

Oakwoods Baptist Church 2008-2009

Oakwoods Baptist Church continued its ever growing and expanding ministries during the 2008 and 2009 church year.

Oakwoods Baptist Church continued with its commitment of reaching souls and church growth. Seventeen people were baptized as a public statement of faith and one by a statement of faith. Seventeen others joined Oakwoods by letter for a total of 35 new members.

Mack and Gracetene Johnson retired as church custodians after 23 years of service to Oakwoods Baptist Church. A special service and church wide fellowship meal was held in their honor on August 31, 2008. A newspaper article from the Wilkes Journal-Patriot highlighted their service to the church (attached).

Eddie Tharpe was ordained as a minister on Sunday, September 7, 2008 at Oakwoods Baptist Church during a 6:00 pm service. Mr. Julius Blevins delivered the charge to the church and the Rev. Robert Duncan delivered the charge to the candidate. Liberty Baptist Church called the Rev. Tharpe to serve as their pastor.

A deacon election for the 2009-2010 church year was held on August 9, 2009. Keith Miller, Donald Faw and Kenny Owens, all of whom are ordained deacons, were selected to fill the three open seats.

Special services were held at different times during the year. The Rev. Sherrill Welborn conducted fall revival services September 21 through September 24, 2008. The Rev. Tom Wagoner conducted spring revival services March 15 through March 19, 2009. An Easter Sunrise service was held on Easter morning in the old cemetery atop the hill behind the church. A fellowship breakfast followed in the fellowship hall.

Only one staff change occurred during the church year. Diane Johnson was hired on December 1, 2008 to fill the vacant maintenance/custodial technician position.

Oakwoods Baptist Church continues to support a number of projects of the Christian cause. One of the newer ones is Foothills Bible College. The Rev. Robert Duncan was elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Foothills Bible College. Kevin Brown, Missions Director at Oakwoods, organized volunteers to remodel, paint and repair the building housing Foothills Bible College. The building is on Winston Street in Wilkesboro and formerly housed Wilkes Central High School and Woodward Junior High.

One of the ever growing and important outreach of Oakwoods Baptist Church is the missions program. Numerous mission functions and trips occurred this church year. Members of Oakwoods Baptist participated in events with Samaritans Purse, the Women's Prison Ministry and several Chicken Ques to fund mission projects. The Church also participated in projects for Hope Ministries and took a church wide trip to Greensboro for Focus on the Family Prodigals on November 15, 2008.

A medical trip to Honduras was taken in the fall of 2008. Also Rev. Robert Duncan and Charles Billings traveled to Brazil during the summer of 2009. This trip is always a highlight of the mission work for Pastor Robert.

Several trips to West Virginia were held in conjunction with the Reverend Dean Crane ministries. In August 2009 church members traveled for a bible school in Rhodell, West Va. There were also trips and toy drives to Mexico with John Strong ministries.

Oakwoods Baptist Church, after much prayer and consideration, chose to withdraw from participation in the Angel Food Ministries Program. Unforeseen and unpredictable circumstances dictated this course of action. John L. Jones did an exhaustive amount of work in the direction of this program.

Sadly, four members of Oakwoods Baptist Church died during the year. They were: Virgil Adams, September 17, 2008; David Johnson, November 4, 2008; Bernie Call, May 3, 2009 and Steve Edwards, July 1, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil and Linda Johnson Revis
Ruby S. Chambers

Longtime Members Honored For Service

Mack and Gracetene Johnson were honored at a covered dish dinner and service at Oakwoods Baptist Church on August 31, 2008. Mack, 88 and Gracetene, 85 joined Oakwoods Baptist Church in 1947 and are the longest serving members of the church. Mack has had a remarkable attendance record having missed only three or four services in the last 30 years.

Reverend Robert Duncan officiated during the service and spoke fondly of Mack and Gracetene during his remarks. He reminded those in attendance of Mack and Gracetene's willingness to help others in the time of need during the course of their lives, their dedication to Oakwoods Baptist Church and the Christian example of how they lived their lives. Others in attendance also spoke and praised Mack and Gracetene.

Mack and Gracetene became the custodians of Oakwoods Baptist Church in April of 1985 and served in this capacity for 23 years. Living next door to the church added some extra demands on them such as unlocking the church for those who had forgotten their keys, turning off the lights at all hours for those who forgot, cleaning up after all the functions in the fellowship hall and the extra cleaning days due to special services but they considered it a privilege and enjoyed every moment. Most regular cleaning days would find them going about their routine before most arose for the day. After Gracetene's health began to fail and Mack grew older they decided to retire at the end of the church year on August 31, 2008. Reverend Robert Duncan said he would miss Mack running the baptismal water because "he could get the amount and temperature just perfect".

Mack and Gracetene met in the early forties and were married on May 4, 1945 while Mack was still in the Army. Mack served his country in World War II and participated in some of the most famous battles in the European Theater. He landed on Omaha Beach a few days after the initial D-Day landing and participated in the Battle of the Bulge, the Hurricane Forest and many others while marching on into Germany. Upon his return to Wilkes he and Gracetene made a life together that is still strong today. Mack was a poultry and cattle farmer and Gracetene was a homemaker. Gracetene is well known for her skill in the kitchen and turning out delicious meals.

Mack and Gracetene had four children, one of which died at birth. The others are Linda Johnson Revis and her husband Phil, Bruce Johnson and his wife Lorna, and the late Wayne Johnson and his wife Judy. They have five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Mack and Gracetene credit the Lord Jesus Christ for the many life blessings and for giving them strength to do and accomplish all they have.