

blue
SPRINGS
BAPTIST CHURCH
CELEBRATING
175
YEARS 1846-2021



Sunday, April 3, 2022

**385 Blue Springs Road
Somerville (Florette), Alabama 35670
(256) 778-1020**

www.BlueSpringsBaptist.com

**<https://www.facebook.com/BlueSpringsBC>
BlueSpringsBaptistChurch@Outlook.com**

A Message from Our Pastor



On behalf of the members of Blue Springs Baptist Church, I would like to welcome you to this very special occasion marking the celebration of our church's 175th Anniversary of its founding by the Jethro Judson Weaver Family along with members from the nearby Shiloh Baptist Church in 1846.

Technically, our celebration should have taken place last year in 2021 but as everyone knows, COVID closures hit our entire nation causing widespread shutdowns including our church. As we emerged from lockdowns and confinement in 2021, we intentionally decided to postpone this celebration so that we would have ample time to plan and appropriately celebrate this important achievement.

While the median age of congregations in America today is 73, it is rare for churches to actually live to be 175-years-old. Reaching this milestone speaks volumes about the people of the church; their calling and commitment to the Lord; their tenacity, hard work, and fortitude; a willingness to change with the times to meet emerging needs; and their ongoing faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. It also speaks of God's immense blessings and spiritual leadership that has instrumentally and purposely guided the church to accomplish His will. God has had and continues to have His hand in directing Blue Springs Baptist Church to be a viable, integral, and important part of the spiritual landscape of Somerville, Florette, & Morgan County, Alabama. Join me in praying for and serving this church (and our Lord) to embrace the ongoing vision God has for the church. Together, we help to celebrate, retain, and continue Blue Springs' lifelong legacy of faith. As we do, I believe the best days of Blue Springs Baptist Church lie ahead.

In Christ,

Rev. Richard L. Richie, Pastor

Location

Blue Springs Baptist Church is located 8 miles south of Somerville on Highway 67 in the town of Florette on what used to be known as Grape Hollow Road (now Blue Springs Road) in Eastern Morgan County, Alabama.

The initial church building was built on a hill northwest of an underground spring that was said to hold a 25-foot-wide, 10-foot-deep pool of azure-blue water.

The present church building sits on 5 ½ acres of land. It sits adjacent to a cemetery that contains both Confederate as well as Northern soldiers along with many who have attended and lived near Blue Springs Baptist Church.

The Church Buildings Over the Years

There have been three church buildings in the church's history:

The initial building was a wooden, box-like structure made of hewn white oak sills. That building was occupied by Northern troops for about two months during the Civil War (circa 1861-1865). The building was moved 90 degrees by the troops to make the main entrance perpendicular to the road. Worship services were interrupted for several years during the war. After the Civil War, a twenty-foot extension was added to the north end of the building.



First Building (1846-1885)

(Artist Depiction Based on Similar Buildings from the Era)

See: [These Log Churches Were Central to Life in Alabama Territory – AL.com](#)

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A second building was built on land deeded to the church by Billy Joe Weaver, around 1886, to replace the rapidly deteriorating initial building & addition. That building survived until 1960 when it was torn down.



Second Church Building (1886-1960)

The third church building (brick, current building) was built in 1961 under Pastor Lee Roy Champion. From 1990-92, a 24'x36' addition was attached to the third building with two basement and two ground-level classrooms, restrooms, an elevator to the basement, and a handicapped ramp.

- A “Fellowship Hall Building” with office space, storage, and bathrooms was added to join the third church building in 2008-9 under the leadership of Pastor Ralph McCollum.

- Numerous renovations and improvements have been made to all of the church buildings during the years to beautify and make these buildings more functional and useful.



Third Church Building – Daytime View (1961-Present)



Third Church Building – Nighttime View (1961-Present)



Third Church Building with Fellowship Hall Addition (2008-Present)

Associations

Muscle Shoals Baptist Association (1856-59, 1873-1919)

Warrior River Association (1859-1872)

Morgan Baptist Association (1919-Present)

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (Convention) (??-Present)

Southern Baptist Convention (??-Present)

Church Theme

“Where Living Waters Flow” based on John 7:38 and numerous other Scriptures found in both the Old and New Testaments referring to Jesus, the Living Water, to whom all people should turn and place their faith and trust for salvation.

Church Legacy

- A warm, loving, caring, praying, & giving (very generous) fellowship of believers.
- A significant influencer for evangelism, spiritual growth, missions giving, and missions and ministry work.
- The “Heart of the Florette Community”
- Early attenders drove horse & buggies/wagons to church and brought lanterns from home due to a lack of electricity for many years.
- Creekside & pond baptisms were common until indoor plumbing and a baptistry was built and installed.
- A Benevolence-giving church providing food, finances, & provisions to the needy.
- Helped re-birth Shiloh Baptist Church in 1947 who helped found Blue Springs in 1846.
- The church was used as a school for the community until an addition on Florette School was built.
- During the depression (1930’s), members raised needed funds by planting, harvesting, & selling cotton on eight acres of land.
- Incorporated in 1960.
- Celebrated its 150th Anniversary on Sunday, June 9, 1996
- The church is debt-free!
- Has enjoyed many years of numeric and spiritual growth for all ages.
- Believes its best days lie ahead.

Pastors - 1846-Present

1846-1853	Unknown
1853-1872	M.A. Verser
1873	R.A Windes
1874-1875	M.A. Verser
1876-1880	J.M. Simpson
1881	S.R.C. Adams
1882-1883	John Edward "Jack" Weaver *(DoD: September 30, 1923)
1884	S.R.C. Adams
1885-1889	John Edward "Jack" Weaver *(DoD: September 30, 1923)
1900-1901	J.E. Roan
1902-1906	John Edward "Jack" Weaver *(DoD: September 30, 1923)
1907-1912	J.E. Roan
1913	No Report
1914-1918	John Edward "Jack" Weaver *(DoD: September 30, 1923)
1919-1921	J.E. Roan
1922-1924	Elonzo Harry Henderson *(DoD: November 17, 1972)
1925	I.J. Quinn
1926	No Report
1927-1928	Elonzo Harry Henderson *(DoD: November 17, 1972)
1929-1931	No Pastor
1932-1933	Elder Jesse Black
1934	B.P. Collier
1935	No Pastor
1936-1948	Dewitt C. Prince
1949-1950	O.C. Marsh
1951	Ira W. Myers (Concurrently Pastored Mt. Nebo Baptist Church)
1952-1953	Lyndon Montgomery
1954-1957	E.N. Chandler
1958	William A. Petty
1959	No Pastor
1960-1969	Lee Roy Champion *(DoD: February 6, 2001)
1970	Jerry Ferguson
1971-1973	Lee Roy Champion *(DoD: February 6, 2001)
1974	K.C. Thomaskutty
1975	No Pastor

* Buried in Blue Springs Cemetery - DoD=Date of Death

1976-1977	Scott Payne
1978-1983	Robert R. Slack, Jr.
1984	Aubrey Turner
1984-1987	Lynn Perkins
1988-1989	Cliff Mitchell
1990-1996	Scott Harris
1997-1998	Cliff Mitchell
1998-2000	Jonathan Campbell
2000	Cliff Mitchell
2001	Scott Harris
2001	Cliff Mitchell
2002-2014	Ralph McCollum
2015-Present	Richard Richie

Music Directors - 1969-Present

1969-1971	Aubrey "Paul" Bowling *(DoD: July 7, 2001)
1972-1973	Tommy Pierce
1974	Monica Loggins
1975	Harold Thigpin
1976	Kim Mooney
1977	Vacant
1978-1981	Harold Gorham
1982	Vacant
1983-1984	Theresa Stockton Johnson
1985	Linda Stancil
1987	Bill Phillips
1988	Aubrey "Paul" Bowling *(DoD: July 7, 2001)
1989-1992	Warren Harmon *(DoD: April 15, 2018)
1992-2001	Steve Douthit *(DoD: August, 10, 2011)
2001	Paula Hazelrigg
2002-2008	Martha McCollum
2008-2011	Pat Storer
2011-2016	John Steele
2016-2017	Teresa Hodges (Interim)
2017-Present	Teresa Hodges

* Buried in Blue Springs Cemetery - DoD=Date of Death

A Detailed History of Blue Springs Baptist Church

FOUNDING & EARLY YEARS (1800's)

In the early 1840s, Jethro Judson Weaver moved his family from the state of Georgia to the eastern edge of Morgan County, about eight miles east of Somerville, Alabama. Weaver settled and built his home, and eventually a crude wooden church building on a parcel of land not far from a blue spring and small lake at the edge of an adjacent mountain (read more about the church property, early church building, and subsequent buildings below). Worship services were held there and in family homes for several years by Weaver, his family, and others in the surrounding community. Eventually, the group, with the help of members from Shiloh Baptist Church (according to old minutes from Shiloh Baptist Church), organized itself as Blue Springs Baptist Church in 1846.

There is a gap in church information from 1846 until 1853, however the Minutes of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association, show that the church was a member of that association as early as 1850. That year, J. Weaver, L. Homes, and A.B. Thompson were listed as delegate (messengers) to the associational meeting. Apparently, the church had no pastor that year since the word “destitute” appears in the statistical table. The American Baptist Register for 1852 also shows no pastor’s name, so early pastoral leadership in the church was elusive. Blue Springs finally secured a pastor, M.A. Verser in 1853 who led the church nearly twenty years, until 1872. The 1855 Minutes of the same association listed C. Oden, W. C. Denton, and J. W. St. Clair as messengers and Elder Verser as pastor; a membership of 24 with a contribution to missions of \$5.00.

During Pastor Verser’s tenure, starting in 1858, Verser began serving as a missionary of the Third District of Muscle Shoals Baptist Association (With the exception of a year or two during the Civil War, Verser served the association until his death).

Blue Springs requested dismissal from its membership in Muscle Shoals Baptist Association in 1859 to form a new association, the “Warrior River Association.” Membership in the Warrior River Association was short lived. “Shackleford’s History” records that Blue Springs Baptist Church reorganized in 1872 and eventually petitioned for and received membership back into the Muscle Shoals

Baptist Association under the new pastoral leadership of R.A. Windes in October 1873. At that time, there were 29 members.

In 1878, messengers to the Association were N.B. Weaver, A. Johnson, and J.E. Wear. There were 13 baptisms reported along with a membership of 50.

In 1882, John E. Weaver became pastor. He was a staunch Christian with great influence in the community and served the church, off and on, for nearly 30 years. He was the grandson of the original builder, Jethro Weaver, and the great-grandfather of the Randolph Ryan family who are present-day members of the church. Weaver died in 1923 and is buried in the church cemetery adjacent to the church.

An unfortunate blot on the history of Blue Springs occurred around 1886 when members of the church, influenced by Campbellism (the divisive belief that baptism is required for salvation), broke away and started "The Baptist Church of Christ at Rocky Creek." That church later changed its name and became known as Rock Creek Baptist Church. The account can be found in "an undated sketch by Regina Smith" mentioned in the History of Morgan Baptist Association.

On a more positive note, one of the church's early pastors, John Elbert Weaver is mentioned in The History of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association as being a "growing" and talented "force of character" as Pastor of Blue Springs (1891-1899). The following is also shared:

"In 1888, Elder Weaver, at the earnest solicitation of his friends, consented to become a candidate for representative to the legislature. He was nominated by the democratic convention, and elected. He made a faithful public servant, but was satisfied with one term having no further aspirations after political honors, and fully convinced of the dangers surrounding a minister of the gospel, who becomes an aspirant for political preferment. He entered more fully upon his ministerial work, conscious that this alone demanded his efforts and ability."

Along with Blue Springs, Elder Weaver also pastored at New Salem and Falkville. All of these churches displayed spiritual growth and numeric increase under Weaver's leadership.

THE 1900's

That the name "Blue Springs" held a significant place in the county is shown by the establishment of a Post Office by that name from 1898 to 1907—the address of the pastor (J.E. Weaver and eventually J.E. Roan) during those years. Also, the road on which the church resides took its name from the church in the early 1950s when it was so designated by the highway department. Formerly, the road was a part of the main highway which now is Highway 67.

Along with other area churches, Blue Springs Baptist Church eventually broke away from the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association on November 9, 1919 to form their own new association: The Morgan Baptist Association.

In the early 1920's, three families, the James Palmers, the Charles Stacks, and the Charles Dixons, moved into the community from Birmingham. As members of Blue Springs, they were instrumental in beginning Sunday School at Blue Springs, in lieu of a Union Sunday School that was being held in Florette school house. Mrs. Nellie Palmer, a devoted and enthusiastic leader of young people, is given credit for beginning Baptist Young Peoples Union (BYPU).

The History of Morgan Baptist Association states that in 1922, one of Blue Spring's most prominent members was Vernon St. John. Vernon went on to become an outstanding educator and lay leader of Alabama Baptists from Opp, serving on important boards and committees. His name can be seen prominently inscribed at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega along with the other individuals who spearheaded construction of the George E. Bagley Conference Center building.

During the Depression (1930's), money was scarce but labor was plentiful. Blue Springs members raised needed funds by planting and harvesting eight acres of cotton on nearby land.

Rev. D. C. Prince served as stabilizing and strengthening Pastor from 1936-1948. Rev. Prince presided over the church's 100th Anniversary celebration in 1946. During Prince's tenure, Rev. Edgar E. Weaver, a direct descendent of the early Weavers, conducted many revivals at Blue Springs, making a significant impact on the community's spiritual life. The result of one such meeting in 1939 was 35 baptisms, bringing the membership to 172.

During the years in which old Shiloh Church was dissolved, Blue Springs served as a church home for some of her members. In 1947, Blue Springs pastor, D. C. Prince and deacons, L. L. Mathews, C. T. Stacks and A. A. Couey met with others and helped in the reorganization of Shiloh.

From 1949, pastors for the next several years included Rev. O. C. Marsh, Ira W. Myers, Lyndon Montgomery, E. N. Chandler, William A. Petty and Jerry Ferguson. In 1956, the church purchased a 1941 Chevrolet bus from the county school board for \$175. The bus held 48 passengers. Jim Gurley drove the bus every Sunday to pick up children and adults for Sunday School.

The Church was incorporated in 1960. In March of that same year, Rev. Lee Roy Champion became the church's pastor. There were 76 active members, an average of 54 in Sunday School, and 52 in VBS. Under Brother Champion's leadership, the church constructed a new brick structure (the third church building in the church's history) in 1961 and demolished the old wooden structure. Brother Champion went on to faithfully serve the church for 14 years.

Having paid off the indebtedness on the new church building and desiring an "on-the-field" pastor, a pastorium was built from 1974-1975. Rev. Scott Payne, a young minister serving his first pastorate, was the first to reside there. He and his family served for about two years until Brother Payne entered the Seminary in Louisville. Rev. Robert Slack, Jr., former Associational Missionary, followed Rev. Payne as pastor. He began his service as interim pastor in 1978, then became pastor until 1984. This was not Rev. Slack's first connection with Blue Springs. He had been invaluable in supporting and counseling the church and conducting several revivals at the church during his years as Associational Missionary.

In 1983, the mortgage on the pastorium was paid off and a remodeling project of the sanctuary began. The work was finished in 1984 and the church became debt free in 1985. During the remodeling, worship services were held in the basement using folding chairs.

The next pastor was Rev. Lynn Perkins. He served from August 1984 until 1987. In that short time, the membership grew by thirteen baptisms and six additions by letter, making a total resident membership of 108 at that time. During that timeframe, the church also developed a new logo and installed new church signs on Highway 67 to capture the attention of passersby.

Rev. Cliff Mitchell, a retired U. S. Navy Chaplain, served as interim pastor until January 1990 when Rev. Scott Harris became pastor. While serving as fulltime pastor, Rev. Harris attended Seminary and graduated in New Orleans in June 1994. Rev. Harris' wife, Cindy Willis Harris was raised as a member of Blue Springs Church. In 1991, the church approved a 24-foot addition to the church that was completed the following year. New sidewalks, a ramp, and the parking lot was paved in 1992. The note for the addition was burned March 19, 1995.

June 9, 1996, the church celebrated its 150th Anniversary. The church was nicely decorated with special banners and flowers that were purchased for the occasion. Members of the Alabama Historical Commission came and presented the church with a special plaque to commemorate the event. Several former pastors and their families as well as numerous former members were acknowledged. The choir sang "Reunion Song" for their special music. Following the morning worship service led by Pastor Scott Harris, a time of lunch, cake, fellowship, and viewing old pictures and mementoes was enjoyed by all. 144 souvenir mugs were available for a donation to mark the event.

In June 1997, Rev. Clifford Mitchell agreed to serve the church a second time as interim pastor when Rev. Harris resigned. He continued until Jonathan Campbell was called in 1998.

Jonathan Campbell served the church as Pastor from 1998 – 2000.

THE 2000's

Following Brother Jonathan Campbell's service, the pulpit of Blue Springs fell into a time uncertainty in the early 2000's. Former pastor Clifford Mitchell returned to preach in 2000 followed by former pastor Scott Harris for a short time in 2001.

Following Scott Harris' duration, Clifford Mitchell returned to finish out 2001. He continued preaching until August 2002 when a new pastor was eventually called.

Brother Ralph McCollum was called to and became Pastor of Blue Springs on August 11, 2002. During Brother Ralph's tenure, he and his wife Martha conducted widespread visitation to not only the current membership but also to unsaved people and church prospects throughout the community. Consequently, the church saw positive numeric growth of 116 people through Transfer of Letter, Conversion, and Baptisms. Also, to enhance church attendance, Brother Ralph led the church to purchase and erect new signs, two at the two ends of Blue Springs Road off Hwy.

67 and one at the crossroads of Hwy. 67 and Eva/Cotaco-Florette Rd. A new church theme was coined during McCollum's tenure: "Where Living Waters Flow," based on scriptures found in John 4:10-11 and John 7:38.

Brother Ralph was influential in expanding the church's ministries and missions during his tenure. At that time, five new Deacons (Danny Humphries, Buddy Beaver, Frank McDaniel, George Prince, and Dave Shollenberger) were called and ordained. The youth and children's departments grew, requiring the hiring of a part-time director. Also, a van was acquired to support the ongoing ministries of the church. Mission work included: sending \$2000 to the Southern Baptist Convention for emergency relief following devastating hurricanes in South Carolina & Florida; providing money and clothing for the Navajo Mission Life Center in New Mexico through Brother Bill Clough who personally ministered there from Blue Springs; and money and clothing to Rev. Paul Radosovich (father-in-law to the music director at the time, John Steele) of Calvary Campus, Letcher, KY for outreach to the Kentucky School for the Deaf.

Brother McCollum was also instrumental in leading the church to build a new fellowship hall building and conduct several building enhancements. Sanctuary remodeling began in October 2006 followed by a re-dedication/open house on June 3, 2007. Due to cramped conditions in the basement where the fellowship hall was previously located, Brother Ralph led the church to commit to designing and building a new Fellowship Hall building on November 2, 2008. The building was attached to the back of the existing church buildings. The new Fellowship Hall/Building was completed in the Summer of 2009. Also, during his tenure, the church decided to sell the Church parsonage/pastorium since it was not being used by the church's pastors for whom it was built.

Due to declining health, Brother Ralph resigned the pastorate and retired from the ministry in November 2014 having faithfully served the church for over twelve years. After stepping aside and leaving the church for a short period of time, Brother Ralph and his wife Martha have returned to Blue Springs where they have made Blue Springs their church home in retirement.

The current Pastor of Blue Springs is Rev. Richard L. Richie who started in May 2015. Though the record and highlights of his ministry are still being written as he continues to minister at the church, some of the highlights of his ministry include: overseeing numerous building enhancements (discussed below in the Lands and Building history section); leading the church to pay off its indebtedness and holding

a note-burning service for its Fellowship Hall Building; conducting several funerals and providing pastoral care for the families of several long-term members who have passed away; conducting community outreach events to help create new relationships and draw new people to the Lord and the church; leading the church to grow spiritually in their relationship with God and others through expanded prayer and fellowship ministries; and challenging the church members to pray for, give towards, and engage in Acts 1:8 mission activities. To equip members for personal spiritual growth and ministry involvement, Brother Richie has conducted extensive expository preaching and teaching and Through-the-Bible studies to disciple and nurture the flock.

To date, there have only been modest gains numerically in terms of conversions, baptisms, & church transfers. However, Brother Richie believes that a part of his calling to and role in the church was/is to prepare the church for future growth. He hopes that with continued prayer and concerted effort by its current members (primarily Median and Senior Adults), that the Lord will honor that commitment to bring a new generation of young couples, children, and youth to the church. It is hoped that a new group of members will pick up the mantle and carry on the spiritual legacy of those who have preceded them. Brother Richie and the members of the church enthusiastically look forward to what God has in store for the church in the days ahead.

THE LAND AND BUILDINGS OF BLUE SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Eight miles east of Somerville, Alabama is an underground spring that was said to form a pool so deep (approximated to be more than ten feet), the water was azure blue. The mouth of the spring fed, cave pool had a width of 25-30 feet. Northwest of the spring and a small adjacent lake, on a hill north of the road from Somerville to Blountsville, Jethro Judson Weaver built a simple, wooden, square-like structure using hewn white oak logs in the early 1840's. According to remembrances shared by long-time church-member, Randolph Ryan, the area was known as the "Grape Hollow Road"—a meandering crooked road that approached the church from the southeast. The structure would eventually become the meeting place for Blue Springs Baptist Church. It is said that Weaver built and paid for the building himself with only nominal help with the labor. Along with being used for worship services, the building was also used as a school for the surrounding community. Near the structure, a "hitching yard" was present where church attenders would hitch their horses to adjacent trees. The church and nearby cemetery were eventually fenced-in with a web wire fence to keep cattle and other farm animals out since there were no stock laws then and animals freely roamed the land. The

fencing project was led by the wife of Rev. John E. Weaver (the church's sixth pastor), Eliza Ann Gurley. Three beautiful large oak trees stood along the fence and the old church. Whenever the church had "eating on the grounds," men would move pews from inside the church to outside under the oak trees where it would be cool and comfortable.

It is supposed that Jethro Weaver eventually gave the property to the church by verbal agreement. No deeds or records of the church property are found until March 12, 1875 when Nathan Weaver (who was Jethro's son by his third wife) and Nathan's wife, Harriet, deeded one and one-half acres on which the church and cemetery were located. Up until that time, many of the church's boundaries were merely indicated by old trails and landmarks. This dilemma required surrounding landowners to agree to set new boundaries around the church. Two additional acres adjoining the cemetery were purchased from Cicero and Coleman Peck in the mid-1900's. In 1960, Peck heirs (Albert & Ona Peck, twin children of Judge and Mary Winton Peck) deeded more adjoining land to the church. The house and land around the old blue spring finally came into the possession of Kate Winton Mikel. When surveyed in 1960-61, the church property was 5.56 acres. Eventually, the property grew to 8.93 acres in 2008 when property (3.37 acres) south of the present Fellowship Hall building was purchased to provide additional parking and a buffer from surrounding properties.

The original one-room log church building lasted about 75 years but did not survive. No record of its demise nor remnants of its materials have been found. During the War Between the States (circa 1861-1865), church services were interrupted for several years. Numerous raids for supplies by both Northern and Southern troops left the area destitute. For about two months, a raiding party of Northern troops occupied the church building but did not destroy it. Church lore shares that the building, which was once parallel to the road in front of the building, was turned by the Union troops ninety degrees to where the door of the church was facing the road. Sometime after the war, a twenty-foot addition to the building was made.

A new church building was built near the location of the first. Like the first building, wooden logs were used to form the foundation of the church. Other materials were scavenged, crafted, or purchased from the surrounding community. The church was a one-room building similar to the original church building. That building would last at least a century. In the building, worshippers used a wood stove for heating. It was later replaced by a coal stove and then gas space heaters.

The only cooling in the building was the stirring of fans and open windows. Lighting was provided by kerosene lanterns owned by the church and brought from home. In 1949, after many years of using kerosene lanterns for light, the church had electricity installed, as did most of the surrounding community, for electric lighting. During the 1950's, the church installed a water pump for its well. Teachers no longer had to carry water from home for use at Vacation Bible School. The building included slatted pews (later replaced in 1953 with pine pews), pulpit and pulpit furniture, and an "amen corner," pews where the deacons sat. The building also included ceiling-hung drapes that could be drawn to create separate spaces/sections of the sanctuary for the conduct of Sunday School.

In 1961, under the leadership of Pastor Lee Roy Champion, the church constructed a new beautiful brick building (the church's third church building in its history and its current building) next to the old wooden, one-room, clapboard structure. The new building provides ample space for worship, teaching, and training. After the new building was completed, the old structure was torn down and removed. In 1960, a new piano was purchased to enhance worship. In 1965, new oak pews were purchased to replace the old pine pews that had been transferred over from the former building. The first heating and cooling system was installed in 1967. Also purchased in the 1960's was a mimeograph machine for church use including printed bulletins for Sunday morning services and a water cooler affording easy access to cold water.

In 1970, a movie projector was purchased for educational and entertainment purposes. An organ was also purchased at a cost of \$2644. In 1974, the church built a Pastorium on property adjacent to the cemetery. The first family to live there was the family of Rev. Scott Payne.

In 1984 the Sanctuary was remodeled and beautifully redecorated. Church services were held in the basement while the pews were stripped and stained. The basement was later remodeled in 1986 installing new cabinets in the kitchen and buying new tables and chairs for the Sunday School classrooms.

In 1990, a 24 by 36-foot addition, with basement and ground floor class rooms and rest rooms, was attached to the back (south side) of the third building. Also, an elevator was installed. The project was completed in 1992 and the note for the addition was burned March 19, 1995. Soon after the addition was made, new sidewalks and a ramp were added, and the parking lot was paved.

Under the leadership of Brother Ralph McCollum, in 2006-2007, the Sanctuary was remodeled with beautiful Stained-glass windows, chandeliers, a fiberglass baptistry with handrails, a lighted window box, a new stage/platform, choir loft, sound system upgrade, and new baby grand piano were purchased and installed. Previous carpeting was removed to reveal beautiful hardwood flooring. A foyer, two restrooms, and a rug for the foyer were added as well. Outside the church, a new porch with new porch columns, handrails down the steps, benches, lights, sidewalks, drains, & new landscaping were installed.

In 2008-2009 a new fellowship hall, kitchen, two offices, numerous storage rooms, two new bathrooms, and a covered overhang entrance were added to the building under the leadership of Pastor Ralph McCollum. To accommodate additional parking and give the new building a buffer from surrounding properties, 3.37 acres was purchased to the south of the new building in December 2008. A note burning service for the building was held in 2018 under the leadership of Pastor Richard L. Richie.

From 2015-2019, during Pastor Richard Richie's pastorate, numerous enhancements to the church building and property have been completed with enormous help by church leaders Treasurer, Betty Jo Ryan, Chairman of Deacons, Danny Humphries, and the faithful financial giving and support of the congregation. These enhancements include:

- a computer & video system which allows words to the songs, announcements, graphics, and video to be projected onto television screens installed at both the front and rear of the sanctuary;
- a camera and television links to the nursery, fellowship hall, and entry hall that allow viewing of the worship services in those locations;
- a sectional speaker system in the sanctuary to enhance hearing and acoustics;
- a new, conveniently-located Nursery across from the fellowship hall;
- a picnic pavilion;
- a new metal roof; and
- a remodeled basement with enhanced classrooms and an open meeting and recreation area for youth and children's activities.

The Cemetery of Blue Springs Baptist Church

The Blue Springs Cemetery is located adjacent to the church. It is operated separately from the church, overseen, managed, and cared for by an elected group of individuals from within and outside the church. There are currently over 583 interments/graves in the cemetery. A comprehensive listing of those graves can be found at:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=21688>

The oldest marked grave in the cemetery is James Addison Ratliff, October 22, 1861, son of Claiborn and Sarah Ratliff who died at the age of 4. There are about 185 unmarked graves; some are believed to be much older than this 1861 date. Jethro Judson Weaver, the founder of the church is also buried in the cemetery along with many of his family members

A book entitled, *Morgan County Cemeteries*, Volume One was published in 1982 by Dene Walls and Sue Marine which includes Blue Springs Cemetery as well as other Morgan County cemeteries east of Interstate Highway 65.

Through the Cemetery Committee, various work projects and enhancements have been conducted over the years to clean up and beautify the grounds.

175th Anniversary Celebration Committee

JoAnne Berdowski

Joe Berdowski

Becky Bryan

Linda Cain

Roger Cain

Gail Collins

Melvin Collins

J.T. Gurley

Teresa Hodges

Linda Kelso

Betty Kelso-Clough

Jimmy Lynn

Sherry McDaniel

Connie Perry

Tommy Perry

Richard Richie

Toni Richie

Joan Southern