

FOREWORD

Springvale history has been defined as accurately as possible after thorough and extensive research by Springvale's History Committee, with some imprecise findings. There is conflicting information on the microfilm and microfiche copies, as this information was given some 30 years after Springvale was organized. Our History Committee traveled from Kershaw Baptist Association office to South Carolina Library, which has the Fairfield and Columbia Metro Records, to get the Association's minutes from the time Springvale was organized (1906) to present. We feel this information is of great benefit to our church. The committee contacted Furman University Library, and Melissa Bateman supplied the information they had about Springvale.

HISTORY SOURCES

Camden Archives
Columbia Metro Baptist Association
Elderly Members of Church
Fairfield Baptist Association
Furman University Library
Kershaw Baptist Association
South Carolina Baptist Convention
South Carolina State Archives

A History of Springvale Baptist Church

(Compiled by the Springvale Baptist History Committee - 2008-2009)

The history of Springvale Baptist Church is a story of the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through His leadership many volunteers donated time, money, and property in the building of a great church.

Springvale Baptist Church was organized in April 1906 by a group of members from Pine Grove Baptist Church of Lugoff.¹ These members, because of a disagreement within that church, saw the need to establish a new church in the community. After organization, we had two worship services a month on the second and fourth Sundays and became a member of the Kershaw Baptist Association. In 1907 the minutes of the annual meeting of the Kershaw Baptist Association reported Springvale's membership at 29. Springvale was named by Rev. C. D. Peterson who preached the dedication sermon in a one-room wood-framed building, built where the present cemetery is now located. This same cemetery had been a cemetery for the Rabon family in the late 1800s. The first person buried in the cemetery was Abraham Rabon, born August 15, 1820 and died April 25, 1883.

The building was heated by a wood stove located near the pulpit. Lighting was provided by oil lamps, which were hung along the walls. For those hot Sundays of summertime the windows were opened and individuals used hand-held fans for relief from the heat. Bathroom facilities consisted of two wooden outhouses located below the cemetery. Water for the church was supplied by a hand-dug well, which was located near the current church parsonage. Baptisms were conducted in the spring located behind the church. Beckie Rabon donated four acres of land for the first church.²

Transportation to the church was no simple task. Worshipers traveled to church by walking or by horse and buggy over a one lane dirt road.

In 1910 membership grew to 60 during the pastorate of Rev. Elison Jones. At this time, a second and larger wood-framed building was erected measuring 32 by 60 feet. This building also was erected where the cemetery is now located. The church moved its membership to the Fairfield Baptist Association in 1915. In 1924, downstream from the spring where we originally baptized, we built a baptismal pool behind the second church, boarded the inside of the pool, and built wooden steps leading down into the pool. We also built a two-room dressing area for the candidates. Olive Watts (Rabon) was the first person baptized in this pool. By 1931 membership had grown to 176. During the pastorate of Rev. B. J. McIver, two wings were added to the church measuring 48 by 33 feet with wooden folding doors used to partition the Sunday School rooms from the sanctuary. This addition gave the church four Sunday School rooms, and by 1937 the Sunday School attendance had grown to 130. When these folding doors were opened it

¹ Other records indicate members from Sawney's Creek Baptist also helped start Springvale.

² Prior to 1937, Danny Rabon, church clerk, lost all church records when his home burned, older church members tell that one member was ex-communicated in accordance with church covenant, but no dates are available.

increased seating capacity for the sanctuary to 300. Electricity became available to the church and the community in the early 1940's (1942-1943).

History of Springvale continues to be made during the tenure of the following pastors and interim pastors.

During the interim pastorate of Rev. Grange Cothran (Chaplain at Fort Jackson), in 1946-1947, plans for our third church were drawn up and approved with construction and completion of an auditorium, five Sunday School rooms and an indoor baptistery. This building, constructed of Winnsboro Blue Granite, still stands today.

Rev. Paul Becker was called as pastor in 1947 and in 1948 Springvale voted to begin meeting each Sunday of the month. Rev. Becker conducted the first baptism in 1948 in the new indoor baptistery, baptizing Dolly J. Branham. In 1949, during his pastorate, Springvale Baptist Church sponsored a mission in Lugoff. During Rev. Becker's tenure the land for the present church building and pastorium was given by Mr. & Mrs. J.A. Rabon, a youth choir was organized, a 30-minute radio program on station WACA called "Christian Youth on the March" was started August 22, 1948, a five-room pastorium was built, and a stoop over the front porch of church was added along with a steeple on the church. Rev. Becker resigned in 1949.

Rev. Grady Fletcher was pastor from 1949 – 1950. The mission that was started in Lugoff under the leadership of Rev. Paul Becker was organized as Lugoff First Baptist Church. Four additional Sunday school rooms were built on the back of the present Springvale sanctuary. These rooms were built with stucco. The note on the sanctuary was burned.

Rev. Harold Wells was pastor from 1951 – 1953. During his tenure, the sanctuary was renovated with new pews and the church purchased a Hammond organ. In June 1953 a second Mission was started in a vacant grocery store near the intersection of Springvale Road and Shivers Green Road. Rev. Wells led a mission trip to the Bahamas accompanied by Charles Rabon, James Branham, Roland Rabon, and Lester Branham, Jr.³

In 1954 Rev. Grady Fletcher was called as pastor. A study and an additional bedroom were added to pastorium during his second tenure.

Rev. Fred C. Metts was pastor from 1955 – 1960. During the pastorate of Rev. Metts, Springvale paid off all debts on our third church parsonage and church furnishings. He began leading Springvale in adding on a fellowship/educational building to our third church. Rev. Metts left our church to become Bible Professor at Anderson College.

Rev. O. D. (Bill) Dyches was pastor from 1962 – 1965. During his time at Springvale, carpet and air conditioning were installed in the sanctuary. He and our youth planted two Magnolia trees beside our church. One still stands and our children enjoy climbing in it.

³ RA (Royal Ambassador) Hut was built between 1951-53.

Bill was a youth oriented pastor.⁴ After leaving Springvale, he and his wife were called to Trinity Baptist Church in Great Falls. Leaving Trinity, Bill and Doris were appointed Southern Baptist missionaries in November 1972. They were sent to Costa Rica for one year to study Spanish. They served as missionaries in Chile for 28 years, retiring in 2000.

Rev. B. C. Durham pastored in 1965. He had the shortest tenure in Springvale's history – 3 months.

Rev. Kenneth I. Thompkins was pastor from 1966 – 1972. The plans, which originated during Rev. Metts' tenure, were finalized, and the educational/fellowship building that adjoins the sanctuary was completed. A church steeple was erected in the spring of 1970. Stained windows were installed in the sanctuary. The windows were donated by family members in memory or in honor of loved ones. Concrete picnic tables were erected outside to be used for Bible School and Homecoming. Kenneth married Doris Miles during his pastorate at Springvale.

Rev. Roy White pastored from 1972 – 1974. During his tenure the parsonage was remodeled, with a second bath added. Plans were in process to add a two-car garage and storage room to the parsonage. A new enlarged slate porch, larger stoop, concrete white columns and bronze steeple were completed on the sanctuary. Plans for restoration of the sanctuary began with refinishing pews and adding cushions to the pews. Restoration was completed after Roy's tenure. Church membership and offering grew significantly.

Rev. Ben Byrd was pastor in 1975. During his pastorate chandeliers were installed in the church sanctuary in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Dewitt T. Branham Sr. by their children.

Rev. Richard Wilson pastored from 1976 – 1977. During his time at Springvale concrete sidewalks were added. The sanctuary was renovated with new carpet, refinished pews, wainscot walls and new window frames. New navy choir robes were purchased, and a library was started. Bulletins with a sketch of our church were used, and a newer bus was purchased. In 1977 the church purchased 5.6 acres from Miss Agnes Rabon for a recreation area. Church and cemetery property now totaled 10.4 acres.

Rev. Paul Bullington was our pastor from 1978 – 1985. During his time with us the church purchased a newer organ, a newer Piano, remodeled the old kitchen (in Youth Department) added a double oven, built a storage shed, a recreation shed, and remodeled the indoor baptistery.

Rev. G. Dan Boineau was pastor from 1985 – 1986. He led efforts in upgrading church cemetery.

Rev. Timothy L. Shull pastored from 1987 – 1992. During his tenure the old outside baptistery was restored, the sanctuary ceiling was renovated,⁵ the parking lot was paved. A new fellowship hall with a kitchen, pantry, two bathrooms, water fountain, and folding

⁴ See *Coon Hunting Story* in pictorial history.

⁵ During this renovation worship services were held in a tent in the back of the church.

doors to facilitate Sunday school rooms was completed. This building was the largest financial undertaking in the church's history. A portable sound system was purchased. In 1989 Springvale honored Rev. Paul Bullington naming him Pastor Emeritus. Tim was instrumental in beginning two morning services, initiating a church news line, and leading in the renovation of the old Education Building.⁶

Rev. Louie McDonald was pastor from 1992 – 1999. A van was purchased. Once again two worship services were begun. The debt on our new fellowship hall was paid off. We hired a Minister of Music and a Minister of Youth. A new organ was purchased. Wednesday night suppers began. Existing wall partitions were removed to make a larger youth room. A new lighted church sign was installed. A policy manual was developed giving guidance to all church functions and activities. The church began using internet service.

Rev. Kyle Harmon was pastor from 2001 – 2002.

Rev. J. Todd Horton – pastor from 2004 to ----- . New heat pumps were purchased for parsonage and the old education building switched from gas to electric. New vinyl windows were installed (except sanctuary & fellowship hall). Playground equipment was purchased. We hired a Minister of Youth. Video screen was purchased for sanctuary. The sanctuary's front porch floor was remodeled. A Personnel Committee was formed. Once again, two morning services were begun. Our church membership grew to the extent that three additional deacons were added. An associate deacon program was instituted. Special Touch Outreach program was instituted. Planning and fund raising began for a new sanctuary (see attached summary of sanctuary construction project). Two websites were created. A school mobile was purchased for additional Sunday School space. In February, 2010, removal of remaining items in parsonage began. Bids were taken on items through February 28 and individuals began removing items immediately, (including: wash & dryer, dishwasher, lights, fans, cabinets, windows, bathroom fixtures, etc. Proceeds went to Building Fund. Demolition of parsonage was completed March 18, 2010. In August, 2011 the Old Baptistry Area was renovated by Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts. AWANA Children's Ministry began September 11, 2011. Construction of a Prayer Garden began in April, 2014 and the dedication service was held August 20, 2014. In April 2014, the church sign was renovated. The time capsule that was originally buried at the sign was relocated to the History Room.

⁶ In 1988 Springvale moved back to the Kershaw Baptist Association. The church saw an opportunity to become an integral part of a local association, rather than continuing on the outskirts of a large urban association.