

A History of Pea Ridge Baptist Church

The First Decade

The Pea Ridge Baptist Church had its beginning in the hearts and minds of West Virginia Baptists in the early 1950s when a movement known as the New Frontiers Program was started among our churches. Special effort was made among West Virginia Baptist churches for voluntary contributions to this cause.

In January 1955, the area missionary for the West Virginia Baptist Convention, Rev. M. M. McKinney, was asked to make a survey in the Pea Ridge area in order to determine the amount of interest in a new Baptist church. The result of this survey by Rev. McKinney was very encouraging.

On June 28, 1956, Dr. Hugh H. Pickett, Executive Secretary of the West Virginia Baptist Convention, called a meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing a church. As a result of this meeting, Dr. Clarence Figgatt was assigned the duty of starting a church school and holding worship services each Sunday morning. The first service was held at Pea Ridge Elementary School on July 29, 1956, with 29 present. Services were held there each Sunday morning until April 1957 when the church moved into our first unit at 5945 East Pea Ridge Road.

On August 5, 1956, Dr. Clarence Figgatt commissioned a voluntary committee of ten people for the purpose of making a survey. This survey would determine and secure the names of people living in the Pea Ridge area who were willing to authorize the committee to obtain church letters. The letters were to be brought together on a specified date for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church. This committee consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Sealfer, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Pancake, Mr. and Mrs. John Daft, Mrs. Lillian Newcomb, Mr. Jesse Colston, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. J. Kelly Wells.

The first meeting of the committee was held August 10, 1956, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sealfer. The following were in attendance; Rev. W. J. Fox, pastor of Twentieth Street Baptist Church, Col. W. C. Petty of the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Sealfer, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Pancake, Mr. and Mrs. John Daft, Mr. and Mrs. J. Kelly Wells, Mrs. Lillian Newcomb, and Mr. Jesse Colston, Jr. At this meeting, Mr. Jesse Colston, Jr. was elected chairman of the committee and Mr. J. Kelly Wells was elected secretary.

Two outstanding decisions were made at this meeting:

1. The date of September 16, 1956, was designated as the organization date of the new church.
2. The name of the new church would be Pea Ridge Baptist Church.

During the month of August and the first part of September, the organizational committee obtained the names of forty-eight people who were willing to band together in a new Baptist church and secured letters from their respective churches.

The final meeting of this committee was held on September 13, 1956, at the Highlawn Baptist Church with all members present. Dr. Hugh Pickett, Dr. Clarence Figgatt, and Col. W. C. Petty were also present. In this meeting, the organization date of September 16 was confirmed and the organizational procedure was decided upon in detail.

At this time, two lots in the Pea Ridge area had been purchased by the West Virginia Baptist Convention for the site of the new church, but neither one seemed to be suitable for a number of reasons. Members of the committee had learned that a lot consisting of approximately three and a half acres at 5945 East Pea Ridge Road could be purchased for the sum of \$7500.00. The committee agreed that they should explore this option. Mr. Colston and Mr. Wells were appointed to look into this matter and find out if the owners would accept \$100.00 as an option for 90 days on the property. This was done and soon a suitable lot was obtained, which was to be the site of the Pea Ridge Baptist Church.

On September 16, 1956, in the Pea Ridge United Methodist Church at 2:30 PM, the organizational meeting was held with Dr. Clarence Figgatt presiding. At this time, the names of forty-nine people were presented for membership in the newly formed church. The names are as follows:

Mr. Jack Pancake	Mr. Thomas E. Briars
Mrs. Jack Pancake	Mr. Delbert Smith
Mr. Jesse F. Colston, Jr	Mrs. Delbert Smith
Mrs. Jesse F. Colston, Jr.	Mrs. Jack Stewart
Miss Arlene Bethea Colston	Miss Willa Lois Farley
Mr. Wayne Fitzgerald	Mr. James Reasor
Mrs. Wayne Fitzgerald	Mrs. James Reasor
Mr. James D. Moore	Mr. Clyde Call
Mrs. James D. Moore	Mrs. Clyde Call
Suzanne Lee Moore	Mr. Richard Ashby Smarr
Judith Ann Moore	Mrs. Richard Ashby Smarr
Mr. Roy G. Kittle	Mr. John Daft
Mrs. Roy G. Kittle	Mrs. John Daft
Mr. Roy G. Kittle, Jr.	Miss Jane Daft
Mr. Glen Seafer	Mr. J. Kelly Wells
Mrs. Glen Seafer	Mrs. J. Kelly Wells
Mrs. C. G. Rhodes	Mr. Eugene Earl Duncan
Mrs. I. H. Newcomb	Mrs. Eugene E. Duncan
Mrs. Russel Fought	Mrs. Dorothy Mitchell
Mrs. Laura Gladys Light	Mrs. G. A. Karnes
Miss Helen Judy Light	Mr. J. Earl Duncan
Mr. Dennis Garrett	Mrs. Earl Neely
Mrs. Dennis Garrett	Mr. Jerry Mounts
Mrs. E. E. Ellis	Mrs. Georgia Mounts

The decision was made to hold the charter open until December 1, 1956. All who came in from September 16th until December 1st would be considered "Charter" members. Those who joined the church during that time were Mr. and Mrs. French Kelly, Miss Karen Kelly, Mr. Jack Stewart, and Mr. and Mrs. Clive Gerlach. Dr. Clarence Figatt continued as temporary pastor for the balance of 1956, during which time the Sunday school grew to an enrollment of 75. Rev. T. H. Binford became the successor to Dr. Figatt and served faithfully until the new pastor arrived in February 1957 to assume full-time duties.

On December 9, 1956, Rev. Walter D. Hickman spoke to the congregation in the Pea Ridge Elementary School and was soon called by the church to become pastor. During the pastorate of Rev. Hickman, the church grew from a membership of 56 to 155. One of the first accomplishments after the calling of Rev. Hickman was to lease the home at 5900 East Pea Ridge Road from the McGovern family as a home for the pastor. Later, the house was purchased by the church. The second accomplishment of the new church was the ground breaking for the present buildings at 5945 East Pea Ridge Road on July 21, 1957. Dr. Hugh D. Pickett, Executive Secretary for the West Virginia Baptist Convention, preached in the morning service and assisted in the ground breaking in the afternoon. Soon thereafter, the first unit of the new church building was begun and services of dedication were held on March 16, 1958, marking the beginning of occupancy in the new building. During the pastorate of Rev. Hickman, the first floor unit of the annex housing the nursery and kindergarten departments was begun in May and completed by late June. This was a much needed addition and served the purpose well. Rev. Hickman closed his ministry at the Pea Ridge Baptist Church on February 27, 1961, having served for four years and one month.

In June of 1961, the Rev. Donald L. Moor became pastor after graduating from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in that same year. Membership increased from 155 members to 250 members in 1966. During Rev. Moor's tenure, the church made significant progress. In addition to 95 new members, the second floor was added to the unit at the rear of the sanctuary which is now used for the Primary department. On June 24, 1964, the decision was made by the church to sell the pastor's home at 5900 East Pea Ridge Road. It was sold on June 20, 1965. This parsonage was not adequate to meet the pastor's needs. The church was able to purchase the property on the west side of the church building that same year, which gave sufficient space for the erection of a new parsonage. This was completed and ready for occupancy on May 20, 1965 at which time the pastor and his wife moved in. The last addition to the buildings is a storage room on the southeast corner of the church building which housed church records and supplies.

The Second Decade

After Rev. Donald Moor's resignation in 1966, Rev. C. C. Coots of Ashland, Kentucky, served in the capacity of interim pastor. In September 1967, Rev. Robert E. Johnson was called to be our new pastor. Rev. Johnson came to us from Summitville, Indiana, where he was pastor of the First Baptist Church. As Rev. Johnson began his work with us here

at Pea Ridge Baptist, both he and the people recognized the need for a new sanctuary. During 1968, many planning sessions were held by the finance and building committees. It was during this time that Wilson and Kings Architects were asked to draw preliminary plans for the new sanctuary. When the plans were presented, they were unanimously accepted by the church. The cost of the new sanctuary was \$180,000.00 and the finance committee secured a loan in this amount with Twentieth Street Bank. Mr. Alva Bailey, Jr. was employed as the general contractor to build the new structure in March 1969. The sanctuary was completed in March 1970 and dedicated in April 1970. God had blessed the Pea Ridge Baptist Church with a beautiful new sanctuary and our most sincere desire was to use it for the glory of Jesus Christ.

After the completion of the new sanctuary, other improvements were made to our building and grounds. Two new parking lots were formed around the church including a blacktop lot on the west side of the sanctuary and a graveled lot in the rear of the old building. The old building needed some repair and updating. The following projects were accomplished: the church offices were painted and carpeted; the halls throughout the building were carpeted; the entire building was painted to match the color of the new sanctuary.

As the second ten years drew to a close, the old chapel was renovated. When completed, this area housed a modern nursery and kindergarten department. This improvement meant that children from nursery through sixth grade would be on the east side of the building, making it easier for parents of small children. Under the sanctuary, the men of the church completed two new classrooms and two new restrooms. Future plans called for a kitchen and fellowship hall which would complete our new building.

God blessed us with new members. We received 302 persons into our membership during this time. Of these, 265 were under Rev. Johnson's ministry, 125 by baptism and 140 by transfer of membership. However, because our community is very transient, we lost 64 members. In 1966, we had 256 members. In 1976, we had 484 members, giving us a total gain of 228. Out of that 484, about 100 were inactive.

God blessed us financially. Our budget grew from \$22,000.00 to \$64,000.00. During this time, we raised our mission giving from \$1,500.00 to \$5,000.00. Even though members have had to face inflation over these years, when a need arose, our people responded to meet each need. We operate our church solely on tithes and offerings given by our members and friends.

God blessed us with some fine youth groups in those ten years. One of the young men saved in our church was Rev. Donald W. Walker, Jr., who served the Lord at the Second Branch Baptist Church in Chesterfield, Virginia. Another of our young men serving God full-time is Scott F. New, son of Mr. and Mrs. Delmar New. Scott was ordained at Pea Ridge Baptist on June 7, 1973. Following Christ's leading, he went to Hamilton, Ohio, where he served as Associate Pastor followed by service to Christ as a U.S. Army chaplain. In 1976, we had a part-time youth director named Terry Jesse. The youth had visiting teams and Butch Lipscomb led a weekly Bible study. The youth had raised over

\$1,000.00 with the hope of one day having a church van to transport young people to various activities.

God blessed us with a fine choir. The director in 1976 was Mr. William Mallory. During this time, the choir presented the musical, "I Love America", by John Peterson. They presented the musical several times at various functions including the Guyandotte Association annual meeting. Mr. Mallory organized a youth choir for high school and college age students.

God blessed us by adding to our staff. In 1976, in addition to our pastor, we had a secretary, Mrs. Brady Lipscomb, a choir director, Mr. William Mallory, a youth director, Mr. Terry Jesse, custodians Butch Lipscomb and Andy Smarr, and duplicating operators, Mr. and Mrs. Don Gray. After twenty years, it was the belief of Pea Ridge Baptist Church that whatever was accomplished in the past and whatever would be accomplished in the future will bring honor and glory to His holy name!

The Third Decade

Rev. Robert Johnson resigned as pastor effective October 16, 1977. He won many souls to Christ in his ten year ministry at Pea Ridge Baptist. Rev. Leo Oxley served as interim pastor from October 1977 until August 1978. With the work of the search committee completed, Rev. John L. Bradley was called to serve as our minister. He was installed on September 3, 1978.

Another stage of our building began in September 1979 as we worked to finish construction on the new fellowship hall and kitchen. The project was finished in September 1981.

In March 1979, our church hosted the WV Baptist Jr. High Convention. The church saw that 78 people were housed.

On Sunday, September 13, 1981, the church celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Rev. Walter Hickman delivered the message. A salad luncheon followed the morning service. Rev. Robert Johnson brought the evening message. Special guests included Rev. Walter Hickman, Rev. Wallace Rutherford, Rev. Leo Oxley, Rev. Robert Johnson, Dr. Douglas Hill, Dr. Frank L. Harrison, Jr., Mrs. C.C. Coots, Rev. Don Moor, and Robert Crouch.

A revival was held in conjunction with Milton Baptist Church and Chestnut Grove Baptist November 14-19, 1982.

Rev. Bradley served as pastor until January 31, 1984. Dr. Frank L. Harrison served as interim from April 1984 until June 17, 1984, when he was called as pastor. During his first year as pastor, Dr. Harrison began planning retreats to evaluate where we were as a church and address our future goals.

In October 1984, the church office was moved to the front of the building. Several areas of the church were redecorated at this time. The primary department was carpeted and new chairs were purchased through individual donations. The Sunday school office was also given a new look. The youth raised funds to purchase a marquee in time for our anniversary celebration in 1985. Funds were collected through the Volunteer Service Project Fund to re-gravel the east parking lot. Also, a "Raise the Roof" campaign was instituted to replace the flat roof at the front of the building.

The Fourth Decade

The church membership enjoyed growth along with many new programs. However, Dr. Harrison resigned on December 31, 1989, to pastor a church in North Carolina. We had several pastors deliver the message during morning worship until Rev. Jake Boggs became our interim pastor. Rev. Boggs was very active with visitation and started "Bring A Friend Sunday". The search committee presented Rev. Roger Adams for candidate as pastor. Rev. Adams was installed October 21, 1990. Under Rev. Adams' leadership, Pea Ridge Baptist experienced a new surge in membership. As of August 1993, our total membership soared to 470.

In July 1991, the sanctuary was carpeted along with the foyer, hallways and steps. New microphones were purchased as well. In January 1993, the nursery and 2's & 3's classroom were moved toward the rear of the building. Walls were torn down to make room for an expanded pastor's office & secretary's office. It was at this time that Pea Ridge Baptist began to use a computer for the first time. In addition, steps for a fire escape were constructed at the east side of the building.

At the suggestion of Rev. Adams and the agreement of the congregation, 10% of our weekly offering began to go directly to mission. Pea Ridge Baptist received an award from the Guyandotte Association for having the highest percentage increase in mission giving in 1992.

Due to the large numbers of families with small children, the Pea Ridge Baptist Preschool opened in the fall of 1993 under the direction of Kellie Cyrus. The preschool offered two and three day classes for children ages three to five.

The Fifth Decade

On September 21, 1996, Pea Ridge Baptist celebrated its 40th anniversary. Services were conducted by Dr. Frank L. Harrison followed by an outdoor dinner and a slide presentation. In attendance were former pastors Rev. Walter Hickman and Rev. Robert Johnson. There were over 400 people present.

In March 1997, we held an outdoor passion play under the direction of Beth Goble. In April 1997, decorative banners were created by the ladies of the church for the sanctuary under the direction of Carol Adams.

In February 1998, the church mortgage was refinanced and several needed updates and repairs were made to the church. Two new furnaces were installed and water drainage was improved around the church by the installation of drainage pipes. In summer 1999, two adult Sunday School class rooms received new tile, drywall and paint. New shrubbery was also planted. The preschool playground received new equipment and fencing was installed.

In the summer of 1999, Rev. Adams announced that he would be starting a new church in the Teays Valley area. His last sermon was August 29, 1999, and a farewell dinner was held on September 12, 1999. Following Rev. Adams' resignation, guest speakers included Willie Wilson, Rev. Jerry Losh and Rev. Keith Creasy. Rev. Tim Yates was called as interim starting May 3, 2000. We were greatly blessed by Rev. Yates' biblical insight and Wednesday evening Bible study.

Our trustees continued to work throughout the church. They completed a much needed storage building and a new water line.

On April 18, 2000, the majority of the Scouts from Troop 62 voted to start a new troop. It was unanimously decided to give it the number "59" because the upside down mirror image of "2" is "5" and the "6" turned upside down is a "9". Pea Ridge Baptist Church became the charter organization and the first meeting was held at the church in June 2000. Phil Alexander was the Scoutmaster and Kurt Baden was the Senior Patrol leader. Emerson Davis was the Charter Organizational Representative for the troop, Mark Miller was the Chair, Peggy Baden was Secretary, Jim Greyard was Treasurer, and Ginny Adkins was Outdoor Activities Chair.

In November 2000, Rev. Yates announced that he would be leaving in December to accept a position of Associate Pastor at Lewis Memorial Baptist Church. Tom Sharp was voted in as our interim pastor shortly afterward. Rev. Sharp was an excellent Bible teacher and leader. In December, Kathleen Napier and Angie Martin presented a cantata and children's play called "Little Drummer Boy". We also provided 25 Christmas baskets for ECCHO and raised \$412.00 for this project.

The Scouts held an "All U Can Eat Pancake Breakfast" here at the church in February to help with fundraising. This has become an annual event. "March Mulch Madness" is another fundraiser for the troop that began in 2001. Orders for mulch are taken and the troop delivers the bags of mulch to the homes of those who placed orders.

During the June 2001 business meeting, the church voted to take \$20,000.00 from a CD account to make repairs deemed necessary by the Fire Marshall. Smoke alarms, fire doors and fireproof carpet were installed, and lighted exit signs were hung. In addition, the fellowship hall and hallways were painted and the parking lot received new gravel.

A.B.W. Ministries raised \$500.00 to go toward the needed repairs. Building fund pledges were received from members.

In late January 2002, we were informed by the search committee that they had been talking with Rev. Greg Creasy, who was Minister of Mission Support with the West Virginia Baptist Convention. On February 9, 2002, Rev. Creasy met with the deacon board and church council. The following day, Rev. Creasy delivered the morning message. Following the service, a vote was taken and Rev. Creasy was called as pastor. He began full-time in April 2002.

Rev. Creasy began participating immediately with our boards and committees. He emphasized the need for prayer in all that we do. The Mission Committee began to take a very active role in all mission projects. Rev. Creasy is very actively involved in Russian Missions and has traveled to Russia many times.

In the fall of 2002, Pea Ridge Baptist united with Hope Church of Ryazan, Russia in a five year commitment of support. The board of trustees installed programmable thermostats throughout the church to reduce heating and cooling costs when the building is unoccupied.

On March 14-16, 2003, we held "A Weekend Of Renewal-Drawing Near To The Heart Of God". The weekend, led by former pastor Dr. Frank Harrison, included Bible study, worship for all ages and fellowship. In April 2003, the library was modernized and many new books were added.

The summer of 2003 included many activities including a women's Bible study called "Jesus, the One and Only", a musical called "Home of the Brave", a playground dedication in memory of Luke Simon, and a youth mission trip to Chapmanville, WV. The summer ended with a church picnic at Camp Ona and a choir picnic at Barboursville Park.

The 40 Days of Purpose Campaign kicked off on October 5, 2003, with a tailgate cookout. This program consisted of small group Bible studies that began October 12th and lasted for eight weeks. We asked ourselves the difficult question, "What on earth am I here for?". This campaign brought many new members into our church. The Praise Team would lead morning worship with new songs of praise to God. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was evident.

In April 2004, the church agreed to a proposal by church council to borrow \$90,000.00 for repairs to the drainage system around the church, remodeling of the church kitchen which included a new sink and dishwasher, paving of the lower parking lot and other repairs. Later that fall, a vote was taken to borrow an additional \$27,000.00 due to higher than expected paving costs. At this time, all church computers were upgraded to DSL service. The church agreed to the purchase of a new van primarily paid for by member donations.

Jim Baden became the second Scoutmaster for Troop 59. They continued to keep the “outing” in scouting by planning an outdoor event every month. Many young men from the church have joined the troop.

During the summer of 2004, the youth traveled to Memphis, Tennessee for a mission trip, the senior citizens formed a fellowship group called The Golden Group which will meet monthly, and Angie Martin and Kathleen Napier were voted as our choir directors. Later that summer, they agreed to serve as pianists during our worship services as well. As fall of 2004 began, we held a church-wide campaign called Fruits of the Harvest. It consisted of a kick-off event and eight weeks of small group study on the Fruit of the Spirit.

In late August 2005, the U.S. experienced a devastating natural disaster with Hurricane Katrina. Truckloads of items were sent to the gulf coast along with two medical mission teams from our church. In addition, we raised over \$5,700.00 for disaster relief.

In the later months of 2005, a new Sunday School class was started by Louie Gaunch and Jeff Kaplan. Pastor Pavel Jirov, from Ryazan, Russia, was here for a short time. Under the direction of Angie Martin and Kathleen Napier, the children’s choir presented a Christmas musical “It Happened in the Country”. They also formed a preschool hand bell choir and an adult hand bell choir.

With the start of 2006 several projects were set in motion. The choir loft and stage area will be renovated to better accommodate our worship services as well as musical and drama presentations. The Middle School class room will have new lights installed. The Library was moved from the room off the sanctuary to the room off the fellowship hall.

As of May 31, 2006, Boy Scout Troop 59 has had ten Eagle Scouts with Eagle Scout projects consisting of: landscaping and building a sign for Mt. Calvary Regular Baptist Church in Wayne; painting the tennis courts and restoring a hiking path at Ritter Park; painting the women’s bathrooms and painting the concession stand at Veteran’s Memorial Field House; landscaping at Autism Services Center; building bluebird boxes at Beech Fork State park; landscaping and building flower boxes at Guyan Estates Park; building a shelter for the soccer field at Cabell Midland High School and building a playground for the Pea Ridge Methodist Preschool. The scouts of Troop 59 continue to make a positive impact on the community.

In July 2006 the youth traveled to Gulfport, MS, for their annual mission trip. Twenty-two young people and adults spent a week assisting with the on-going clean up and rebuilding from the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

In September 2006 we will celebrate our 50th anniversary. Plans are under way for a new church pictorial directory and a cookbook of recipes from past and present members. On Saturday, September 9th, we will have a golf scramble and a ladies tea. Then on Sunday, September 10th, our celebration will continue with a special worship service. Following the morning worship, service the weekend of festivities will conclude with a luncheon for all those in attendance.