

Cedar Creek Bible Church History

Provided Courtesy of Mrs. Shirley Case

The history of Cedar Creek Bible Church began in 1940 when the Bunnell Methodist and Hickory Corners Methodist churches decided to join together. Shortly after that, some of the families from the Bunnell Church in the Cedar Creek area began to hold meetings at the home of Will and Ethel Gurd, eventually deciding to separate from the Methodist Church and hold their own church services in the Doud School (located on the corner of Cedar Creek Road and Cloverdale Road). In 1945, Ben Hescott was the first pastor at the Doud School, which had a congregation of about 30 people. Pastor Hescott was followed by Pastors Don Nichols, Harold Hoppe, and Elmer Deal.

When the Cedar Creek and Delton schools consolidated, services were moved to the Cedar Creek School.¹ Shortly afterwards, it was purchased from the Delton School for \$400. Pastor Elmer Deal became the first pastor of Cedar Creek Bible Church, as it is known today. In 1947 (or 1949?), the school was moved 75 feet south of its previous location to a different plot, where a basement was built under it. In 1949 an addition was built onto the south side of the building (doubling it in size), and the original building was remodeled in 1950. Later, the land where the school had originally sat was deeded to CCBC.

In September 1954, Pastor Deal decided to step aside; and his son, Paul Deal, became the new pastor in 1955. In October 1958, a 24x36-foot addition was started at CCBC, which nearly doubled the capacity of the church (whose attendance at times reached 190). The basement was completed and the shell of the ground floor roofed over before winter's severe weather stopped the work. The project was completed by Christmas, 1959. The sanctuary pews were changed to face the south wall of the addition. The old United Brethren Church in Cedar Creek, which was located just north of CCBC, had been built in 1875 and was being used for a community hall when it was sold to CCBC for \$1. Around 1963 it was torn down, and the materials were used to build a church parsonage. Additionally, the CCBC belfry was constructed out of fieldstone about that time. Pastor Paul Deal served until June 7, 1964, when he was called to a different church. During his pastorate, a constitution and by-laws were formed.

In June, 1964, Donald Tack began to serve as interim pastor; and in October of that year he became the official pastor of CCBC. His family was the first to live in the new parsonage. The back of the church auditorium was remodeled in 1966, making two coatrooms. Pastor Tack left this pastorate on June 26, 1967 to attend Bryan College in TN.

On July 5, 1967, Pastor Samuel Wegner and his family came from Leesburg, PA to assume the pastorate of CCBC. During his stay, a new garage was built on the church parking lot south of the parsonage (fall of 1967). In September, 1970, Pastor Wegner and his family left to pastor a church in South Carolina.

On September 6, 1970, Pastor Brent Branham (along with his wife, Lois, and children, Talitha and Jared) accepted the call to the pastorate of CCBC and moved from Beckley, WV. In 1973, a new auditorium was built; and in 1974 the garage was moved next to the parsonage. Also, new pews and carpeting were purchased for the auditorium.

In the early spring of 1976, CCBC purchased the former Hickory Corners Methodist Church and renamed it Hickory Corners Bible Church, thus establishing a daughter church. The Hickory Corners Bible Church became independent in November 1979.

¹ As far as we can determine the school was built somewhere between 1860 and 1888. The exact date was lost in a fire, but they do know that Adda Campbell taught school in 1888.

In 1976 a ball diamond was built on the east side of the church. A Sunday School wing was added to the east side of the church in 1978, and a new portico on the front in 1980. In 1981 the old parking lot was landscaped and seeded; and, due to chronic water leakage in the basement, drains and gutters were added.

Cedar Creek Christian School was established as a ministry of CCBC in 1982. The 1983 Harvest Festival provided the funds for a playground near the northeast parking area. Also in 1983, the garage next to the parsonage was moved for the third time to a location northeast of the playground where it now houses the lawn equipment. A new garage was built onto the parsonage. Ceiling fans were installed in the main auditorium and a fire alarm system in the basement. The parking lot on the south side of the church was paved in 1984. The lot adjacent to the parsonage was purchased from Elwin Lammers. The 1984 Harvest Festival provided funds to purchase a new sound system.

A new line fence was installed on the north property line and part of the parking lot was paved and the kitchen area had major remodeling. A new well was installed at the church parsonage in the summer of 1987. Building plans for a new addition, housing a sanctuary upstairs and a fellowship hall and kitchen in the basement, on the east side of the church were drawn up in 1987. The church membership faithfully prayed, worked and gave of their financial resources, and the new debt-free addition, as well as a remodeled office wing, were officially dedicated to the Lord's work on Sunday, May 21, 1995. By this time the ministry served upwards of 300 people.

On January 19, 1996, Robert Norton was ordained at CCBC. He served as Associate Pastor on a part-time basis until August 1996, when he (along with his wife, Annette, and children, Nichole, Joseph, and Zachary) accepted the full-time position of Associate Pastor at CCBC. Pastor Norton continues to minister as Associate Pastor as well as overseeing the Cedar Creek Christian School.

In 1996, a new nursery was erected upstairs and classrooms were added in the old sanctuary, thereby completing the Christian Education Wing. In 1999 Pastor Branham built his own home on Dowling Road and the parsonage was torn down, making the parking lot much larger. The ball field and the lower parking lot were expanded. Also, at that time, the asbestos was removed from the original church building. In 2000, the ball field was completed and a fence installed. In 2001, two new portable unit vacuums were purchased. In 2002, a new sign and three flag poles were installed. The north parking lot was redesigned and paved, landscaping and flower beds completed, enhancing the entrance to CCBC.

In 2002 a new sign, as well as three flag poles were installed on the west side of the church. Also, the north parking lot was redesigned and paved. In 2006 new carpeting was installed in the fellowship hall. Also in 2006, the church library was established. In 2009, a new Geo Thermal furnace was installed in the church, and the roof was replaced on the old part of the church. Also, a Welcome Kiosk Center was installed in the foyer to make church material more available.

On September 19, 2010, Pastor Branham and Lois celebrated 40 years of ministry at CCBC. In 2014, an elevator was installed in the church foyer. Also in 2014 Pastor and Lois celebrated their 50th anniversary with the church family. On October 31, 2014 Pastor Branham retired as pastor of CCBC and he and Lois moved up North.

In 2015, a committee was formed to search for another pastor. On June 26, 2016, Ethan Holmes was recommended by the Search Committee for the position of Associate Pastor at CCBC. A vote was taken and overwhelmingly passed. Mr. Holmes accepted the call and will be available for service August 31, 2016 alongside Pastor Norton.

Shirley Case, 2016