

BETHLEHEM FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

The Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church began in 1947 in the Union Hall, over at Earling, W.V. In 1948 it moved to the one room School House in the lower end of this camp.

With approximately 8 or 10 members, in 1949 a board of trustees was elected to build a new church. The board consisted of Brother Alfred Cook, Brother Howard Elliott, and Brother Rexal Perry. Brother Cook made an appointment with Doran Hinchman (who owned the property) to discuss leasing the property to build a new church on. In 1951, the property where the church now stands, was leased from Mrs. Hinchman for \$1.00 a year (which money is put back into the church).

Brother Howard and Sister Nellie Elliott and Brother Harry Booth put their property up for collateral on a note, to build the new church.

Brother Alfred Cook took a paper around to the mines and collected money from the miners, and contributions was also received from business around the county, especially in the Man area.

With a growing congregation, they started to build the church. They got part of the framing up and a storm came and blew it down. Brother Brooke Spurlock and Brother Harry Booth were the carpenters, with a lot of volunteer workers. The church was built and Brother Alfred Cook nailed the last nail in the church.

When the church was paid for, it was dedicated in October 1952. Rev. Harry Booth preached the morning service and Rev. Andrew Parsons preached the evening service.

It was named the Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church by the Rev. A.A. Marcum.

Sister Lillian Cook was our longest serving clerk, with 39 years of service. Our deacons are Brother Lawrence Williams and Brother Charles Hunter. We have four charter members still living: Sister Sue Childers; Sister Virginia Toler; sister Marie Blankenship; And Donna Jean Williams.

We remodeled our church in 2004 & 2005, and we are very proud of it, but it was hard for me, because I felt like my mom, dad, and brothers work was gone. But I think if our family could see it today they would be very proud of it too, because just remember that its not the building that makes a church, its the body of Christ that worships in it!

Ministers who have pastored the Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church are as follows:

Rev. Harry Booth
Rev. Andrew Parsons
Rev. Oattie Burke
Rev. Brady Stevenson
Rev. John Stevenson
Rev. Robert Hoosier
Rev. Llody Bellomy
Rev. John T. Vance
Rev. Tilden (Ed) Blair
Rev. Henry Dameron
Rev. Gary Bowen
Rev. Morris Meade
Rev. Jessie Blankenship
Rev. Frankie Imes
Rev. Bazzil Goodman
Rev. Butch Cobb
Rev. Gary Michael Brown.

The Church belongs to the Guyan Valley Conference of Free Will Baptist, the West Virginia State Association of Free Will Baptist, and the National Association of Free Will Baptist.

Attached you will find a picture of the church.

We currently have about 20 members on the roll now, and as of January 2015, Brother Mike Brown resigned, and we are currently without a pastor. Pray that God will send us one.

Sister Jean Collins, clerk

Bethlehem FWB Church

2015

