

THE HISTORY OF FLAT SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

November 1905 – September 2023

1905

On November 27, 1905, Flat Springs Missionary Baptist Church was organized at the home of Amos Caswell Bridges. An invited presbyter met with twelve persons interested in the organization of a Missionary Baptist Church. Rev. L.R. Dixon and Rev. N.H. Shepherd led in the constitution of the church.

The twelve original charter members were Amos Caswell Bridges, Ila J. Bridges; Johnny Yates Bridges & wife, Josie L. Bridges; Sandy Bridges and wife, Maggie J. Bridges; Malinda S. Bridges; Susan P. Bridges; J.J. Hackney; C.M. Holt and wife, Mary Ann; and Curtis J. Kelly.

Rev. Dixon called the meeting to order and was asked to act as chairman of the proceedings. C.M. Holt was elected as Clerk Pro-tem. The group wrote and adopted an Order of Business and provided Articles of Faith, Rules of Decorum, a Constitution and a Covenant.

Gum Springs Missionary Baptist Church, located in lower Chatham County, supported the members who lived south of the Deep River, Haw River and/or Rocky River, in order that they may have a local church and worship services without facing river-crossings and travel on nearly impassable roads. Letters of Dismissal from Gum Springs Missionary Baptist Church in Moncure, NC were read and adopted.

Rev. N.H. Shepherd of Lindhurst, NC was called as the first pastor. J.J. Hackney was elected Clerk-Treasurer, Amos C. Bridges, Sandy Bridges and C.H. Holt were elected Deacons. Johnny Y. Bridges, Curtis J. Kelly and J.J. Hackney were elected as Trustees of the church.

The congregation asked Amos C. Bridges for three acres of land, to be used as the church designated, which he donated. During that first year, they struggled to build their church despite great personal and financial hardship for the original members as they were modest farmers still struggling from the aftermath of the War Between the States and Reconstruction. However, by the end of the first year, five young people were received upon their profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Membership had reached 17 and Flat Springs submitted a petition asking for admission, as a Missionary Baptist Church, into the Sandy Creek Baptist Association.

1906

An application for \$50.00 was made to the State Mission Board, because the church felt that assistance was necessary. Construction began on the first church (near the site of

the present-day Bewey Shaver Fellowship Hall) in 1906. Flat Springs Baptist Church was received into the Sandy Creek Baptist Association in October.

(Flat Springs was built in the Oakland Township of Chatham County. Though Flat Springs has never moved, the church is now located in the Deep River Township of Lee County, probably because of the formation of Lee County in 1907 from portions of Chatham and Moore Counties. U.S. Highway #1 was then a dirt road that ran approximately fifty feet in front of our present buildings. That road, which is now named Deep River Road, was eventually shifted to its present site and was gravel before being paved.)

1907-12

The first year set the pace for successive years. Building a church with very little money; struggling to pay their pastor; as well as provide leadership for their new church, were sometimes overwhelming and were just some of the obstacles they faced.

In the beginning, preaching services were only held once a month, weather permitting.

In order to make a living, pastors sometimes served 2 or 3 churches simultaneously and often worked other jobs but work on the church continued and improvements were made. A "tower" (steeple) was built and soon after 1911-12, the building was painted white (known as the "little white church," whenever mentioned in later years).

During this time, the church experienced a severe trial of their faith. The church disciplined two members in December 1911 and January 1912. One of the members, Mr. O.E. Sewell, was excluded because he became involved dishonestly with another member, Mr. T.M. Lassiter, over the matter of some cross ties. The church investigated for several months and felt justified in their decision. Mr. F.M. Riddle left the country because of "unlawful actions" and the church decided to withdraw fellowship with him in January 1912, citing "conduct unbecoming to a true follower of Jesus Christ." (The term, "left the country," probably meant that he left the area and not the actual country.)

1915-16

Membership increased to 44 with almost twice as many in Sunday School. The church was finally dedicated on October 8, 1916. Rev. W.N. Johnson, Corresponding Secretary of the North Carolina Baptist Board of Missions, delivered the dedication sermon.

1917-28

These years were characterized by efforts "designed to make the foundation, which had been laid, secure." It was also a time of "ups-and-downs." The membership increased; the Sunday School, although having severe difficulties, managed "to hold its head above

water.” Financial gifts increased in amount and in effective ministry and the church continued to grow.

Flat Springs will forever be indebted to friends of the Jones Chapel Methodist Church and Zion Christian Church for their assistance during these years. The cooperation of the churches, and the leadership of Mr. C.F. Johnson of Zion, was a major factor in the life of Flat Springs Sunday School

1929-1944

Rev. R.H. Weaver had served the longest consecutive pastorate, at this point. Highlights of his ministry included the addition of four rooms onto the rear of the original building and the beginning of the Baptist Young People’s Union, with thirty Intermediates, both in 1934. He was succeeded by the Hancock brothers of Hemp, NC.

William F. Hancock was called and served until June 1935 and was succeeded by his brother, Ernest D. Hancock. In August 1939, William became assistant to his brother and served in that capacity until 1943. Ernest served as pastor until October 1946. (As pastor, Ernest preached on the second Sunday and William, as the assistant, preached on the fourth Sunday.)

During their shared ministry, the Hancock brothers were responsible for the addition of a classroom in 1936 and two more in 1944; the aforementioned two services a month beginning in 1939; the first Vacation Bible School in 1944 with 25 students enrolled; the Baptist Young People’s Union, after being inactive for a year, was revived with 18 members in one union; and a large increase in membership.

1946-51

Rev. Cad H. Norris of Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest was called as pastor in November 1946 and served until November 1949. Under his ministry, gifts to missionary causes increased significantly.

It seemed that the church had made little reference to the original Covenant, Constitution and By-laws set forth in those earlier documents. An amendment to the Constitution to the effect that the “pastor shall be called *indefinitely* and not *annually*” was accepted by the church. The church also seemed to be having difficulty carrying out its decisions because the amendment was repealed on August 4, 1949. The need for cooperation and organization had been established. Even though torn by internal dissension, specific overtures toward adhering to the principles of church laws was made. The church also began improving its physical facilities, at this time.

Rev. Gerald C. Primm of Sanford, NC began serving as pastor in December 1949. The church, in conference on December 29, 1949, adopted a Unified Budget and voted to

have evening services on the first and third Sunday and morning services on the second and fourth.

The church was still considering the question of time and number of services on Sunday. A Women's Missionary Society was organized with 25 members. And a mid-week prayer service was begun on September 14, 1950. A central heating system was purchased in the fall of 1950; two classrooms were built, making it possible to increase growth in Sunday School; and a new piano was purchased.

Rev. Primm resigned in April 1951.

Max Gilmore, the only minister licensed by Flat Springs, until then, was elected interim pastor and served until July 1951. The church was still in a quandary regarding the days of meeting, repealing their previous decision (first and third Sunday evenings) to the second and fourth Sunday mornings. Under Mr. Gilmore's leadership, Flat Springs experienced one of the best Vacation Bible Schools ever.

Rev. Proctor Smith, of Southern Baptist Seminary, was called as pastor on September 16, 1951.

New choir robes were purchased, and plans made for a trained church choir to be led by J.O. (Jimmy) Bridges, Jr. Plans were formulated to remodel the church sanctuary by the Building Committee, composed of Walter Campbell, Jimmy Bridges, James Bridges and John Luck. Amos Bridges was awarded the contract.

Rev. Smith was led to another position and resigned on September 14, 1952.

The church was still considering the question of time and number of services on Sunday.

On September 17, the church voted to adopt the rotating Board of Deacons. Before the calling of another pastor, the church voted to have worship services on the second and fourth Sunday mornings and the first and third Sunday evenings.

1952-55

Rev. Melvin Henderson, from Southeastern Baptist Seminary, was called as pastor on October 26, 1952. The work of remodeling the sanctuary was continued and completed in November 1952. In November, the church, led by Amos Bridges, voted unanimously to borrow \$2,500.00 from Central Bank and Trust Co. in Sanford in order to buy new pews, remodel classrooms, buy pulpit furniture and install carpet on the floor. This work was completed in February 1953, except for the carpeting, which was installed in October 1955.

The church adopted the plan of conducting worship services on each Sunday morning beginning a full-time church program in 1953.

The rotating Board of Deacons, the idea which began during Rev. Primm's ministry and was officially accepted in Rev. Smith's tenure, was put into effect in January 1954.

The church voted to build a parsonage on July 3, 1955, upon the recommendation of the Building Committee, which was composed of Lemuel Johnson, Belle Marks, Bobby Hurley, Craven Johnson and Clarence Womble. A lot, consisting of 1.12 acres, was given to the church by Mr. & Mrs. J.T. Marks and Mr. & Mrs. D.M. Covert. Amos Bridges was awarded the contract to construct the parsonage. He donated his services to the church.

In October 1955, the Baptist Young People's Training Union was organized with five units and 80 students enrolled. The mid-week prayer service, which had been discontinued in September 1952, was revived at that time. By this time, Flat Springs Baptist Church had grown to a membership of 225. Carpeting for the sanctuary remodel was finally installed in October.

1957-62

On September 8, 1957, Rev. Lawrence Childs, of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, accepted the call to Flat Springs. The church took an active role in erecting a Community Building.

In 1958, the Sunday School showed an increase in attendance, which necessitated a need for more teaching space.

In 1959, a Brotherhood was organized, and the Royal Ambassadors, Sunbeams, and the Girl's Auxiliary were begun.

A Planning Committee was organized and in 1960, a new Educational Building was completed. This was the first phase of a continuing program of expansion. The Educational Building was dedicated, and the cornerstone laid on June 12, 1961. In 1960-61, as part of its work in the North Carolina Baptist Church Achievement Program, Flat Springs was named "Church of the Year" in North Carolina.

Rev. Childs resigned as pastor on May 8, 1962. Rev. Robert Dukes became pastor on June 1, 1962. While Rev. Dukes was at Flat Springs, a study course was held; a new water line was laid to the church; and the church voted to give a specified sum to the Community Building to be used toward its upkeep and improvements.

1963-69

Rev. Dukes resigned effective December 12, 1963.

In February 1964, the Pulpit Committee, following a recommendation by the Deacons to secure an interim pastor, announced in March that the Committee recommended Rev.

Bewey Shaver, of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, be called as the interim pastor. Under his leadership the church showed a steady growth, as well as financial growth.

In January 1965, the church voted to sponsor a Boy Scout Troop (Troop #945) with Rev. Shaver as scoutmaster. A Tape Ministry was also started. The debt on the Educational Building was paid off in 1965 and the note burning took place in June. In July a Planning Committee was appointed to begin plans for a new sanctuary. It was recommended that when \$10,000. had been saved, construction would begin on the new sanctuary. The church voted to employ Walter Campbell as contractor. The sanctuary was built at a cost of \$56,531.19.

In January 1967, the church voted to purchase choir robes for the Adult Choir as they were now financially able to do so. The first service was held in the new building on March 26, 1967.

Rev. Lawrence Childs, a former pastor, was invited to deliver the sermon that Sunday. In April, the first baptism was held in the new baptistry.

Rev. Shaver resigned on June 9, 1968. On September 15, 1968, Rev. Baxter Prevatte, Jr. was called as pastor.

In March 1969, new choir robes were purchased for the Youth Choir. In July, a recreation program was started in the afternoons for children and youth. On October 9, 1969, the church suffered a fire bombing in the sanctuary, which did \$2,400. worth of damage. No one was ever charged with the crime.

1970-79

In April 1971, the first joint Easter Sunrise Service was held with Zion Christian Church.

The youth attended Camp Caswell, at Oak Island, NC, for the first time, that summer.

In April 1972, a note burning was held to celebrate the retirement of the debt on the sanctuary. A bus was purchased for church activities. The Senior Adult Choir was started, and the Constitution was revised. In August, the Youth Choir presented their first musical. In September, the Flat Springs Baptist Church Kindergarten opened led by Louise Atkins and attended by many children from the church and community. The kindergarten was in operation for approximately two years; and the Children's Church was begun that year.

In March 1973, it was agreed that the church would start a Bus Ministry. In June, the youth went to Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, in Black Mountain, NC, for the first time, that summer. Rev. Prevatte resigned on June 3, 1973. On December 16, 1973, Rev. Glenn Fasanella was called to become pastor.

During this period, the cemetery was surveyed and plotted. Rev. Fasanella resigned, effective December 31, 1974, following a call by the U.S. Army to report for active duty as a chaplain, during the Vietnam Conflict.

On January 26, 1975, Rev. Bewey Shaver, a former pastor, became pastor of Flat Springs once again. In May, the church voted to begin the construction of a new Educational Building & Fellowship Hall after a goal of \$45,000.00 was reached.

Construction was completed in 1977, along with the paving of the driveway, parking lot and tennis court. There were also renovations done to the Education Building. In August 1977, Marguerite Garner resigned as Music Director after many years of service to the Music Program.

In June 1978, the church voted to start a bus fund in order to purchase a more up-to-date bus than what we currently had. Also in June 1978, the church voted to hire a full-time Minister of Music and Youth. In September of that year, they called Leonard Harris, Jr. to serve in that capacity. Later that year, the church voted to sponsor a basketball team to compete in the Church League and in 1979 a softball team was added.

In January 1979, Doris Thurkill was hired as the part-time secretary for the church. And a sound system was purchased that year.

1980-89

In November 1980, the church celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the church. It was the largest attendance, on record, at that time.

In April 1981, the church voted to purchase a 1974 Chevrolet C-60, passenger bus for \$7,900. and give our old bus to Cumnock Baptist Church.

In 1982, the church continued to grow. In July, they voted to purchase a Rogers Organ, Model #725 BE for the sanctuary at a cost of \$12,935.00. In September, a motion was made to begin Children's Church for children ages 3-5 years of age. It was also decided to hook onto city water when it became available.

The Music Committee was allowed to purchase a new piano in March 1984, at a cost of \$2,493.92. The church gave their permission for the Girl Scouts (this included the sunshine girls, for one year, the brownies, and then one year of Girl Scouts for about 4 years. They were led by Ann Marks.

In 1985, the church voted to re-pave the road (driveway) entering the church property and to purchase another sound system. Leonard Harris was given permission to travel to Chicago with "The Singing Churchmen," for a music presentation. In December, James Bridges, the church treasurer, reported the "best year in giving" in the church's history.

In January 1986, the church presented Greg McGarvey his license to preach. Doors were installed on the baptistry, and louvers were installed over the speakers in the sanctuary. The church accepted two acres of land as a gift from George & Inez Riddle that adjoined the church property and bought an additional 2.21 acres from Mr. & Mrs. Riddle.

In 1987, the church accepted a gift of chimes, which are still enjoyed by residents of Deep River, who reside within a 2–3-mile radius of the church. Also in November, Rev. Shaver was granted permission to visit the Holy Land from November 18-27.

May 24, 1988, was designated “Lawrence & Doris Child Appreciation Day.”

On June 5, 1989, Darrell Watson, a lifelong member of Flat Springs, was ordained as a Minister of the Gospel. Also in June, the church voted to purchase a 1989 Goshen, 30-passenger bus with automatic transmission, air conditioning, and a diesel engine at a cost of \$49,000. The old bus was to be sold for \$2,500. - \$3,000.

1990-95

In October 1990, the church voted to buy an answering machine and a computer at a cost of \$5000.

In January 1991, a Long-Range Planning Committee was formed to look at the growing needs of the church. The church felt that it needed more space as it continued to grow. In May, Leonard Harris was granted a two-week leave of absence to go to Brazil with “The Singing Churchmen.” In August, the church voted to send Hubert Garner to Poland for three weeks as a missionary. On November 3, a motion was made to call Rev. Larry McClure as pastor to replace Rev. Shaver, who would be retiring on December 31.

On December 15, a recommendation was made to declare January 19, 1992, “Bewey and Vivian Shaver Day” in honor of their years of service to Flat Springs; the church named the Fellowship Hall, “The Bewey Shaver Fellowship Hall,” in his honor. The church had grown both physically and financially under Rev. Shaver’s pastorate.

In January 1993, the church voted to incorporate the church and a committee was formed to oversee it. A Nursing Home ministry was formed whereby the Sunday School classes took turns visiting Convalescent Care of Sanford, once a month, to sing hymns and have a devotion with any patients who cared to share in the service. In February 1993, the church Constitution was amended to conform to the Articles of Incorporation as a nonprofit corporation and a trust fund was set up for the cemetery. In April, the church purchased approximately 28 acres of land that adjoined the church property from the Alton Wicker family. In June, the church voted to dissolve the Flat Springs Baptist Church Association to the successor corporation of the church, Flat Springs Baptist Church, Inc. The church continued to grow and in August, a Long-Range Planning Committee was formed to focus on the future needs of the church. On October 31, 1993, a pot-luck dinner was held to recognize Leonard Harris’s 15 years of service to the church.

Rev. McClure read his letter of resignation to the church on January 2, 1994, which was to take effect on January 31. He felt it was time to move closer to his aging parents in order to care for them.

On March 20, the church called Rev. Woodrow Neal as interim pastor until a full-time pastor could be located.

In September, the deacons recommended that the church purchase a new computer. They felt it would help in the job of locating a new pastor. The church approved the purchase. In October, the church also approved building an office for the church secretary in the corner of the Fellowship Hall. (This was where the present-day History Room is located.)

In 1995, a recommendation was made to renovate the sanctuary – repaint the walls and ceiling, add breakers to wall switches, and add wall sconces. This was the first phase of the renovation. The second phase was to install new chandeliers, add cushions to the pews and install new carpet on the floor.

Rev. Gordon West was called as pastor on May 14.

In June, a storage building was built at the back of the parsonage property and a basketball goal was erected.

In July, the church voted to begin the first phase of the renovation of the sanctuary by refinishing the church pews and the pulpit furniture and adding cushions to the seats of the pews. Later that month, they voted to replace the hanging lights in the sanctuary with chandeliers which were donated to the church by various church members.

By August, the first service was held in the newly remodeled sanctuary and a new piano was donated to the church in memory of Clyde and Velna Johnson.

The College Away Ministry (later known as the College Students/Military Ministry) was begun this same year, to remember our college students and military personnel with letters, cards and small gifts throughout the academic school year.

1996-2000

In 1996, the church decided to hold Wednesday Night Suppers once a month with a different Sunday School class being responsible for the meal.

The church also voted to purchase new hymnals (Baptist Hymnal). Some of these were donated "In Memory of" various family members.

In October, it was voted to purchase six sets of Baptismal robes. An architect was hired that same year to direct the church through the appropriate steps with the Long-Range Building Plans.

From 1996-1998, Flat Springs Baptist Church had the most baptisms in the association. As the church steadily grew, the members voted in June 1997, to start a second service beginning at 8:30 A.M. and continue with the regular service at 11:00. Most Sundays the

church was at capacity, and they did not want to discourage any visitors from attending because of overcrowding issues.

In January 1998, a plan for the new addition to the church was presented. This was to be a new educational wing with a suite of offices and a kitchen (break area). In May, the Long-Range Planning Committee made another recommendation to the church for the new education wing to have classrooms to be used for children through 8 years of age, and a nursery was included. Renovations of some existing rooms, in the old education building, were to be used for office space. The cost was to be in the range of \$425,000. It was approved in June. Kathy Seal was hired as secretary for the church.

In October 1999, the contracts for the new Educational Building, were signed and work was begun.

2001-05

January 2001 was an exciting month as the new educational building was ready for use. Then on February 18, Rev. West read his letter of resignation to become effective on March 31. He had agreed to accept the position of Director of Missions with the Sandy Creek Association.

In May, Lewis Kelly was hired as part-time maintenance person.

Rev. William Mills was hired as interim minister on June 2. The church also started an Organ Fund as the old organ was beginning to have some problems. The church also decided to do repairs and upgrades to the parsonage, in July, at a cost of \$35,000.

On January 13, 2002, the church voted to call Rev. Todd Freeman as the new pastor. In December, the church voted to purchase new playground equipment at a cost of \$22,000. That same year, the Senior Adult Ministry (SAM) was started. The SAM ministry was started so that the church could minister to the seniors in the church and community, as well as to area nursing homes.

In February 2003, the church voted to bestow the title Minister Emeritus upon Rev. Bewey Shaver for his many years of exemplary service to Flat Springs Baptist Church and the community. The church also voted to name the church library, the Mrs. Ethel Hedgepeth Library in appreciation of her many years of service to the church library.

June brought troubled times to the church. A special called Business Meeting was held to explore why or why not Todd Freeman should not be terminated as pastor. It was decided that a vote would be taken by church members on August 2, but on July 29, Rev. Freeman resigned as pastor effective on August 2. The church accepted his resignation. A special called Business Meeting was held on August 3 to discuss Rev. Freeman's financial package. He was given full-pay for six months, unless he accepted another position; use of the church parsonage for three months; and be allowed to keep his lap

top computer. Some of the current members felt they needed/wanted to leave our membership after this.

In September, Rev. Del Parkerson was called as our interim pastor, and served us well, until we located a full-time pastor.

In November, the church voted to give Leonard Harris \$2000.00 for a trip to Belgium to attend Global Mission Project in June 2004. This was in recognition of his 25-years of service to the church.

In November, in a special called Business Meeting, the church voted to hire Dr. William Gary McCollough as our pastor.

2005-14

Dr. McCollough accepted the call and moved into the parsonage with his family in January 2005. He graduated from Southeastern Theological Seminary in December 1982 and received his Doctor of Ministry from Drew University, Madison, NJ, in October 1994.

In August 2005, Dr. McCollough and his wife purchased the parsonage and property from the church. Below is a compilation of Dr. McCollough's accomplishments throughout his 17 years as pastor of Flat Springs Baptist Church:

- 130 baptisms
- 132 funerals
- 211 members have joined the church

Ministries he had been involved in throughout his ministry:

- 3 Block Parties (with several hundred in attendance)
- 12 Wild Game Dinners (with 300+ attending, at times)
- Mission trips to Atlantic, NC; Gulfport, MS; Goldsboro, NC; Whitley City, KY (several times)
- Three **4:10 Projects** – 1 for a week & 2 were for a day or two
- Bread of Life meals (numerous times)
- Souper Bowl ministry (benefitted local Food Banks)
- 3 Grief Share support groups
- 3 Financial Peace classes
- At least 2 Red Cross Blood Drives per year (15 years)
- AWANA (5 years)
- Baptist Men's Breakfast (15 years). (Baptist Men had been meeting for 2 years prior, but not on a regular basis.)
- Added the position of full-time Associate Pastor of Family Ministry
- Ronald McDonald House

- Trunk or Treat
- Numerous Bibles studies

Worship additions:

- Maundy Thursday service (17 years)
- Easter Sunrise Service (5 years)
- Thanksgiving Service (We began when other churches, we had previously been holding services with, quit participating.)
- Children's sermons (approximately 12 years)
- Began livestream of our Worship and Wednesday Night services
- Advent Season: included Hanging of the Greens & lighting the Advent candles
- 1 Seder Meal
- 2 Moravian Love Feasts

Physical Additions/Renovations:

- Remodeled pulpit area and some pews in the Sanctuary
- Remodeled Fellowship Hall
- Purchased a new bus.
- Added an electronic sign in front of the church on Deep River Road
- Updated electronics in the Sanctuary
- Second update, including audiovisual capacity, in the Sanctuary

Children and Youth and Associate Pastors hired:

- Rev. Matt Riggsbee, Associate Pastor of Family Ministry, May 2011-December 2015
- Rev. Taylor Crumley, Associate Pastor of Family Ministry, December 2017- August 2002

Dr. McCollough faithfully visited his parishioners in area hospitals and rest homes, as well as in their homes; and if he knew of any residents of the community, he would include them, too.

2014-23

Leonard Harris retired in August 2014. On November 15, 2017, Flat Springs Baptist Church bestowed the honor of Minister of Music Emeritus

Jimmy Allen was hired as the part-time Minister of Music in November 2014. He received his undergraduate degree from Campbell University. Mr. Allen moved to Hendersonville, NC due to his wife receiving her pastorate and later he asked to reduce his hours because of the driving distance. Mr. Allen resigned in January 2022. While the church

advertised for a Music Minister, the Chancel choir had no director. Brad Boisvert, who was a member of the Chancel choir had some experience directing and had previously filled in for Mr. Harris and Mr. Allen. He agreed to step in, strictly on a volunteer basis. Gail Luck, the church's longtime pianist, and her husband Tom, who has been a Deacon for many years and a life-long member of the church, took on many of the clerical responsibilities of the choir.

Kathy Seal resigned, which was to become effective in August 2021, but agreed to stay another 2 weeks and train the new secretary. The church hired Rhonda Coggins as the new part-time secretary in August 2021 to replace Ms. Seal, but Ms. Coggins resigned in September, citing different expectations of the job requirements. Ms. Seal agreed to stay until someone could be hired.

In January 2022, Barbara Miles was hired as the part-time secretary. Ms. Seal was finally able to retire after Ms. Miles' 2-week training period was completed at the end of the month.

On March 26, 2003, the Education Building was named the W. Gary McCollough Educational Building and was dedicated "In honor of The Reverend W. Gary McCollough, Doctor of Ministry in grateful appreciation for his service to Flat Springs Baptist Church and to the citizens of our community."

He retired on March 31, 2003.

In the fall of 2022, Flat Springs Baptist church agreed to host Girl Scout Troop #761 led by Laura Conley.

Ella Lazenby was hired in April 2023 as Minister of Music. She graduated from Campbell University in December 2019 with a BA in Education. She served as choir director at Baptist Grove in Fuquay Varina, NC from 2019-22.

In May 2023, Rev. Allan Blume, who served Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Boone, NC for 16 years before becoming the Editor of the Biblical Recorder from 2011-2019, was called to lead Flat Springs Baptist Church through this transitional period until we can hire a full-time minister.

September 5, 2023