



45.1" Average Rainfall



7" Average Snowfall



Average Temperature



July 87.1°
January 25.5°

APPENDIX
*Former Pastors of
Starling Avenue Baptist Church*

Reverend Thomas Waitt Fryer	1936-1939	
Reverend George Simmons	1940-1941	Called into active duty
Reverend Charles L. Harmon	1941-1946	
Reverend George Simmons	1946-1953	Returned to SABC
Reverend Shields Webb	1954-1957	
Dr. Thomas O. Hall	1958-1962	
Dr. Charles R. Sanks, Jr.	1963-1969	
Reverend John E. Woody	1970-1979	
Dr. David W. Adkins	1979-2014	Pastor Emeritus
Reverend Abner Brian Harrington	2016-2021	Co-Pastors
Reverend Ashley Gill Harrington		

Original Congregational Profile was created in 2014

Revised January 2022