

2001

The year 2001 will be remembered for the terrorist attacks on September 11. On that day our nation realized that it is neither isolated nor invulnerable. In the mass violence against thousands we saw humanity's dark side. Nevertheless, that day and the days that followed there were also examples of the sacrifice and heroism of good people. The church was open for prayer that week, and the Sunday following found people of faith across the United States in worship. The sermon the pastor preached that day was collected with those of other Virginia Baptist pastors into a book. The proceeds from its sale went to Virginia Baptist Disaster Relief.

In the spring, a group, led by Pat and Gaynelle Stanley, met to explore the possibility of preparing a meal for bereaved families at the time of the death of a church member. The group decided to go forward with



such a bereavement ministry. Before the plan was complete, Emma Washburn passed away. She had requested that her church prepare a meal for her family after her funeral.

So, the first meal was following her funeral. Pat asked for help from the church at large, and the response was tremendous. The Bereavement Meal ministry was begun.



On June 10, we began an 8:45 am "early service" in addition to the 11:00 service. People were welcomed to wear casual dress or work clothes. Music included Taize and contemporary hymns. The service proved popular and was continued after the trial summer months.



The focus of the children's retreat at Camp Lee Ford was the Bible. Children learned the books of the Bible, acted out parables and took part in Sword Drills.

In addition to WMU, Sunday School and Baptist Men, senior adults were active in their choir and monthly fellowships. The mid-week Bible study on Wednesday mornings was well attended. In months when weather permitted, there were several trips, among them Shattley Springs and the NC frescoes, Mabry's Mill, and Peaks of Otter.



Advent the senior adult, youth and children's choirs sang in the Hanging of the Greens, The adult choir led a service of "Lessons and Carols," and the Longest Night service was held again.

Recognizing that our current hymnal was published 25 years before, the worship planning committee did a study on the need for a new hymnal. A license to print hymns or songs was being used for the early service and it was determined that such a license would serve our needs.

Hymnals of SABC
Modern Hymnal (1926)
Broadman Hymnal (1940)
Baptist Hymnal (1956)
Baptist Hymnal.(1975)

Susan Spangenberg endeared herself to everyone with her energy and tremendous gifts of ministry. She met with the youth for weekly fellowship, Bible discussions and mission projects. Susan began regular after school activities with children in conjunction with children's choirs.



In 2001 a dessert auction was held after the spaghetti supper. Louis Compton entertained with his banter between each of the desserts which had been prepared by the men and boys of the church. Proceeds went to the youth mission trip.

In the spring the Wednesday afterschool programs for children began to attract community children. Younger children inquired about participating, and with their parent's permission were added. Numbers increased and soon community youth showed up as well. The size of the group was a challenge, but an even greater one was the disruptive behavior of some. A ministry had come knocking on

our doors and we tried to deal with it the best we could. When school was out and our regular church children and youth programs stopped for the summer, The staff collaborated on a summer intergenerational program of Bible Study, crafts, and music around unifying themes. Some children were

hungry for attention, at the same time others did not trust us. Some would come for the potluck and then be disruptive enough to be asked to leave. In the fall when the regular programs

began, the neighborhood children and youth were asked to register so workers would have family contact information as well as birthdays. The cut off age was

eighth grade. Rather than give us this information some did not come back. Others did. The younger ones were separated from the older community youth, who were offered a Thursday night program. The older youth dwindled and after Christmas the church discontinued the Thursday night program. The younger

ones, however, continued to be active for the next two years. Looking back on the experience we know we touched the



lives of some children for the three years we had contact and we are grateful.

There were several mission trips in 2001. Gerry and Betty Robinson were part of the Virginia Baptist Male Chorale trip to Austria, where their concerts overcame barriers Baptists there face there in reaching people. The team also led in a music camp for the Austrian Baptists.

Kay Spencer marked her tenth anniversary as the church organist by a mini-sabbatical leading a team Virginia Baptists to China. Having served as a missionary journeyman to Taiwan, Kay's knowledge of Mandarin and the Chinese culture was a great asset.

Joe and Merle Prince and Sean Prince went with "Transformers" to the Northern Neck of Virginia. Joe also was involved in an ecumenical disaster relief effort for flood victims on the Virginia Tennessee border.

The world hunger project for 2001 supported the ministry of the Baptist Convention of Rwanda to children orphaned by recent wars and the AIDS epidemic.

RA's collected 71 pairs of glasses for the Aquadulce Baptist Church in Panama to assist them in their ministry to the poor in their community. We collected 61 boxes for the Christmas Child project sponsored by Samaritan's Purse. The GA's began collecting Campbell soup labels for the Bland Center. Merle and Joe Prince were part of a team of Virginia Baptists working on homes in Roanoke in the spring. The church assisted many families with food and medicine during 2001. Several of our members have provided leadership to and volunteer in the local prison ministry. Over 60 members are involved in the Homebound Ministry of the church. The SHARE program located at our church has become not only a

resource for people trying to stretch their food dollars, but it has initiated even more people being involved in volunteer service in the community. Habitat, with which we are a partner, dedicated another home in November.



Tables set up for the SHARE distribution

The church hosted an associational WMU/Baptist Men sponsored mission conference August 26. "Beyond Belief" offered mission testimonies and workshops. Craig Wilson was the guest speaker. We also hosted the 2002 regional BGAV Leadership Conferences.

Rick Clore, the new VA CBF Coordinator, spoke in August as a part of a series on our Mission Partners.

The windows on the west side of the educational building were all replaced. The total debt of the church was paid down to \$6,553. A special gift made the purchase of a fourth octave of hand bells possible.

Led by Rev. Spangengber our youth participated in *Passport*, in Wingate, NC. There they repaired homes, served in day care centers, and worked with senior adults. Other youth ministry projects included a Christmas party for King's Grant residents and a very successful fall festival for children who live in the church's neighborhood.



Early morning devotions at the Children's Retreat at Camp Lee Ford.

Dr. John H. L. Laughlin, chair of Averett University's religion department brought his extensive experience as an archeologist in Israel to a winter Bible study on how the discoveries there are reshaping our understanding of the Bible.

The church marked the pastor's 25th year with Starling Avenue on the first Sunday in March. Worship was followed by a meal and the presentation of a walnut carving by John Steely of Patrick County based on Philippians 4:8-9.

2002

Renovation of the fellowship hall and educational entrance through special gifts was completed early in the year. The entrance renovation, done in memory of Blanche Mays, included a new gray tile floor and gray toned walls which inspired the re-painting of the second floor hallways. The fellowship hall took on a new look. Shutters were replaced with blinds. The walls took on neutral beige with white trim. Down lights were installed and plants added. Roy Harrell led a team of workers for both projects.

Two benches given in memory of Emma Washburn graced the church playground and office porch.

Discussion began on what should be the long-term plans for our parking and landscaping around the church. The parking lot had served well but was showing signs of its age. A group from the building and grounds committee made a first report in December on a multi-stage landscaping and portico project, as well as renovation or replacement of the office building. The landscaping around the church, except for the 220 side, could be improved. (We had to remove four trees that were diseased in front of the church: two hemlock at the steps and two maples). Keeping the church attractive was agreed to be a witness to the community about the value we place on God's work.

We were proud when Maribeth Jones was selected as GA of the year in the association and then doubly proud when she was recognized as GA of the year for the state of Virginia. Her accomplishment is also a testimony to the dedication of mission education leaders in this church.

Through the Baptist World Alliance we sent the \$2,604 World Hunger offering to help Liberian Baptists deal with refugee resettlement.

The closing of Bassett Walker/Vanity Fair was another blow to our community and some of our members lost their jobs or were transferred as a result. Coming after the closing of Tultex and DuPont, this further closing made it clear that Martinsville/Henry County was still in economic transition. The national economy also suffered in 2002 making local recovery more complicated. Although new jobs were created, there was still many unemployed. In this situation our church responded to make it possible to

help people that have been affected. A record \$6,952 was given to local benevolence and the food closet was well supplied by the youth "pantry raids" and regular donations. No hungry person had to be turned away and many emergencies were been met.

2003

Our church secretary. Jamie Caviness retired in September after over 10 years as church secretary. She and her husband Wes anticipated traveling more, since he had retired as well. The church recognized Jamie in the morning worship and presented her with a check. In October Lorene Hopkins became the new church secretary.

The church celebrated Gerry Robinson's twentieth anniversary on the first Sunday in September with a reception. To commemorate the occasion the church gave him a handcrafted hammer dulcimer and a check.

Susan Spangenberg led a group of youth on the pilot mission trip to NYC where they worked with Metro Baptist Church in its active summer program for multinational children nearby. The scheduled a followup for 2004. The major mission trip for 2003, however, was to Passport at Kentucky, where the youth were involved in home repair and childcare.

Throughout the year Rev Spangenberg provided other opportunities for children to be involved in ministry projects, such as the Christmas party at King's Grant and the Easter party given at Blue Ridge Manor.

A growing number of preschoolers was learning about missions every Sunday during the 11:00 am mission friends program. The dedicated

volunteer teachers and leaders were coordinated by Trish Dickerson.

In July, Margaret Caldwell led a very successful VBS program *Lighthouse Kids: Shining God's Light*.

Jo Grayson expanded the history committee for a pictorial directory. Ann Harrell assisted in assembling and laying out the activity pages for the book. One photography day was cancelled because of bad weather, but perseverance of members overcame that obstacle.

Wanda Martin, single adult coordinator, organized an ecumenical single adult fellowship in November, featuring Victory's Junction. The event drew over fifty single adults for fellowship and inspiration.



The spaghetti supper and dessert auction raised a large portion of the funds needed by the youth to go on their two mission trips. The recreation committee also planned a successful fall picnic and hot dog roast at Mountain Valley/Dyer Store in October.

The youth met weekly on Sunday afternoon for "Detour" In the fall, youth choir and handbells also moved to Sunday afternoon.

An Advent Art Show featured works loaned by artists Kathy Ammon of Raleigh, Esther Augsburg of Harrisonburg, Anne Frazier of Martinsville, and Keith Ramsey of

Richmond. The works explored the theme *God Comes to Us: Judgment, Peace, Hope, Love, and Incarnation*. A program of music and reflection began the show and the pieces were displayed in worship services.

The September choir retreat held at Clarence and Shirley Stegall's Philpott Lake cabin in September allowed the group to fellowship and to begin work on the Christmas music which was presented December 21. The choir was augmented by percussion, brass and flute in that service.



At the suggestion of the worship committee there was "*hymn sing*" on the last Sunday of each month. Three or four hymn numbers would be called out and the congregation would then join in singing the hymn. Young and old have been eager to have their hymn sung. The organist jokingly called it "stump the organist Sunday."

Over 100 people from across Virginia and from other states descended on Henry County to be part of the *Transformer* teams repairing 15 homes.



Merle Prince was the local coordinator. Our church contributed financially to the purchase of supplies and was represented by seven volunteers on the work force.

Significant contributions were made in 2003 toward the renovation of the *kitchen*. In December an ad hoc committee began meeting to formulate targets for the upgrade. Discussions were held on the parking lot improvements.

The 2003 world hunger offering was channeled through the Baptist World Alliance to the Russian Baptists for their ministry to children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. Our \$2600 went to provide food and clothing.

CBF missionaries Eddie and Macarena Adalpe spoke in December about their work in India with the gypsy people and the CBF Adopt-a-People program. Through Adopt a People, a church covenants to support, study and pray for a people group and missionaries working with them a special focus of prayer. We were joined by guests from other Baptist churches.

The growth in the Silent Class created an incentive for the group to have a classroom of their own, instead of sharing one. The class moved to Room 305.

Susan Spangenburg and Donna Finley provided leadership in our outreach to children living around the church who were not part of our regular Sunday programs. Learning from experiences in 2002, the Wednesday program was limited in number and younger and older children divided for learning and activities. We were blessed by dedicated volunteers who faithfully helped us in this expanded mission project: Barbara Smith, Lisa Lovell, Peaches Wood, Eva Weaver, and Bonnie Barrow (spring session).

\$2650 was given to help emergency needs through our local benevolence fund in addition to the food provided through our emergency food closet.

Bill Adkins completed fourteen years as the head of Habitat in December. Although he handed leadership over to another president, he continued on the fund raising committee. During his term fourteen homes and four apartments were built, providing decent shelter to families who otherwise would not be able to afford owning a decent home. Starling Avenue continued to offer office space and a place for Habitat to meet.



Every five years the by-laws stipulate a review of the by-laws and constitution of the church. In 2003 the church amended the constitution and by-laws to divide committees into committees and teams. Service on a team would be annual and renewable. The leader would be nominated by the nominating committee, but all who want to help with the work for that year are automatically added to the team roster.

A second major change was a modification of reception of members. In addition to receiving members by profession of faith and baptism by immersion and transfer of membership by letter, the by-law allows the church, upon the recommendation of the deacons, to accept into membership a candidate by transfer from another Christian church without requiring rebaptism by immersion.

This change had been brought to the church previously but had fallen just

short of the two-thirds majority needed to effect it. In 2003 the church passed it overwhelmingly. One reason for the shift was the influence of a godly woman Elizabeth MacFarland. James and Elizabeth had both lost their spouses, but found a new marriage together. Elizabeth had been a very active member of a Methodist church. In a letter to the deacons Elizabeth explained how asking her to be rebaptized was asking her to declare her first baptism had been to no effect. While she felt very much a part of our congregation in every other way, she could not in good conscience agree to rebaptism.

The SBC voted to decrease its giving to the Baptist World Alliance after the BWA voted to admit the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to its membership. The SBC was a founding member of the BWA, which was created as a way of Baptists unions and conventions around the world to work together. To meet the financial crisis this created, the BWA called on congregations and unions to help make the difference. In response, SABC became a charter "global impact church," putting the BWA in our church budget for 2003. Denton Lotz, the executive director of the BWA, at our church anniversary in 2000 gave an inspiring report of the good work this partnership is doing through out the world. He also spoke of how the BWA has been an effective voice for religious liberty in other countries. Regrettably the SBC executive committee led the SBC to turn its back on this good work, recommending that all SBC funds to the BWA be eliminated in 2004.

Realizing that the SBC had continued to move away from its historic roots, the church voted to move its *yellow page* listing from "Southern Baptist" to "Baptist." After lobbying by our church the category Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was added under churches in the yellow pages the next year.

2004

Margaret Caldwell, whose curriculum (teachers' and members' quarterlies and the resource kits) and special education magazine articles had been published with the SBC Sunday School Board since 1989, was informed that since her church supported the CBF, her services would no longer be needed. It did not matter that we still contributed to SBC missions, unless we only supported the SBC we could not participate in SBC affairs. These pressure tactics the new SBC had adopted only confirmed our support of other options. Mrs. Caldwell had been a conference leader for special education since the early 1980's.



In May the church purchased a new 15 passenger mini-bus from Carpenter Bus.



On Sunday, November 21, following the 11:00 a.m. service there was a brief service of dedication for the newly renovated kitchen. A reception in the fellowship hall followed, and everyone was able to tour the new kitchen, those who worked so diligently in making this project a reality were recognized. Ann and Roy Harrell, Shirley and Clarence Stegall, Jimmie and Geneva Winn, Dottie Robertson, Richard Caldwell, among others.

Children's Sunday School instigated the World Hunger project for 2004 by raising money for a "Heifer Project." Through our offering we purchased a water buffalo for \$2,474.

The Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child project continued as an annual project.

The children's annual Christmas party for the folks at King's Grant was held Saturday, December 18th. The Youth joined with the children and their parents to take special Christmas goodies to share and to play board games with the residents.

2005

We responded to the December 26, 2004 *tsunami* in Asia by giving \$1,804 for relief through Virginia Baptist "Back to School Buddies" project.

And then *Hurricanes* Katrina in August and Rita in September devastated the Gulf Coast. In the

months following that disaster the church directed the World Hunger Offering to this new need and raised an additional \$2,470. In total, our annual church report to the association showed that in twelve months we gave \$54,242 to missions through the budget and special offerings.

In 2005 the church approved new “united way” plan for the special mission offerings beyond the church budget. The *annual mission offering* was created to combine all the special missions offerings into a single offering with a goal of \$10,000. The offering would be received between Advent and Pentecost. The allocations were determined by surveys. The responses revealed the congregation wanted one third to go to global mission efforts; one third for use in Virginia; and one third for local needs. The offering began December 2005.



Our members not only gave to missions, they were involved hands-on. Seven members worked on homes in Roanoke June 1-4 as part of Virginia Baptist *Transformers*. Joe Prince was part of the many Virginia Baptist *disaster relief* teams headed to the Gulf region after Katrina and Rita hit. Fifteen went on the *youth* mission trip to a hurricane-damaged Arcadia, Florida. It was one of the most physically demanding mission trips they had ever undertaken, but they returned with a great sense of accomplishment. Susan Spangenberg also went with her husband and his church on mission to *Cuba*, where she used her skill with Spanish.

Our members also served within our own community through the WMU, the Developmental Disability Ministry Walkathon, prison ministry, Habitat, Boaz and Ruth, Random Acts of

Kindness Day, and SHARE—just to name a few.



Begun in 2005 *GROW* met twice monthly for one hour to write or call members and visitors.

The *Homebound Ministry* became the largest team in the church, visiting, calling, and sending cards. Under the direction of Marcella Minter it made sure that none of our members who are confined are forgotten.

Deacons also recognized the magnitude of the task of ministering to the congregation. We were blessed to have a group of men and women who took that job seriously.

In February, 2005, the Deacons recommended that the pastor assemble an ordination council for the purpose of examining Kristin Adkins Whitesides for her fitness to be ordained to the gospel ministry. Kristin had been a Baptist scholar at the University of Richmond, where she not only was involved in the academic study of religion but was active in ministry through the BSU. She had been a Lilly Fellow at Duke Divinity School, and following her graduation *magna cum laude* in May had accepted a



call to be associate pastor at First Baptist Church, Winchester, Virginia. The council recommended her ordination. The church ordained her on Father's Day June 19, 2005 with her father Dr. Adkins preaching the sermon. Dr. Curis Freeman, director of Baptist House of Studies at Duke, and two members of Winchester Baptist were among those who came to participate. A reception headed by Shirley Stegall followed the service.

During Lent there was an art exhibit in the halls of the third level featuring etchings by Andy Farkas and Kathe Kollowitz, and lithographs by Marc Chagall. The pastor gave a talk on the relation of art and faith in the work of Marc Chagall.

Four lovely new banners were created for worship. Wanda Martin created a banner for baptisms. Kay Spencer completed a new All Saints banner in her father who passed away in 2005. Pam Martin provided a Christmas banner based on the "O Antiphons." Lynn Turner completed an Epiphany banner of the three wise men, in memory of her father.

Children's Own Worship provided a worship experience at 11:00 am geared to the developmental needs of preschoolers and young children.



Susan Spangenberg continued to offer Wednesday night "All Stars," which reach children beyond as well as within our congregation.

In the fall Gerry began offering a separate Orff class for children on Wednesday nights. Gerry had been pursuing certification in Orff and had taught Orff and was scheduled to be a presenter at the national Orff Convention in 2006.



The Children's Choir presented "Adam's Apple" in June, a delightful musical about resisting temptation.

The kitchen and fellowship hall project reached a beautiful conclusion in June with a new tile and glass block entrance. Roy and Ann Harrell, Jimmie and Geneva Winn, Dotty Robertson, Clarence and Shirley Stegall and other helpers did an outstanding job on this crowning renovation of the church. Shirley Stegall and her food services team had a meal with the new dishes for all the folks who had been part of the kitchen fellowship hall project.

Another project in 2005 was the renovation of the children's Sunday School classrooms. New cabinets were the first order of renovation. The budget squeeze postponed the replacement of the flooring, but that last phase was done early in 2006.

The 2005 VBS theme was "Serengeti Safari." The church sanctuary transformed into an African wilderness.



Pictured above are the Sunday School officers Joe Prince, seated; Billy Spencer and I. C. Lancaster.

Billy Spencer completed 20 years of service as the Sunday School director in 2005. We recognized Billy in the fall, as well as Joe Prince who also completed a lengthy term as Sunday School secretary. Keevin Jones became the new director.

Tenor Jeff Prillaman, with the assistance of Charles and Kathy Hullin, at the piano and on the French horn, offered a recital to raise money for the Free Medical Clinic. The recital was warmly received and raised \$704.

In addition to their monthly meeting, the Adult Fellowship enjoyed excursions to High Point to view the Dead Sea Scroll exhibit, to Wohlfahrt Dinner Theater in Wytheville, and to the Chrismon tree at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville. Senior Adult Sunday on May 1 included testimonies and music by the seniors in our church, followed by a luncheon in their honor by the CARE group.

The youth mission trip required a variety of fund-raising projects: car washes, yard sales, auctions. The youth also enjoyed weekly "Detour" meetings on Sunday night and a variety of recreational and fellowship outings.



There were two church-wide outings in 2005: the open air "service in the park" June 26 followed by a picnic; and a Sunday afternoon hot dog supper September 25 at Camp Lee Ford, followed by the bluegrass gospel music of "Victory's Junction" punctuated with periodic bursts of "I'll Fly Away" by the enthusiastic audience.

"Victory's Junction" came back in October for a Saturday afternoon service on race weekend. The Saturday service was planned to give those who had difficulty threading through race traffic on Sunday a chance to worship. Unfortunately, the Saturday truck race let out just in time to create difficulties for some folks coming to the Saturday night service-- including the musicians! Despite that a good group got there in time to enjoy the evening.

The pastor received a grant from the Lily Foundation through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship for a sabbatical in 2005. The church approved the sabbatical provided additional resources through special gifts. Dr. Adkins used the time for study at Regent's Park College, Oxford University, His reading there explored the connection between art and faith as well as Baptist history in England. The balance of the sabbatical was spent in visiting congregations to learn about new approaches to worship and ministry. The sabbatical lasted from the

last Sunday in August till the last Sunday in October.

Starling Avenue celebrated its 70th anniversary in grand fashion Sunday, November 6. The service included scenes from the past and present, wonderful music from our choir, instrumentalists, and organist and guest musicians Jeff Prillaman and Kevin Lewis. Dr. Fred Anderson, the Executive Director of Virginia Baptist Historical Society and Center for Baptist Heritage and Studies, was the guest preacher in the dramatized personage of Dr. William Hatcher. The history committee filled the church with displays and pages from the new church scrapbooks. Months of planning and work by many hands went into this day and the results were memorable.

The dedicated work of the sanctuary choir is in front of the church every Sunday. Always good, the choir excelled for the Homecoming service, Passion Sunday, Easter Sunday, and the "O" antiphons service December 18. Their talent and devotion blessed us.

In December 2005 we began LINK, a fellowship in which groups of 8-10 gathered once a month for four months with the sole agenda of getting to know each other better. Most of these informal meetings were around meals.

Ran Minter's choir, Gaudete, graced the community with three *a capella* Christmas music concerts.

In the fall Carol Merchant organized Chrismon workshops to help members create new decorations for the new larger Chrismon tree. The stunning results were added to the tree during the Hanging of the Greens service.

In December the church was given a lovely depiction of the Nativity by Werner Willis, a Charlotte artist and son-in-law of Bob and Louise Shuford, whose painting of the church is in the vestibule. The new work was displayed in the sanctuary during the Christmas season and then moved to permanent display in the parlor to the side of the sanctuary.

Looming over the church for much of the year was the awareness that we were behind in the budget. The stewardship committee concluded that the significant increase in 2005 budget had been premature. The proposed budget for 2006 was pulled back in all departments.

As it happened gifts came in at the end of the year to cover the total 2005 budget goal.

2006

In 2006 we joined with other congregations in the founding of **Grace Network**. For several years ministers had explored ways of coordinating benevolence ministries. At one point the churches of Southside had a fund they mutually supported and used. Then Salvation Army was used to coordinate



assistance. A third approach was begun by Bonnylee Witt when she was Church and Communities Ministries coordinator for the Henry County Baptist Association. An online database sponsored by the association was open for churches to register help given and see what other services a person had received. All of these had only partial success. There was still a great deal of duplication of service and some abuse by people seeking resources, and much depended on church secretaries and busy church staff. The United Way gave the ministerial association a grant to explore another way.



In 2005 the ministerial association had sponsored a meeting of interested lay and clergy to discuss options. Three members of SABC had been elected at that meeting to serve on the founding Board of Directors of what would become Grace Network: Diane Adkins, President; Gerry Robinson, Vice-President; and Merle Prince. The board had spent a year in studying similar organizations in communities around the country before launching Grace Network in April, 2006. Through teams of trained volunteers and pooled resources Grace would make it its goal to meet the needs of families in crisis in our community.

Midge Huddle became our church liaison, Marilyn Spencer became a lead coordinator, a score of other members took on various other roles as volunteers. After its opening in April,

over \$100,722 was spent in 2006 helping nearly 1800 families meet emergency needs and over 52,000 items of food were distributed. Grace had been born.

The first "Annual Mission Offering" was concluded on Pentecost Sunday. Our first goal of \$10,000 was exceeded before we reached Pentecost and an additional \$1,000 was raised to cover the extra transportation expenses of our youth in their mission trip to New Orleans.

Gerry Robinson suffered a slight stroke in 2006. Rev. Robinson was to share in conducting the combined choirs of First Baptist Martinsville and Starling Avenue in an afternoon concert of "St. John's Passion" by John Ferguson. Rev. Craig McCoy stepped up to conduct the entire concert at our church, and our prayers were answered a few weeks later when Gerry made a complete recovery.

Giving was solid in 2006. We had tightened our belt after 2005, but giving generously went beyond the budget goal we had set for ourselves.

2006 marked the 30th year David has served Starling Avenue.

Upgrades to the building in 2006 included a new light for the fellowship hall foyer, ceramic tile backsplash in the kitchen, new vinyl tile floors in the children's classrooms, fresh paint on the children's classroom walls and improved sound in the sanctuary.

Thanks to the engineering of William Fain the services were now broadcasted over FM 91.9. Anyone, whether in the sanctuary with ear buds or in the nursery with a portable radio, could hear the service amplified to his or her desire.

The light outside our front doors was repaired in time for Christmas Eve services and an automatic dusk to dawn feature was added.

2007

Like most years around Valentines Day, the recreation team scheduled another spaghetti supper. On Sunday, February 18, we gathered in the sanctuary at 5:00 PM for announcements and blessing, and then headed down stairs to eat. The men and boys of the church cooked up some baked desserts for an auction. The proceeds went toward the youth mission trip to help Hurricane Katrina cleanup in New Orleans. The Martinsville High School Jazz Band played for entertainment.

March 11 we began Spring LINK, groups of 8-10 meeting for the sole purpose of getting to know each other over a meal and developing deeper fellowship.

The Chrismon tree decorations which adorn our tree at Christmas are all handmade and take time to produce. Our worship planning committee sought volunteers to craft a few more for 2007 since we now had a taller tree. On Sunday, March 18 there was a meeting to decide which designs to tackle; volunteers accepted each project. Follow-up workshops allowed crafters to finish the job. Carol Merchant headed up this project.

Cos Barnes, who grew up in Starling Avenue Baptist, authored several devotions in 2007 for *Reflections*, a devotional guide from Smyth & Helwys. Other members who are writers include Marshall Stowe who was published in *Upper Room*; Margaret Caldwell who wrote curriculum of Special Education for the Baptist Sunday School Board; and Diane Adkins who wrote some of the first

Formations Sunday School lessons for Smyth and Helwys.

On the weekend of February 23-24, two girls from Starling Avenue Baptist Church joined voices with over 100 children from Virginia Baptist Churches in an All-State Choir in Richmond, Virginia. Brooke Mason and Hannah LaPrade were selected to be a part of this auditioned choir which had its performance at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 24 at Bon Air Baptist Church.

During Lent our weekly Bible study included the praying the psalms and centering prayer.



In 2006 Starling Avenue constructed its first Labyrinth in the fellowship hall for Holy Week. Labyrinths are an ancient tool for praying with the body as well as the mind and heart. Walking a labyrinth slows one down to act out the twists and turns of life through which God is leading us. The labyrinth was open for walking the rest of that week and also used it in evening services.

One of the highlights of 2007 was the Eastertide study of *"It's Time"* led by Marshall Stowe in a joint Sunday School for seven weeks. *"It's Time"* outlined the challenges of being a church in America in the 21st century. The discussions were energizing. Many used the related devotion and reflection guide for discerning God's will for our church.

Gerry presented a workshop on the use of Orff instruments for worship at the American Orff-Schulwerk Association National Conference in Omaha. After working together at Eagle Eyrie the children's choirs of SABC, First Baptist Martinsville, and Franklin Baptist joined forces for a weekend at Franklin, singing in the morning worship.

In New Orleans our youth worked in the Lower Ninth Ward to remove debris from devastated homes so that reconstruction could begin. The impact of seeing the dire needs of these people has inspired them to plan a return in 2007. Transformer volunteers Dottie Robertson, Kathy Long, Merle and Joe Prince, Claudia Pratt, and Sean Prince joined crews from around the county in rehabilitating homes in Roanoke for aged and poor. Other members who made special mission trips included Lynn Turner in Mission of Mercy, a dental clinic for rural Wise County and Kimberly Parker who was part of a medical mission to Honduras. Joe and Martha Lee spent a week at Bluefield College helping to remodel a house for missionaries-in-residence. In October, Merle Prince went to South Africa with the Evangeline Ministry, helping HIV+ women find a way to support themselves by designing and sewing purses for the tourist industry.

Several members represented us well in Baptist life beyond our church. Marshall Stowe and Bill Adkins served on the board of directors for the Virginia Baptist Children's Home. Sarah Fain was on the CBF National and State Coordinating Councils. Diane Adkins served on the Revisioning Committee and Coordinating Council of CBF-Virginia. Merle Prince was on the Board of Trustees of Virginia WMU. Gerry Robinson continues to serve in the

Virginia Baptist Male Chorale. The pastor served on the Board of the Baptist House of Studies at Duke Divinity School.

The year came to a close with another musical high point. Sunday, Christmas Eve, the adult choir was joined by organ, strings, flute, and bells in celebration of the Christ's birth. The church was packed as we reveled in singing carols.



A prayer retreat held at St. Francis Springs Retreat Center Prayer included prayer walks, discussion of readings by Henri Nouwen, and journaling.



In 2007, VBS again provided memorable and concentrated instruction. VBS is always labor intensive, but the results were wonderful.



Perhaps the most unusual service of the year happened on the First Sunday in October near St. Francis Day, October 4. On that afternoon we had a "blessing of animals."

The Wednesday program changes made for a variety of music, missions, homework time, and discipleship development a real boost. The children joined with the youth choir to lead the Hanging of the Greens, and before the summer break showed their talent in a spring musical about Noah, "A Technicolor Promise", under Gerry Robinson's expert direction.



Children's retreats have become a valuable tool of discipleship development. Rainy weather changed the spring retreat planned for Camp Lee Ford into a lock-in instead.

The youth program on Sunday afternoons grew numerically and in enthusiasm in 2007. They raised funds for their mission trip to New Orleans. It was hard work under hot humid conditions, but they once again proved their stamina and good spirits and distinguished themselves among the youth at passport when seven of the thirteen youth chosen as camper of the day, as well as the camper of the week, were from our group. Detour and Youth Choir on Sunday afternoons have become important times for them all.



September 10, the recreation teams headed up a cookout picnic at Camp Lee Ford. The afternoon ended with singing in the lodge.

So much of the life of a church is out of sight--moments of encouragement, presence with hurting families, private prayer for those in crisis. The phone tree automated the dissemination of needs to the prayer chain. Deacons interceded for the spiritual wellbeing of their families. Mission groups prayed for missionaries. A small group gathered outside the sanctuary before Sunday School to pray for the church. At home, some shut-ins covenanted to pray for the services they

cannot attend. A church is sustained in and by prayer.

GROW involved a group of volunteers meeting each month to write friendship notes to visitors, new members, congratulations, or encouragement to those who are going through some crisis. Spending time together and contacting each other regularly are the "rituals of friendship" by which friendships are begun or continued.

An incredibly vicious storm lifted the roofing on the education wing, tore off a gutter, and the rain associated with the storm also damaged the ceiling on the third floor. In addition, despite surge protection, some of the phone system in the education building was taken out. While insurance softened the blow on the repairs, the roof covering simply needed replacing. These repairs diverted money and attention we had intended for a more visible improvement to the property, projects we hope can be restored in 2008.

December 16 there was a barbecue meal following the worship service. Members brought side dishes to add to the main courses provided by Len and Bonnie Barrow. Following up on this kind of fellowship a breakfast prepared by and paid for by men of the church began the year 2008. These events grew out of deacon discussions on ways we can help our congregation and visitors get to know each other better.

The church bus was paid off in 2007. We came into mid fall with receipts running significantly behind budget goals, but thanks to the leadership of the stewardship committee and the response of the church, giving in 2007 ended up being solid, exceeding both the budget goal and the expenditures. Stewardship extends beyond our own lifespan. The

best attended special Wednesday program last summer was led by three of the attorneys in the church who discussed important considerations in updating wills. Members were reminded that they could bless their church by including the church endowment fund in their will. Our second year of the Annual Mission Offering also was solid. The giving exceeded the \$11,000 goal.



2008

It was hard to believe summer was gone till one looked back and counted what went on: a successful VBS; youth on fire for ministry through Passport and inspired at a beach retreat; mission trips, Transformers, Impact; six persons baptized; over 50 people in prayer triplets; children at music camp and on outings; adults in Bible study, fellowships and on the road to a play.

The fall church Picnic was Sunday, September 28, at Camp Lee Ford. The covered dish picnic supper was served at 5:00 pm. The churches gathered to hike, play soccer, dip a line in the water, or pitch horseshoes; and folks stayed after supper to sing songs and toast a marshmallow. The church recreation team organized this event.

There was a one day prayer retreat Thursday October 2 at St. Francis Springs Prayer Center in Stoneville, N.C.

On Wednesday September 10, the fun began for children:

All Stars was activity oriented and creative in scope. Group singing, and multimedia (videos) were used to help relate Bible stories and truths to the children. There will be plenty of fun learning activities related to the lesson.

Children's Choir involved teaching children singing and music fundamentals through various activities which include: vocalizing and singing techniques, musical games, rhythm activities, body movements, and instruments. The instruments included percussion, *Orff, hand bells or choir chimes, and recorders.

In Children on Mission children were involved in studying missionaries and different places where missionaries work. Their activities included learning about different cultures and the life styles other people live. There were many hands-on learning activities and the children earned awards for their work.

Music Maker's was the choir for preschoolers beginning at age 3. The children learned music fundamentals through a variety of activities. Occasionally they sang in worship or other special services throughout the church year.



The 2008 Children's Retreat on "Places of Worship" included a trip to the park to think about outdoor encounters with God; a tent to talk about the tabernacle, and a service in the sanctuary to close.



September marked the 25th year of Gerry's service to Starling Avenue Baptist Church and we celebrated that anniversary on September 21 in the 11:00 am service. A covered dish luncheon followed

The Personnel Committee proposed that the church give Gerry a sabbatical to mark this milestone. One way to show our appreciation for Gerry's tenure of service was to provide the resources for this sabbatical

Sunday, October 5 was the second annual "Blessing of the Animals." We thanked God for animals and prayed God's blessing on animals, at the lively service. The blessing is held near St Francis Day, October 4, in recognition of this saint's appreciation of the natural world.

For a second year, Grace Network sold pumpkins as a fundraiser. The pumpkin patch was at First Baptist Church, Martinsville. Our church agreed to staff the pumpkin patch on Thursday, October 23 for the entire day.

Throughout 2008, "Pursuing Missional Faithfulness" was the focus of over fifty members who met in groups

of three to discern God's will for our church through prayer and reflection.

The "missional" emphasis which was becoming more common in churches shifted the focus of mission thinking from just supporting others doing mission somewhere else to an awareness of how God wanted us to be the presence of Christ.

On Sunday, October 12, 3:00 pm members of the church came to be part of "Celebrate the Journey". The prayer triplets shared the results from having weeks together. From their discussions and prayers we heard about their discoveries. We listened, responded, shared and celebrated what God is calling us to be and do as a church.

From its inception in 2001, the Bereavement Meal Ministry Team has grown and remains an important outreach to the families of church members at the time of a funeral. Families commented that members who prepare dishes and those who set up tables, wash table cloths and who contribute the fund which provides meat and amenities have provided comfort and care at a time when they need it.

2009

2009 marked a transition in the staff of the church. After 25 years as our minister of music and associate pastor, Gerry Robinson departed in February for Richmond where he had accepted a call to be the minister of music and worship at Hatcher Memorial in Richmond, VA.

Fortunately we had talented leadership to step in. Ran Minter became interim director of the adult choir; Pam Randall accepted the invitation to be the interim children's choir director. Carrie

Painter led the handbell choir, and David Adkins and Sarah Fain led the youth choir. With all our fine church musicians stepping up to the plate, the programs went on beautifully.



The Personnel Committee met with focus groups and did church-wide surveys to clarify the priorities of the congregation before advertising the position. In November, as the committee was narrowing the search, Kay Spencer announced her plans to retire from the organ bench in January, 2010. In view of this, the committee broadened the focus of the search to candidates who, in addition to leading choirs, also played the organ.



A churchwide fall hike at Smart View off the Blue Ridge parkway.

In 2009 our neighbor, Hines Funeral Home, approached the church with a desire to purchase a portion of the former Sara Lee parking. We had an agreement with Hines Funeral Home allowing their use of this property, which they in turn had kept up and lit. The church approved the \$70,000 transaction and held the loan.

During the same time we entered that transaction the Building and Grounds Committee was completing a revised plan for the renovation of the parking around our church.

After much discussion a compromise was reached to leave the office building standing and focus on reconfiguring parking around it with a drop-off and handicapped-accessible entrance near the elevator.

It was anticipated that increased state regulations of soil disturbance would increase the permits and paper work involved in such a project. The church voted to have detailed drawings made which would anticipate those difficulties and allow us at last to get a firm idea of the cost of the project. The year ended with the matter yet to come to the church for further decisions.

Susan Spangenberg took family medical leave for a part of the year to be with her husband Keith during his hospitalization and recovery, but she was able to carry off another impressive program of youth ministry.

The youth took part in Virginia IMPACT, working in homes on Eastern Shore in the Northampton Association, and, under Susan's talented leadership, several area youth groups joined together for a beach retreat. To raise

funds for these trips, the youth sponsored a popular St. Patrick's Day chili lunch and dessert auction in addition to a yard sale and silent auction. The weekly "Detour" groups add to the fellowship and training offered the youth through Sunday School and youth choir.



The church was concerned about the condition of the playground equipment and a fund was set up to purchase a new and safer set. The set arrived in time for the end of the Wednesday children's programming and was a delight to children at VBS.



Also memorable was the impressive production of *Are We There Yet?* by Allen Pote, directed by Pam Randall. The musical presented the story of the exodus and the ten commandments. Combined with costumes, sets, and choreography, the musical was spectacular. The musical reinforced the All Stars Wednesday afternoon study of the ten commandments.



Out of our Pursuing Missional Faithfulness three new ministries began.

First a "mission tree." The "fruit" on the tree were specific needs of members or people members knew. The needs were turned in to the pastor and the mission tree team created the fruit. Sometimes a large need was broken down into smaller amounts. Members "pick the fruit" and meet the need by action or resources. In addition to the odd jobs that were done, the mission tree has channeled thousands to help families in crisis.

In March a second new ministry was initiated by a number of interested members who met to discuss using the unpaved portion of the Sara Lee purchase as a community garden. Legal issues, horticultural methods, and promotion were hammered out. Dawn Taylor took leadership of this group which met mostly on Saturday mornings to construct raised beds which were filled with organically enriched soil. Participants from other churches as well as neighbors on Adele St joined in with wonderful results. Grace Network was a recipient of the produce from some of the beds. The garden grew more than vegetables, it grew community.



The third new ministry was a bereavement support team which met to learn more about how to be a friend to those who are going through loss. A support group met for several weeks and the group also created cards to send to those who lose a loved one. Martha Lee volunteered to head up this team.

Drawing on a different set of talents, a group began to meet to knit and crochet lap blankets for our homebound and nursing home members. By the end of the year over thirty of these beautiful fiber creations had been delivered and the group began making afghans for disabled veterans. Helen Edwards headed up this project.

In addition to Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child, our church sent Christmas bags to Lakota Indian children who live on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, one of the poorest regions in America. Merle Prince, who has been on two mission trips to Pine Ridge, coordinated the project.

Joe Prince was a team leader for two Virginia Impact weeks in 2009. And locally members served on the Henry County Baptist Association team that built the Habitat house in Ridgeway this past summer.

The 2009 annual mission offering exceeded its \$13,000 goal. One half of it was used locally to minister to the many needs.

'Looking Up,' a gospel/Christian music group, offered one of their local concerts at Starling Avenue in the spring.

We observed Lenten luncheons with Christ Episcopal, alternating between the churches for soup and lively

discussions of "Living the Good Life Together: Forgiveness Letting Go."

On the Sunday VBS began, we worshipped in Fieldale Park with a picnic following the service. The old iron bridge had been demolished and gave the area a different look. The weather was lovely and the hiking trails were peaceful. By having our worship in the park, VBS workers were free to use the entire previous week to transform the sanctuary and classrooms into a wilderness adventureland.



"Just Desserts" was the name given to a book discussion group which met during the year to share thoughts on *The Last Lecture*, *At Home in Mitford*, *Peace Like a River*, and *Three Cups of Tea*. As in 2008, these discussions drew people from the community as well.

Among the midweek studies in 2009 were "Backgrounds to the Historic Creeds," "A History of Baptists" (in observance of the Baptists' 400th anniversary), and studies of Ezekiel and I Thessalonians.

In 2009 we received \$324,300 toward our budget of \$318,968. An additional \$40,743 was given in special offerings, \$20,834 of which was for missions. When added to the \$31,931 we gave to missions through the budget, \$52,765 went

to missions beyond our own church program. Given the economic uncertainty of the past year, this was a wonderful display of dedication to God's work.

2010

The adult choir was blessed with the leadership of Ran Minter, and Judy Strickland Minter became the interim organist. Pam Randall continued to offer leadership to the children's choir and handbells. Sarah Fain and the pastor led the youth choir. The adult choir presented a special service of music at the end of the summer.

The youth traveled to Gatlinburg, TN to participate in mission projects sponsored by Team Effort. They worked on homes and churches in this Appalachian region, touching lives and being touched in return. The annual Beach retreat was a significant time for spiritual growth, and the Music Week at Eagle Eyrie was likewise a time of growth in Christian discipleship.

Amy Clemmons directed an innovative VBS held on a weekend, beginning Friday night at the new soccer complex and ending at the morning worship celebration.



August 29th the adult choir under the direction of Ran Minter and accompanied by Judy Minter, led in a service of music and words. The moving service was well attended not only by church members but by others from the community.

The music program continued in the fall with those talents as well as the leadership of Pam Randall and Sarah Fain for youth choir; Kay Spencer, Brent Robinson, and Margaret Caldwell for Children's choir.



CHARTER MEMBERS

- Mr. and Mrs. Tom Agee 11-24-35
 Mrs. Robert Boaz 11-24-35
 Mr. Harry Boaz 11-24-35
 Mr. P. L. Boaz 11-24-35
 Miss Delia Dillon 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. B. M. Davis 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Donavant 11-24-35
 Mr. Clarence Donavant 11 -24-35
 Miss Melissa Bryant 11-24-35
 Mr. Claybourn Donavant 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Bowles 11-24-35
 Mr. Marvin Donavant 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. Tom Carter 11-24-35
 Mrs. J. R. Chappell 11-24-35
 Mr. O. K. Chappell 11-24-35
 Mr. Billie Chappell 11-24-35
 Miss Charlie Clendenine 1-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Cooper 11-24-35
 Miss Nora Coleman 11-24-3 5
 Miss Thelma Coleman 11-24-35
 Mrs. R. E. Critz 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Carter 11-24-35
 Miss Mildred Carter 11-24-35
 Miss Virginia Carter 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. Willie Chandler 3-2-36
 Miss Gladys Donavant 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Draper 3-2-36
 Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Draper 4-6-35
 Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Eanes 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Floyd 11-24-35
 Rev. And Mrs. T. W. Fryer 3-16-36
 Mr. and Mrs. S. G. Grogan 11-24-35
 Mrs. E. N. Hylton 11-24-35
 Miss Dovie Hylton 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Helms 11-24-35
 Mrs. O. C. Hayes 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Hardy 3-8-36
 Mrs. Sam Hill 4-6-36
 Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Dillon 11-24-35
 Mrs. G. G. Jefferson 11-24-35
 Mrs. A. J. Jones 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. F K. Thornton 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Koger 11-24-35
 Miss Pauline Koger 11-24-3 5
 Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Land 11-24-35
 Mr. HB. Land, Jr. 3- -36
 Mr. and Mrs. W. O. Minter 11-24-35
 Miss Elsie Minter 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Minter 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Minter 11-24-35
 Miss Ella Ray Minter 11 -24-35
 Miss Ivey Minter 11-24-3 5
 Mrs. J. A. Miles 11-24-35
 Miss Jolene Miles 11-24-35
 Miss; Estelle Myers 11 -24-3 5
 Mr. W. J. Martin 11-24-35
 Mrs. Mary B: Mason 11-24-35
 Mr. W. D. Nunn 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. Buster Owens 11-24-35
 Mrs. John Pinkard 11-24-35
 Mr. Harvey Robertson 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Rutledge 11-24-35
 Miss Arlene Toney 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Wood 11-24-35
 Mr. J. A. Washington 11-24-35
 Mr. and Mrs. J.T. Washington 11-24-35
 Mr. Frank Wilcox-3- -36
 Rev. and Mrs.A.F.Yarborough 11-24-35
 Miss Lola Yarborough 11 -24-3 5
 Miss Oretta Yarborough 11 -24-3 5



