

UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH 2012 FAMILY STORIES

The current families of Unity were asked the question, “What brought you to Unity Baptist Church?” Not all of the families of Unity in 2012 are included, but please enjoy the ones that are here!

A

Tom and Carol Abbey

When Tom and I married, he chose to attend my home church. For many years we were active members. The time came that we felt that the Lord was leading us to a new church. It was hard for me to imagine that we should be leaving Westwood Enterprise Baptist Church, because I had attended there for over 40 years. While we were doing our search to find the one that we felt the Lord was leading us to be a member, we visited five or six different churches. Because I was a kindergarten teacher at Rose Hill Christian School, I became acquainted with some of the students, their parents, and co-workers who attended Unity Baptist Church. I was favorably impressed with what I saw in their lives. It was a little difficult to convince Tom that we should consider visiting Unity, because he thought that it was a big, city church where the people would feel high and mighty. However, he was surprised when we visited. As soon as we set foot on the premises, we felt welcome and right at home. We have been attending Unity for almost nine years now, and we love it.

Heather Adkins

I came to Unity because I was dating Manny Pittore, and his family invited me to come to Unity with them in March of 2011. The very first time I came here I already felt like I belonged because everyone was so welcoming and nice.

Steve and Amy Alley

I've been asked to write how I was led to Unity. To begin this story, I must go back several years.

To the best of my recollection from what I've been told, my grandparents Norman "Red" and Virginia Lanthorne were the beginning of four generations to start attending Unity Baptist Church. It was the year 1937 and my grandparents had a baby boy named, George Allen Lanthorne. Allen became ill and died at the age of 7 months.

A man from the church, Mr. Orville Felty came to visit with them and invited my grandparents to church. He was a compassionate man and even

offered them a burial plot to bury their infant son. The families would later grow to become very close friends.

From that time forward, Red and Virginia Lanthorne started attending Unity Baptist Church. My grandmother would tell the story years later that God had taken away her excuse not to attend church. She never became bitter and the two of them became members at Unity until the days of their homegoing.

Red and Virginia were very active members at Unity. My grandmother was president of WMU and a Sunday school teacher for more than 50 years. Red was a deacon, choir member, RA's leader and church treasurer for many years. They both were involved in Prime Timers as well.

They had two additional children, Virginia "Jenny" Lee Lanthorne and Rodney Norman Lanthorne. Both were raised at Unity and became Christians; Jenny being baptized by Brother L. H. Tipton and Rod by Brother C. B. Coots.

Jenny Lanthorne went away to college and returned to Ashland and married the late Wendell Jack Walter. They were married on June 15, 1962 by the Reverend Ira MacMillan. They were the first couple he married at Unity. He was affectionately known to his congregation as Brother Mac. The Lanthorne/Walter families have very fond memories of Brother Mac.

This is ultimately where my story begins. Jack and Jenny Walter had four children. Three boys: Wendell Jeffrey Walter, Bruce Edward Walter and Patrick Scott Walter. Then came a baby girl (me,) Amy Leigh Walter.

My dad and my three brothers were all saved and baptized by Brother Mac. I was also saved and baptized at Unity. Brother Harold Cathey was the preacher at the time.

My husband, Stephen Franklin Alley and I were married at Unity by the current pastor, Dr. Floyd A. Paris. Steve transferred his membership to Unity in 1998.

We have been blessed with three healthy, beautiful boys; Stephen Luke Alley, Wendell Jack (named after my dad,) and Landon Eli Alley.

Luke and Jack have both made professions of faith and have followed in believer's baptism.

So back to the question, What led me to Unity? I have been attending Unity Baptist Church 9 months prior to my birth.

I have so many memories of several Godly saints that have gone on before me. But like my grandparents that made no excuses and took their children to church and led by example, my parents did the same for me. Now as I am raising my boys, I hope to instill in them as my parents and grandparents have done for me. My children quite possibly wouldn't have been afforded the opportunity to be raised in a Christian home if not for them.

Who knows, maybe one day there will be a fifth generation of my family attending Unity Baptist?

Happy 175th Anniversary Unity Baptist Church!

Amy Leigh Walter Alley

Evan and Leslie Allison

We moved to Ashland in September of 2004 from Cincinnati. I had been to Unity many times to watch Mary Faye and Sarah in different plays and The Living Christmas Tree. I knew we would be welcomed there. We started attending Unity thinking that at least it would be a place to start our search for a church home. We were hooked from the start! We love our church home and have been so blessed to be a part of such a wonderful group.

Gary and Delilah Arthur

I moved to South Ashland in 1942 when I was nine years old and starting in the third grade at Oakview School. Most of the kids in my neighborhood went to Unity. Kids like, Kenley and Clifford Dobyns, Eddie and Jim McGlone, Shirly and Charles Tipton, who were Bro. L. H. Tipton's boys. As I recall Brother Tipton served as a Chaplain in the Army during WW II. Asst. Pastor Sherman Woods filled in while he was gone.

Some of my earliest memories of Unity Baptist Church were the two weeks of Vacation Bible School each summer. We sang, played games, recited bible verses, and had a lot of fun. I especially liked getting to do wood working. I can remember making foot scrapers, book ends, and tie racks, one in the shape of a fish which I painted red and kept for many years.

Somehow I still have most of the certificates they gave us for attending bible school, many are signed by the parents of current Unity members.

Another memory was of attending the RA meetings at Mr. and Mrs. Orville Felty's house on Crooks Street. Along with the good times we had, I can remember admiring the full size gold football that Ralph Felty, their son, had received when he played for Duke in the Rose Bowl. Ralph was in the marines at that time.

Unity always had good Sunday School and youth programs which had a great influence on many young lives in the South Ashland area. In May of 1948, I was baptized during a revival held by Bro. W. K. Woods. There were several baptized at that time and many are still attending Unity.

I am thankful for the part that Unity Baptist Church has played in the early spiritual life of our family and for the loving care and guidance that my lovely wife Delilah has given to our children, Gary Jr., Jennifer, David, and Michael, all who became members of Unity Baptist Church and were baptized by Bro. Ira McMillen Jr.

B

Carl and Wandaleen Bailey

Wanda had been going to Unity for several years. She was married to Jim Walters, and Jim passed away. I (Carl) had attended Unity in the past. Carl's wife died, and when he met Wandaleen (Rusty), they married. He was going to Rose Hill at that time, and when they married, he joined Wandaleen at Unity.

Dr. Ralph and Linda Beadle

We started attending Unity Baptist Church when facing some major challenges in our lives. Pastor Floyd and Gene Ray were unwavering in their support and encouragement through that challenge. You do not forget that!

We enjoy attending because Pastor Floyd takes the scripture and puts it into a language that we can understand and apply to our daily lives. He brings the Bible alive!

The vibrant music program conducted by Pastor Sam creates a great worshipful atmosphere. We appreciate that! We continue to attend because we feel supported, welcomed by its members, and encouraged by the growth and activities of the youth programs led by Pastor Brad. We see our grandsons benefiting from the many youth programs supported and conducted by Unity Baptist Church.

Sam and Michele Beason

Our daughter, Allie, is who actually brought us to Unity. She was in the first grade. We came to see The Living Christmas Tree, and we loved it! We had never seen anything like it. When we came to visit Unity, we went to Glen Puzey's Sunday School class, and we really liked it. We kept visiting. Allie began to go to Awana. I had been teaching Awana in our former church, and I knew how good the program was. It was important to us to have a church that was very active and had activities for all ages. Unity had those activities. We came to Unity in 2001 and to us, this is home.

Jason and Misha Bennett

I, Jason, was brought to Unity by my parents, Jim and Janice Bennett. I grew up at Unity, back and forth, because Dad was transferred to Buffalo, New York for five to six years, and then we moved back to Ashland and to Unity Baptist Church. I was saved at an early age. I remember being baptized by Reverend Charles Davis in 1986. It was a special memory, for sure. My brother, Scott, and I were being baptized at the same time. Scott went first, then me. Right before I went under, Brother Davis was pulling me back, and I could see Scott out of the corner of my eye, swimming laps! I believe he was doing Olympic quality breaststrokes!

I met Misha while in high school at Boyd County High School. We dated for five years. Misha became a Christian while we were dating, and she joined Unity Baptist. We moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1997. At that time, we moved our membership to Stewart Heights Baptist Church. We were there for five years, and then came back to Ashland in 2002, with a "litter of kids." (That would be a litter of two, Geoffrey and Sydney!)

Jim and Janis Bennett

We came to Unity because of the invitation of Bill and Betty White. Janis started working with Betty in 1972. When we came, we went to the Couple's Class over in the old house that used to be where the Mission House is now. Bill and Pat Pope were in that class, and we became good friends. We moved to New York for five years, and then we moved back to Ashland. Carl and Omera Sparks lived down the street from us, along with Ted and Jo Blanton. Claude Messinger and Fred Boggs were the first to visit us. We made our Profession of Faith here at Unity in 1974. I remember working with Pat Conley in the Bus Ministry. We made Unity our home, and we've been here ever since!

Joey and Brandy Bevins

Joey and I joined Unity a few years back. As a child, I grew up at Unity and loved what they had to offer. When we started looking for a church, Unity was on the top of our list. When we began attending the first few times out, the girls fell in love with all the programs they offered and we also enjoyed what was offered for the adults. It is a blessing to see your children excited to go to church and see them grow in the Lord.

Tony and Amy Blackenbeckly

We were looking for a church. Both my husband and I had been raised in Christian homes, but we had never found a home church as a family. We had two young children, and I wanted to raise them in a Christ-loving home, supported by a home church. I knew about Unity because Pastor Floyd Paris was a patient of my father. He was also a friend because when my father had a brain tumor, Pastor Floyd and Gene Ray sat with my mother and our family while my father was in surgery. We were not members of the church, but Pastor Floyd and Gene Ray sat with us for hours and prayed with us. It was a great comfort to have them there, and to have never met them before that day. After that, I visited Unity several times and felt God's love right away. Pastor Floyd said, "If this is where God wants you, this is where we want you." I felt at home and we then started coming as a family. I loved the programs offered for the children, and knew I wanted my children raised here as well. I became more involved with

different programs and got to know more people. The first Judgment House, I showed up to help one evening. I went through the program and rededicated my life to Christ. I was then asked if I wanted to help in the Hell scene. It was an interesting night, for sure, as I hardly knew anyone, and I was way out of my comfort zone. I did survive “Hell” that night, and came back for more. I then joined the Awana leadership, and joined the church as a member. I had been saved, but had never been baptized. Pastor Floyd and his wife, Penne, came to my house one evening and talked with me and prayed with me. I knew I wanted to be an example for my children and needed to walk what I was talking when I explained God’s love to them. I am very happy to say that I, my husband and oldest son have now been baptized here, and my youngest son is saved. The love and support from all the people at Unity has made Unity our home. The ministries available here are too numerous to count. If someone is not involved in at least one, they are missing out on so much. It is the chance to share God’s love. I feel so blessed to be a part of this church and raise my children here. I feel like I am home.

Fred and Jeanine Bledsoe

We had just moved to Ashland and we were looking for a church. We went to two other churches in the community, but didn’t like the one and didn’t even go into the second one because no one was carrying their Bible. We turned around and went home and turned on the TV. There was the Unity broadcast. We came to Unity three weeks later after watching the broadcast for two weeks.

Fred and Alva Boggs

I, Alva, came to Unity Baptist Church in 1953. I was a student of ECU (formerly Eastern College). At that time students were encouraged to go under the watch care of a local church. I was under the watch care of First Baptist Church in Richmond, Kentucky. When I came home for the summer, my parents (Taylor and Eliza Fraley) had joined UBC. I then moved my letter to Unity.

Fred and I were married at Unity on February 20, 1954, by Reverend C.B. Coots. Because Rev. Coots had ministered to us as newlyweds, Fred

joined Unity Baptist Church in the summer of 1954. We have been active since that time and have held many positions in the ministries of the church.

We have raised our family in the church and feel that Unity has more than met the needs of our children and grandchildren.

Mike Bolner

I went to Unity back in the 90's, but when Brother Cathey left, I lost interest. When my father-in-law passed away, the new preacher from Unity preached the funeral. He came up and talked to me afterwards and I remember he didn't talk to me about God or church, he talked to me about deer hunting! I liked that. He told me about a drama that his church was having called Judgment House. He knew I was a firefighter, and asked me if I could help them out some. I thought about it and decided I would. Steve Alley was also helping and I knew him through the fire service, so I came and joined in. On the third night, the preacher came to our Judgment House scene and I asked him what the rest of the play was like. He said, "You mean you haven't been though?" I said, "No." He said he would see to it that I got to go through the entire program. The next night, I went with a group. As I went through the drama, I felt myself being drawn into it like I was really living it out. It became more powerful and moving as I went from scene to scene. I remember there were three teenage girls in my group. Through the first three scenes, they were laughing and cutting up, but after the fire scene, they were quiet. I remember watching the transformation in the faces and the attitudes of these kids, and how this drama was affecting them. By the time we walked out of the hospital scene, these girls were crying and so was I. This was really working on me. When we got to the end of the drama, I knew in my heart that something was missing in my life. I accepted Christ that night, July 19, 2000, and it all happened because of a preacher who didn't try to shove religion down my throat like so many had done before, but just asked me how the hunting was up here. He had no idea that I wasn't saved, because he told me that afterward. He just let God use him in the way he needed to, to reach someone who was lost. That was twelve years ago and I'm still going to that church and I'm still listening to that preacher who likes to deer hunt! Thanks, Brother Floyd.

Earl and Sue Borders

(Sue) My mom and dad, Cora and Russell Scaggs, belonged to Unity. We went here from the time I was born until I was in the Second Grade. We moved away from Ashland, and then came back, and we went downtown to church for a while. When Earl and I bought a home on Blackburn Avenue, we came back to Unity. Not only was it closer to where we lived but we wanted our kids, Earl Jr. (Rick), Marcia, Scott and Angela to come here to church.

Sandra Brammell and Bill and Diana Taylor

We came to Unity because of our grandson and son, BJ Brammell. We were going to a church that was small. They had no Youth Group, and we really wanted that for BJ. Cindy, Greg and Josh Jackson lived nearby. BJ and Josh were good friends. Josh told BJ about Unity's Youth Group and invited him to his Sunday School class, taught by Betty White. We came, and we liked it. We are related to Jenny Walter and her family. My maiden name is Walters. We add an "s" to the name, but Jenny's family does not. BJ grew up with the Youth here, and we've been here ever since.

Stephanie Burgess

I came to Unity at a very difficult time in my life. I was trying to find a place to worship. I knew Gene and Jane Forth, so I knew if I came to Unity, I would see some friendly faces, but I didn't want to talk to anyone! When I came, I usually came in late and left early. Gary Frizzell was the pastor at that time. One day as I left, Brother Gary met me at the back door. He looked at me and said, "Are you going to do this forever?" He and his wife, Kay, helped me so much! They were a big encouragement to me. At that time, Diane Chaffin was at Unity, and they told Diane about me and encouraged her to reach out to me. Diane introduced herself to me, and we became great friends. That's how I got here. The Lord showed me that I didn't need to be afraid. Unity has been such a blessing to me. When Mike Rice was here, he was also a real encouragement. We were praying for a Sunday School class that would minister to Singles. One day, Mike suggested that I start the class and teach it. I did. Those who were in that

class have gone down other pathways now, some getting married or moving away.

My good friend, Cristal Miller, is an outshot of Diane. Diane knew Cristal, and she and I visited her to invite her to the Singles Sunday School class. That is how Cristal came to Unity. Diane and Cristal got to be good friends. Of course, Diane died not too long after that, and it was a horrible time. Because of the friendship of Diane and Cristal, it was a comfort to me to have her as a friend because she knew Diane and we shared in the grief of losing such a wonderful friend. I think the Lord sent Cristal to Unity so that I wouldn't lose my mind!

C

Fred and Jerri Cassidy

We first started coming to Unity because of a friendship with Sam and Betty Rice. We didn't really know anything about the church, but Mark Maynard wrote an article about it, and mentioned JD Crum as someone who had a part in the history of the church. JD Crum is my great-great grandfather.

When Brother Cathey was at Unity, he gave us a copy of a Greenup County Association book that mentioned JD Crum, and it had his picture in it. It was the first time that I'd ever seen my great-great grandfather!

Larry and Beverly Carr

Beverly: My parents, Carl and Ann Oliver, with my brother Ken and I, came to Unity in 1964 to visit when I was eleven years old. We came because of the witness of our next door neighbors, Ishmael and Jerri Sturgill, who were members of Unity at that time. We were good friends with the Sturgills, but my mom, Ann Oliver, was very close to Jerri Sturgill. They would sit on our shaded front porch and talk and visit for hours. During those talks, Jerri invited my mom to Unity. None of our family was saved at the time. Jerri shared the story of salvation with my mother, and my mother was very interested in what she had to say. We did visit Unity, and we kept coming. My mother was the first one who was saved in our family. My dad, Carl Oliver, was saved shortly after that. Later, I joined the church, and

a bit later, my brother, Ken, was saved. Brother Ira McMillen, Jr. was the pastor at the time that we came to Unity, and he baptized all of us. I remember attending Sunday school in the “Junior Department” with Goldie Clevenger as my first Sunday School teacher, and learning for the first time about Jesus. A few years later, Carol Wright led our class of girls. She was a wonderful teacher, and moved up with us as we grew. I also remember helping Mrs. Menifee in Vacation Bible School for several years. We took VBS to Unity’s 45th Street Mission, to help them with reaching their community. Youth group was a wonderful experience, with Joyce and Larry Fletcher. I began singing in the “Adult Choir” when I was in the eighth grade, under Mr. Ray Mayer. I’ve been there ever since then, singing under the direction of Jerry Douglas, Ken Johnson, Ron Joyce, Gary Carrier, Dean Olive, Mike Daniel, Ty Lovette, and Sam Norrod. Choir was always a special time. We learned and sang songs that taught us much about the Lord. Singing in both choirs helped me grow as a Christian. I worked a lot with Alice Welch, our church organist, providing music for wedding and funerals. She was a wonderful influence in my life.

Even though I had “joined the church” when I was twelve years old, I began to doubt my salvation. I saw the movie, “The Greatest Story Ever Told,” and it had a great impact on my life. I remember understanding at that time, what Jesus had truly done for me. Years later, during a revival service, I realized that I was not truly saved. It was at that time that I gave my heart fully to the Lord, and was baptized the second time, in believer’s baptism, by Harold Cathey.

A few years later, in 1979, Bob and Lucille Carr joined Unity. They had told Brother Harold Cathey of their son, Larry, who was unsaved at the time. Brother Cathey told me about this man, and that he thought he had found “the man” for me. The first thing I asked him was whether or not this man was a Christian. Brother Cathey admitted that he was not. I looked at him, and said, “How many sermons have I sat under with you preaching about not being unequally yoked?” He answered and said, “Alright, I’ll work on that, and then you can go after him!” I smiled, shook my head and walked away.

The next Tuesday night, which was visitation night, my mother received a call from Brother Cathey. When she later relayed his message to me, she said, “Brother Cathey called and left you a message. He said that ‘he has done his part, and now it’s up to you to do the rest.’ What is he

talking about?” Remembering the conversation that I had with Brother Cathey earlier, I looked at my mom and said, “I bet Larry Carr was saved tonight.” Sure enough, he was and he joined Unity the next Sunday and was baptized on December 2, 1979. I remember when he walked down the aisle that Sunday morning. As I watched from the choir, he reminded me of Hoss Cartwright, from the TV show, Bonanza! As I got to know him, he turned out to have the strong, kind, generous and gentle personality that Hoss Cartwright displayed. A year later, Brother Cathey married Larry Carr and me. Larry often teases Harold Cathey and says, “Well, you led me to the Lord, baptized me, and married me. Two of the three weren’t bad!” Our children, Bobby and Bethany, were both saved under the preaching of Gary Frizzell, and were baptized by him.

I miss the “Old Building” as we called it—the first church that was built on 29th Street. When it was torn down, a few things were saved from it, and put in the building beside the parking lot at that time. Members of our congregation were invited to come and look through the things and take any mementos that they wanted to keep. I took one of the green stained glass windows to keep as a treasured memento. At the time, some updating was done to the Sunday school classrooms below the new auditorium. The old blackboards, trimmed with cherry wood frames were taken down and replaced with new white wipe-off boards. When I first started teaching Sunday school, those cherry-framed boards were the blackboards that I used. The old blackboards were in the mission house that day for the taking, and I took one. It hangs in my house today as a treasured memory.

How I love Unity Baptist Church! I praise the Lord for what it has meant to our family through the years!

Gene and Wanda Carter

We attended a smaller church before we came to Unity. I was very happy there, but my children were not. When they went to Sunday school, they would often be the only one in their class. They asked to go to Unity because all of their friends went there. We did live closer to Unity, so we tried it. Larry and Joyce Fletcher were the youth leaders at that time, and my what a youth group they had! They were such a wonderful influence on our children, Keith, LeeAnn, Diana, Mindy, and Stacy. LeeAnn worked in the Bus Ministry with Pat Conley, and it was so good for her. The kids loved

going to church where they could be with their friends, but I just couldn't get used to it. Unity was just too big for me. So, we returned to the church that I grew up in, but we faced the same problems as before. The kids needed Unity. Gene and I prayed and prayed about it, and then in 1979, we just knew it was the right time to move our membership and join Unity. I just love my church!

Teresa Carter, Carolyn and Elizabeth

We were invited and first attended Unity Baptist Church in August of 1987. Upon entering the sanctuary, Kenley Dobyms and Wayne England gave us the most loving and warm welcome. We began attending regularly and in the spring of 1988 joined the church. Teresa had her letter transferred and Joe was baptized. Carolyn and Elizabeth were also baptized at Unity in the summer of 1997. Reflecting on the 25 years of attending this church, we feel so richly blessed to have had the leadership of wonderful pastors, Sunday school teachers and church leaders. We've also been blessed with so much love, support, encouragement and prayers from our church family. Throughout our journey in life and as Christians, Unity has helped us get through so many difficult times. We are incredibly thankful that God led us to Unity.

Lovell and Opal Caudill

When we first came to Unity, it was because of The Living Christmas Tree. We had some friends who invited us to go with their group, and so we did. When we saw it, we liked what we saw. The people were friendly. At that time, we had been looking for a church. Mike Rice was the Interim pastor when we joined, but eleven months before that, Brother Cathey told us about a class that Van Miller was going to teach, which would explain the doctrinal beliefs of the church. We attended that class, and we liked it. The first Sunday that we came was a Sunday morning service in 1992. I was surprised to see my cousin, Carl Oliver and his wife Ann. Then, I saw my cousin, A.J. Patton and his wife Maxie Dean. When we finally decided to make Unity our home, Brother Gary Frizzell baptized both Opal and me. Opal was the first person to be baptized by Brother Gary when he was at Unity, and I was the second.

Samantha Caudill

We had been trying out different churches. When we tried Unity, my boys insisted that this was the church for them! They refused to go anywhere else! So, here we are!

Jim and Julia Church

I've always attended Unity since I was a baby in the nursery. My husband has attended Unity since we started dating in 1971. We were both baptized by Brother Mac. Both my daughters were dedicated as babies at Unity and later were baptized here. Brother Cathey baptized Noel and Brother Gary baptized Tessa. All my grandchildren were dedicated at Unity – Logan, Christian, Elizabeth and Ruthie. Just recently Logan made known his decision to follow Christ at Unity. My memories would fill a book, but here are a few.

I REMEMBER

- ...As a child calling our pastor "Coots M'Noots." (Clinton Coots)
- ...NOT wanting to move into the "new building" when I was 4 or 5. I wanted to stay with Mrs. Graham in the 3 yr. old nursery.
- ...Singing in the children's choir with Ray Mayer directing. Ray directed all the choirs.
- ...Going to GA camp at Hudgen's Hill with my cousin Wanda. We decided to come home the 2nd day.
- ...being beat in Bible drills by Jimmy Halladay – over and over.
- ... "Tell it Like it Is"
- ...when Beverly Oliver sang her first solo. She was shaking.
- ...two week Vacation Bible Schools and the girls sewing while the boys did woodwork projects. I didn't like that one bit.
- ...my brothers told me they painted the picture in the baptistery in the old sanctuary - and I believed them!
- ...my father coming into the Training Union room and telling our teacher, John Thaxton, that we were late for church. He just pointed at his watch.
- ...sitting with Vickie Miller and smothering our laughter when Bro. Mac had difficulty getting one man under the water when baptizing him. We knew it was serious, but we were teenagers, what can I say?
- ...the people at Unity knowing Jim and my dating relationship by whether we sat together on Sunday mornings or sat on opposite sides of the church.

...begging our Sunday school teacher, Carol Wright, to promote with our class. She ended up teaching us for about 4 years.
...when Dessie Menefee took the GA's places in her car, she let me pick the radio station.
...Edrelle Harrison fixing us Rice Krispie treats when she taught the GA's.
...the looooong prayers Tom McCracken prayed.
...we always hoped Ray Cossett would lead the prayer in the Junior department Sunday School before we dismissed to our small classes because he prayed shorter prayers than Tom McCracken.
...we took it seriously when we filled out our reports in Sunday school – if you studied your lesson and brought your Bible you got credit for that on the report. And you certainly didn't fib about that because God knew if you studied your lesson!
I guess I am beginning to write a book and these are only childhood memories. I hope these spark some of your memories of Unity.
Julia Reynolds Church

Robert and Janet Church

We were without a pastor at Oakland Avenue Baptist Church in 1977. Larry Fletcher and Bob Carr visited us and invited us to Unity. We visited Unity, and Harold Cathey was preaching that morning. After hearing him preach, we couldn't wait to join the church! We joined then, in 1977. Both of our kids, Bryan and Ashley, were saved at Unity. Bryan was baptized by Brother Charles Davis, and Ashley was baptized by Brother Gary Frizell. I remember so many revivals that had such great preaching. Janet and I worked with the children and Janet also worked with the youth. I (Bob) went to Uganda with Brother Cathey on his first mission trip, and then went again ten years later to see the work that had been done. I had the pleasure of preaching at that church in Africa.

I've had the pleasure of serving the Lord as a Deacon since 1989, serving in the Bus Ministry with Brother Charles Davis, and working with Brother Gary Frizell. It was during Brother Frizzell's pastorate that I went to his office and told him that I had felt the call to preach God's Word. Shortly thereafter, I answered the call of Kirk Memorial Baptist Church in Grahn, Kentucky. I was there for eight years.

This church is just a big family! Bob Carr knew it would be a good church when he invited us to visit. We've been here ever since!

Ralph and Margie Clere

Ralph: I have gone to Unity Baptist Church all my life as my family goes back six generations on my Dad's side (Clere) and five generations on my Mother's side (Imes).

I was saved in 1948 at the age of ten. That year over 100 people were saved at Unity. Rev W.K. Wood preached the revival then and most were saved at that time. I have been under six preachers: Rev L.H. Tipton, Rev. C.B. Coots, Rev. Ira McMillen, Jr, Rev. Harold Cathey, Rev. Gary Frizzell, and Rev. Floyd Paris.

If I had to name the most faithful member it would be Mrs. Goldie Clevenger. She was always there, rain or shine. When Rev. J. Harold Smith came to Unity to preach a revival, his message, "God's Three Deadlines" was the best I've ever heard.

There have been some great people down through the years at Unity. I will never forget Mrs. Mable Felty, my R. A. teacher. She loved all us boys and taught us the Bible and always prayed for us. Curt and Alma Graham, what great workers in the church. Curt always took his vacation and worked with the boys in Bible School. Alma worked in the nursery and taught Sunday School. She was considered the best story teller around. There are so many I could name, like Glen Sparks, Lewis Waggoner, Maurice Barbour. Theron Hocker was one of the best choir leaders ever.

John and Becky Clere

I was born into Unity Baptist Church. I spent my early years in Sunday school at Unity and I was baptized on November 16, 1975 (my birthday) by Brother Harold Cathey. My father, Ralph Clere, tells me that I'm the seventh generation to attend Unity Baptist. Our ancestor, Ezekiel Clere, came from Ireland to America sometime in the 1820's. His son, Darius Clere, lived in Ashland and fought in the Civil War for the Union as a soldier in the 14th Kentucky Volunteers. Darius is buried in the Ashland Cemetery and there has been a Clere in Ashland ever since.

Pastor Floyd Paris married my wife, Becky and I at Unity and our family has attended and grown at Unity since. All three of our girls have been baptized at Unity. Megan was first and then both Julie and Mackenzie were baptized on the same day of Sept. 5, 2010.

Every Sunday, I sit in the same pew with my father, Ralph, and mother, Margie, and with my Aunt Betty and Uncle Bill VanHoose on the other side of me. I grew up sitting in the same section that I sit in every Sunday. I remember sitting here with my grandparents, Ken and Jean Clere, when I was just a child. Unity has been my home for my entire life and my family's home church long before me.

When I think of Unity, I think of friends, family, Brother Cathey, Brother Floyd and Pat Conley, who dedicated her life to the kids at Unity.

Steve and Debbie Cole

Debbie was pregnant with Quinn at the time we began looking for a different church to attend. Finding a church with a good children and youth program was important to us when looking for our new church since we would soon have a son in our lives to be responsible for. We attended several other churches in the area and, while all were good churches with good people, we came to love Unity and its people and felt this was the place of worship in which God would have us raise our child. As always, God did not disappoint. Debbie and I still fondly remember standing over Quinn's bassinet in our home with brother Cathey as he prayed a blessing for this newborn life. Following that, many good people at Unity helped care for, guide and raise that child into a young man with sound values and helped give him a solid spiritual foundation on which he continues to build his life. Debbie and I also had found in Unity a wonderful place to serve God and receive his word each week. The friends and fellowship have filled our lives with much joy.

O.A. Collins

Alma and I came to Unity right after we were married. We lived across the street from Harry and Joy Clark, and they invited us to come, and we did. Of course, we lived close enough to walk to church. I have so many wonderful memories of Unity. Alma and I had our three girls—Paula, Pam

and Pat. We are so proud of all of them! I was saved when I was eighteen years old, and I'm ninety-two now.

Herb Conley

My wife, Janice, was the reason I came to Unity Baptist Church. Janice grew up here at Unity. Her parents attended Unity. Janice was saved and baptized here. She taught Sunday school and always brought our kids with her. Janice always tried to get me to come to church, but I just didn't go.

Then, Brother Harold Cathey came to Unity. When I heard him preach, he was really something! I was saved in 1977, and I've been here ever since then. All of our boys, Greg, Shawn, and Jeff were saved here. I enjoyed going with Brother Cathey on visitation.

Unity Baptist Church has been a blessing to me and to my family.

Terry and Marie Cook

Marie: I had been visiting a few churches in the area for 3 months and had pretty much settled on one but was not quite sure if it was where God wanted me. I kept telling myself I should try Unity but kept putting it off because I did not know anyone who attended there. I had friends at each of the other churches I had been visiting. I finally decided to go on a Sunday morning in September 2010 and was delighted to see a couple I knew, Darrell and Sandy Tucker. That Sunday also happened to be the day of the annual church picnic. At Sandy's urging, I came back that afternoon for the picnic, and again the following Sunday. Everyone I came in contact with was very friendly and inviting. The third week I started attending Sunday school with Sandy, where I was delighted to see two ladies I knew from my band booster days. In December, still trying to get to know people and the church, I came for Soup and Caroling, thinking it would be just a nice time of fellowship at the church. When talk started about breaking up into groups to go caroling I thought about leaving and going home then Carol Abbey came over to me, introduced herself and invited me to go with her group which I did and had a wonderful time. In January 2011, I joined the choir, giving me a chance to serve again which I was dearly missing in my life, and a chance to get to know more people. Then, on a Sunday

morning in February 2011, Brother Floyd preached about being a part of the Family of God. God impressed upon me during that sermon that I needed to be more than just a regular attender; I needed be a part of the Unity Family. When the invitation started I went to Bro. Floyd and told him I needed to transfer my membership and join the family, which was gladly accepted by everyone there with a resounding "Amen!"

Terry: I came because Marie and I were dating. We had visited some churches, and decided that this was where the Lord was leading us.

Stephen Cooley

Before I was saved, I was a Satanist. I practiced Satanism, mainly to spite my mother. The time came when I was living on my own, and I realized that not all Christians were what I had thought they were, which was hypocritical. A friend of mine came to see me one night, and was surprised to see that I didn't have my "Satan stuff" out. I looked at him and said, "This Satanism stuff is getting old."

I was bored. I didn't have any furniture, and I really wanted to watch a movie. I decided to walk to where I could watch a movie. The route that I had to walk took me right in front of Unity. When I got to Unity, I saw that they were having some kind of service at the time. The Holy Spirit stopped me, and He invited me in! At first, I was uncertain. I wondered what would happen when I came in. I feared that if the pastor saw me walking in during the middle of a service, he would tell me to get out!

I did come in. It was on August 20, 2010. No one told me to leave, but they did lead me to the Lord that night, and I was saved!

Ray and Barbara Cossett

I came to Unity by way of my parents, when they brought me to the nursery as a baby. I was on the Cradle Roll. I have served my Lord as a Sunday school teacher and sang in the choir, and as a deacon. (Ray)

Lindsey and Vicki Cossett

I came to Unity on a Sunday night, during a Christmas program in December of 1977. I was saved during that service, and baptized the next

Sunday, which was on Christmas Eve. I can tell you that the water was cold!

Chris and Amy Compston

When I was eighteen years old, a friend and I were in Judgment House. We visited the church a few times but decided to continue going to our church in Greenup County. Nine years later, my husband and I were looking for a new church to join with our kids. I remembered how welcoming and sweet everyone was to me when I was an outsider helping with Judgment House. I told my husband that we need to go there. Our first Sunday went searching for our new church home, we came to Unity. Everyone, still nine years later, was so welcoming and sweet. We have been here ever since.

Jean Copley

I was looking for a church, and my daughter's friend, Hope Holland, invited us to visit Unity. We did, and we were very happy. Brother Cathey was the preacher at that time, and we just loved him! We also loved the people here at Unity. I've been here ever since!

Russ and Mori Crawford

When I am asked how long I have been at Unity, I jokingly answer, "Since 9 months before I was born." My parents, Fred and Alva Boggs, are long-standing members of Unity. Except for the few years I lived in Louisville, Unity Baptist has been my only church home, and the Unity family - my extended family. Trying to put into words the part Unity has played in who I have become today has proven to be a challenge. Unity is the place of my childhood, my salvation, my baptism, my wedding. It is the place where I was taught and trained as a child, and where I have the privilege of serving today. It is the church where my children are forming their childhood memories -- where they have both been saved and baptized.

My earliest memories are from the preschool department -- when it was located where the Youth Room is today. My 2/3 year old Sunday school room had black and white checked tile flooring and I remember playing with

cardboard blocks that looked like bricks. I remember having Janice Conley as Sunday school teacher in Kindergarten. I couldn't wait to arrive in her classroom every Sunday. Maybe that is part of the reason I love teaching in the Preschool Department today.

I was saved in the summer of 1977. I can remember going to the auditorium at Putnam Jr. High to watch the movie, "Thief in the Night" after Sunday School. I thought about it all day, and the film was shown again in the Sunday evening service. When the invitation was given, I didn't hesitate to go forward. I prayed with Bobby Cambell, our assistant pastor, and asked Jesus into my heart. I was baptized by Bro. Cathey the next week.

Sunday School, GA's, Training Union, Bible Drills, Children's Church, Vacation Bible School, and Children's choir all have a special place in my heart. My knowledge of the Bible and my ability to use it was given a foundation in Bible Drills -- a skill that has proven invaluable. And who can forget, "Down by the Creekbank"?

Since my father and my sisters worked in the bus ministry, it also plays a part in my memories of growing up at Unity. Every Saturday began with a "bus breakfast" cooked in the old kitchen. Then I would go visiting with Dad as he prepared to pick up the kids on Sunday morning. On some Sundays I rode the bus with Dad, and others with my sister and Pat Conley on their bus route.

Being a part of the Youth Group under the leadership of Larry and Joyce Fletcher was a highlight of my teen years. Their patience with all of us was definitely God-given. Going on youth retreats each summer was looked forward to all year.... Belle's (in Gatlinburg), Mammoth Caves, and traveling to Colorado and back in a school bus has left me with memories I cherish. Bonfires at the Fletcher's, Bible studies, and 'ham' pizza after church on Sunday nights made the rest of the year just as much fun.

As for pastors, I remember Bro. Mac, Bro. Coots, and Bro. Cathey from my growing up years. Bro. Cathey came when I was in the 1st grade, and I can honestly say that the amount of Bible knowledge I gained from his teaching is immeasurable. I can't think of any of those in the youth group with me that were not afraid of Beverly Cathey's "snap". We all came to attention... even if we were innocent of any wrong doing. I saw many adults sit up a little straighter as well.

It seems I have always been involved in the music ministry. I have been part of children's choir, youth choir, and the adult choir. I remember

singing in the very first Living Christmas Tree and the Easter pageants with the drama acted out behind the "scrim". I still sing in the Living Christmas Tree, and now I'm helping direct the children's choir. I love working with our children as we praise the Lord together. Listening to these children each week as they lift their voices in song blesses my heart.

I am eternally grateful to all of those who have served at Unity. Each and every one has played a part in my life, and in the life of my family. Their faithful service has left us with examples to follow. They have left a legacy of Godly sacrifice and love for each of us. It is now up to us to leave the same legacy to our children. I am blessed today to be part of the Unity Family. It is a joy to serve alongside my parents and sisters, as well as my spiritual brothers and sisters, as we minister to the Ashland community

Moriah Boggs Crawford, (Mori)

D

**Elizabeth Easterling Dobyns,
who is the oldest current member of Unity Baptist Church in 2012, at
93-years-old.**

It was a very cold winter night, when Dennis and Clara Goble Easterling brought their first child into this world. I was born December 6, 1918 in a two-room log cabin on a farm in Grayson, Kentucky. My father didn't want to spend his life as a farmer, so he made the long trip in those days to Ashland to try and find a job and buy a house. He bought a house at 2824 29th Street. He came back and loaded up what furniture they had and our family at that time. My mother Clara, me and Opal in a wagon pulled by a horse and a cow tied to the back of the wagon. What a sight we must have been coming into Ashland. My father got a job driving a "Jitney". He would meet the incoming trains and take the passengers to where ever they wanted to go.

Shortly after we moved in, as it was the custom in those days, our neighbor Mrs. Cecil Mullins came over to meet us and invited us to go to church. Since we were looking for a church, we did visit and we liked it right off. That began my life at Unity. I am now 93 and my sister is Opal Easterling Spurlock, 91, who is also a member, as well as Jane Easterling

Hogan until she moved away from Ashland. My late sister, Virginia Easterling Lewis was a member until she died. As a matter of fact, Virginia was the first baby in the cradle roll in 1927.

I was baptized on 11-11-1931. We did not have a baptistry at the time, so Brother Edens took us to First Baptist Church downtown to use theirs. I attended and worked in the Bible School that also started in 1931. By this time, I had two more sisters, Jane and Virginia, but my mother still worked in all the Bible Schools also.

Our Sunday school was growing so fast and our Junior Department was in need of a larger room, so a building was built in the back of the church. We all called it "The Chicken Coup". It was a wonderful time. I taught the 11-year-old girls' class in the chicken coup for 3 years and then I moved up to the 14-year-old girls for two years. I had to stop for personal reasons and I could not devote the time to study that I needed. But my heart was always there.

I sang in the choir for years and did a few Christmas Cantatas. I have always felt compelled to help in any place I was needed. I love my church work. I have enjoyed my life at Unity and the Lord has blessed me for a long time. I hope to stay able to attend even though my life has changed with my age.

Janet Dobyns

Kenley, my husband, grew up in Unity. His mother, Erma Sparks Dobyns, brought him to Unity as a child. She was a wonderful lady. Kenley had a brother, Clifford Dobyns, who married Judy Barbour. Clifford is now 80 years old. When Kenly and I were married, I came to Unity with him. I was the first person to be baptized in the new sanctuary, by Reverend Coots. We had been attending Unity in the Old Building, but waited until the new sanctuary was built to be baptized. I've been here at least 56 years!

John and Yvonne Duley

We were going to a church outside of Ashland, and our children, Leigh Ann and Mike, were attending high school in Ashland. We wanted a church in Ashland; so that they could go to church with the kids they went to

school with. We came in 1975 or 76. Brother Cathey was here at that time. We came to Unity and we liked it. We've been here ever since!

E

Wayne and Petie England

Our daughter, Kathy, went to Russell High School. She was friends with Cindy Evans, who was a part of the Youth at Unity, with Larry and Joyce Fletcher. Cindy invited Kathy to come to Youth Group, and she went. Kathy was with the Youth Group at Gatlinburg, and they had been praying for Petie and me. We needed to be saved. One evening, Bob Reynolds and Jim Walters came to visit us, and they led both of us to the Lord on July 6, 1975. The Youth Group, who were in Gatlinburg at the time, just felt that something had happened at home. They called to see what was going on at home, and we told them that we had been saved! You should have heard the shouting from that Youth Group, over the phone! Of course, we came to Unity at that time, and I was later ordained as a deacon. Brother Cathey asked me to teach Sunday school. I told him that I was the one who needed to be taught! He asked me to pray about it, and to let the Lord direct me. I did, and the Lord led me to be the Sunday school director of the 5-6th Grade Sunday School Department. I had wonderful teachers in that department—Bob Church, Julia Vencil, and Myra Griffith. I couldn't have turned down that job if I'd wanted to! The Lord led me to it, and I loved it!

I also served on the Finance Committee during the time that the Family Life Center was built. Carl Oliver was one of the people who helped build the Family Life Center, and bless his heart, we about drove him to his death! He was so eager—he'd do whatever we asked.

Then, Claude Messinger asked me to serve as a greeter at the door when people came in. Now, that was a real ministry! I served as a greeter for twenty years. I loved it. You know, it's an important ministry! You are the first person that someone sees, and you could be the difference as to whether or not they feel welcomed into the church. I was talking to Paul Jackson recently, and he said, "Don't you wish you, me and Kenley (Dobyns) could spend one more time on that door?!" That was a real ministry. I love Unity and I love the people!

Amanda and Reagan Evans

We were looking for a church with an excellent Children's Program and a pastor who taught from the Word of God. Within two weeks of attending, we knew this was a church shown to us by the Lord. We have felt welcome here and Reagan *loves* the Children's Program!

F

Eva Mae Fannin

I used to come to Unity with my Mom, Irene Cox. About four years ago, I started coming back to Unity. I live close to the church, and I can walk to get here. The people here are friendly and I'm well-satisfied.

Jim and Cora Fields

We were invited to come to Unity by Herb and Shirley Webb. We met Herb through his business of selling pre-cut houses. He invited us to come. Herb and Shirley now live in Lexington. Brother Cathey was the preacher at the time, and we just loved him. So, we kept coming. We've had to be in and out over the years for various reasons, and that kept us from getting as involved as we would have liked. But, we're still here, and we love it!

George and Essie Fleihman, Jane, Joe, Jill

Our family was looking for a church. We had visited several churches, and then we visited Unity. When we visited that day, we heard Harold Cathey preach. When we heard him preach, it was decided. We had found our church.

Gene and Jane Forth

We were attracted to Unity because of the reputation it had for standing strong on Biblical principles. Prior to attending services, we had attended a Living Christmas Tree presentation by invitation from a former neighbor. On the day that I, Jane, first attended a Sunday service, Brother

Harold Cathey resigned to go to the mission field in Africa. It was not until a couple of years later, when Brother Gary Frizzell was pastor that we started to attend and decided to make it our "HOME".

G

Jan and Cathy Goble

We came to Unity from the Gospel Tabernacle in about 1960. Our aunts, Blanche Freholm and Mecca Rigsby, were attending Unity and invited us. We were baptized in the mid 60's. Dad (John) transferred his letter from Second Baptist Church around 1990, and mom (Sarah) was baptized in 1995.

Clarence Gray, Jr. and Janice Gray

Junior's parents, Clarence and Midge Gray, brought us here to Unity in 1982. Brother Cathey was the preacher at that time, and we were extremely impressed with him. We came, and we're still here! After we joined Unity, Brother Cathey and Charles Davis came to visit us to welcome us after joining. When they came, our cat had caught a snake and greeted them with it as they came up on our porch! Luckily, they didn't run away, but came in and talked with us. What a special visit that was, for many reasons!

Virginia Griffith

I have been at Unity since I was a baby. My parents, Haskell and Jesse Rowe Webb, brought me. My Dad taught Sunday school and Bible School. Our church was our whole life. We all belonged here. I especially loved Brother Tipton. My siblings are William, Robert, Phyllis, and A.J. My children are Michael Griffith, Cathy Griffith, and Connie Griffith. I just love Unity Baptist Church!

H

Robert and Mary Halladay

We started going to Unity in 1960. We were looking for a good church, and we had tried several churches. Unity was the closest to what we believed, and it was close to where we lived. We felt that it had good programs for our children—Jim, Connie, and Ralph. We have enjoyed it very much. Mary especially enjoyed being a part of the Women's Circles.

Kelly and Jane Hunt Harper

I found my way to Unity Baptist Church when a friend named Shirley Hay, at Oakview Elementary School invited me to a revival held by W.K. Wood. His sermon was about Jesus on the cross. I was saved and then baptized by Brother Tipton, the pastor at that time. There were many people from South Ashland who were also saved during that revival, including my parents, Ruth and Fred Hunt, my brothers, Bill and Don Hunt and my sister, Nancy Sue.

I enjoyed Sunday School, Training Union and G.A.'s. I continued many wonderful years at Unity. Kelly and I were married by Rev. C.B. Coots in the "old church building" on 29th Street in 1955. I have a special love for Unity Baptist Church.

Tom and Anna Ruth Hayes

When I first came to Unity Baptist Church, my parents, Elmer and Bonnie Frost, brought me, as a little girl. My sister, Nancy, and I were active in GA's. I've enjoyed working with WMU. When I came, Brother Tipton was the pastor, but not for long. Brother Coots soon came, and then Ira McMillen. Some of these pastors you just never forget, because you share life experiences with them. Brother McMillen buried my Dad, when he died Sept. 22, 1966. My mother died in October of 2006. Brother McMillen also performed the wedding of my sister, Nancy Frost Ison. He was a wonderful man; and of course, how we love Brother Cathey! Tom and I have three children, Paul Thomas Hays, Sharon J. Hays, and Scott David Hayes. I worked in Vacation Bible School under Brother Mac, and then I've also worked in the Supply Room during Sunday School. It was an

interesting job, keeping it full and making deliveries. I'm glad to have been able to help out when I could.

Nancy Hemphill

Bob and I were married at Pollard Baptist in 1972 and moved to his home area near Lima, Ohio. We lived in that area for five years and eventually settled into a small Southern Baptist Church where the pastor and his wife were from Kentucky. When we moved to Ashland in 1977 we were not interested in a large church so we did not return to Pollard. We played Yellow Page church each Sunday, picking a different Baptist church from the Yellow Pages each week. We visited Unity one Sunday and Bob was amazed. The only seats available were in the back, and I don't know the subject of the sermon, but Brother Cathey held up his Bible and said his words were not from the Sears/Roebuck catalog, but from God's Word. We had not heard preaching like that before. Bob wanted to return, but I was put off by the size of the congregation. We visited several other churches but kept coming back to Unity. I think what helped clinch our decision was visitation. One night, Brother Cathey and Herb Conley came to visit. Herb gave his testimony. We joined in October 1977, after looking since August. Families like the Setters, Rices, Churches, Byers and others reached out to us and included us in their circle of friends. Bob got involved in visitation. We both became involved in the Bus Ministry, Children's Church, teaching, VBS and other ministries. One family member said our children were going to become over-churched! Our life history seems wrapped in the walls of Unity—our trip to Israel, the births of our children, Bob's ordination as Deacon, our children's salvations and baptisms and Bob's death. It seemed strange when a pastor and staff came who didn't know Bob or us. I look at the legacy of so many who have gone before me leaving behind memories of dedicated service to their God, their church, their family, their country. Oh, to be like them; Oh, to be like Jesus!

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

Randy and Dana Henneke

One day Matt came home from school and asked if he could go to church with Logan Watts on Wednesday night because they had a children's

choir and a program called “RA’s”. We had no idea what RA’s was so we called and talked to David Watts. He explained the program and they picked Matt up for several weeks and took him with them. Then they moved and it was no longer possible for him to ride with them. Randy was working in Columbus and I stayed in Ashland with the kids. I agreed to take him and I would sit in the back of the church for the Wednesday night service. I never filled out a card so I sort of went unnoticed for a time. Then a miracle happened ...Ty Lovette, the choir director at the time, gave Matt the lead part in the Children’s program “Sermon on the Mount”. I had heard Matt sing and that is why I call this a miracle. I started taking him to choir and attending every Wednesday night. On the Sunday of his program, several people welcomed us and invited us to Sunday school and Church. I had really fallen in love with the Wednesday night prayer service so I was excited to try a Sunday service. We were not disappointed. One night someone sitting in front of us asked us to start singing in the choir, and the rest my friend, is history. Even though we are not part of the big families at Unity, we have discovered we are related to some.

Gary and Willa Hensley

Willa Bowen Hensley

When I was in the sixth grade, I moved to Ashland with my parents, Claudia and Prentice Bowen. For about a year, we attended a church that was very close to our home. Then, when I was in the seventh grade, I met Joan McCracken and she invited me to attend Vacation Bible School at Unity Baptist Church. My parents allowed me to go and I remember having a great experience. I talked about it for days. I asked them if we could go to church there some time. I believe they must have been looking for a different church, because, even though, the people were very friendly where we had been going, they believed a little differently than my parents. One Sunday morning, my family and I went to Unity for the first time together. Reverend Ira McMillen had just become the pastor and visited our home several times.

Tommy Dixon and O. A. Collins also visited us several times and because of these two dedicated Deacons, my parents and I joined Unity. I remember the Sunday morning that my parents walked the aisle to the front of our sanctuary to say to Bro. Mac and the church they wanted to join and

be baptized. I was sitting with Joan and some other girls when they walked down that aisle. I didn't want to be left out and I made my way down the side aisle.

We were baptized together one Sunday morning, and I can't tell you how exciting it was to have that experience of being baptized with my mom and my dad.

As time went on, we became more involved in the church; my parents became Sunday school teachers of nine and ten year old boys and girls in the Junior Department. I believe, this was one of the most special times of their lives. They loved the kids and the kids loved and respected them. Even today, people come to me and tell me how much my parents meant to them as a children.

I was active in the Youth Department, Vacation Bible School, Training Union, and most other activities available for the teenagers. As I got older, I also became a Sunday school teacher in the same department with my parents. We had lots of great kids and wonderful outings. When I began dating Gary Hensley, he and I would take my Sunday school girls out for picnics. He drove a black VW beetle and we would pile those girls into the car and off we would go. Those little girls loved Gary and no one wanted to go home first. We would be driving all over town taking these girls home—none of them wanting to get out of the car! Several years later, Gary and I were married at Unity. I remember walking down that long center aisle with my dad. Gary and I were married by Brother Mac in 1972. This was a very good day for me, and our family. My parents loved Gary very much. We moved to Belpre, Ohio and didn't attend Unity church services for many years.

In 1981, my dad passed away and we had his funeral at Unity, instead of a funeral home. By this time, Unity had a new pastor, Rev. Harold Cathey. My dad's funeral is the only one I ever attended that made me smile. As we were leaving the sanctuary, I had a smile on my face. Some asked me later why I was smiling. It was because the eulogy presented by Bro. Cathey was so positive and uplifting. I knew my dad was in Heaven and I knew Bro. Cathey knew it too. It was a beautiful service and I will always be so grateful to him for it.

I guess the next big event that happened at Unity for me was the day Gary was baptized. Gary has been a Christian since he was a little boy, but of another faith. When Rev. Gary Frizzell was the pastor, he and Gary had

many discussions about being baptized a second time. One Sunday morning, Gary was baptized and I know he feels that it was what he was meant to do. Gary is very active at church. He teaches the Adult 5 men's Sunday school class and he assists wherever he is needed in Vacation Bible School. He is also the church clerk. When we present Judgment House, Gary plays the part of "The Judge" in our Judgment Scene. He enjoys this very much. He says it is quite an experience to see the faces of people as they "stand before Judgment" and watch as the actors are sent to either Heaven or Hell. He says you can see the changes in the people's faces as they begin to realize what lies ahead of them. Gary was also ordained as a Deacon and serves as their secretary.

I love my church and my church family. Some people have told me they didn't want to attend Unity Baptist Church because it is so big. I tell them that it is a big building, but once you've been there a short time, you realize how small and intimate it really is.

Gary and I are very thankful for the wonderful experiences we have had at Unity Baptist Church and cannot wait to see what God has in store for us in the future.

Gary:

My first visits to Unity Baptist Church were by the invitation of Willa when we were dating. We attended a number of church services and functions together as well as taking the girls she taught in Sunday school to a number of events, which I enjoyed. We were married at Unity in 1972 by Rev. Ira McMillen and moved to Belpry, Ohio. After a number of years we started attending Unity in 1995 where we have been ever since. I became a member and was baptized by Brother Gary Frizzell in 1995. We found Christ's love at Unity plus the love of many friends. It is an honor to serve at Unity and I am blessed to be called to serve as a Deacon, Sunday School Teacher, work in VBS and Judgment House. God has completed our lives by sending us to a church where his love and grace are taught.

Lee and Rae Hogsten

In 1975, my family moved back to Ashland after Lee (my husband) got out of the Army. We were young Christians at that time and I came to Unity to see if that was where God wanted me to move my membership. Bro. Cathey had just become pastor at that time. After listening to him, I couldn't imagine going anywhere else. I've been here for 37 years.

Gary and Hope Holland

We first started attending Unity when a friend called and asked me to with her. Barbara Copley's mother, Jean Copley, told her that Unity had a young preacher and he was the best she had ever heard. After visiting, Gary and I felt that Unity was where we needed to worship and raise our family. We joined Unity Baptist Church in 1977. Our children are Gary Lee Holland, Aaron Holland, and Sarah Holland Parks.

Crystal Hudson and Ethan

Ethan was 4 and we were looking for a church to attend in Ashland because he was going to start school soon and we needed some friends in town since we both really knew no one here. We had been attending a wonderful church in Huntington and hated to leave, but knew it was the best thing for us. We had tried a church in town for a few weeks but I just wasn't satisfied. I was looking for a church that taught God's word but I was desperate for a really good Sunday School class for both of us because I know how important a good Sunday school class is.

As we were driving home one morning from the other church, I told Ethan we needed to pray about finding a church home and that we would try another church the next week. About that time, we drove by Unity Baptist and Ethan pointed to the left and suggested we try that one with the big steeple!

Well, we pulled in Unity and walked in a little late because I thought it started at 10. We were kind of wandering aimlessly, as Unity is so big, but David Huffman found us and took us to Ethan's Sunday school class which was led by Miss Margie and Miss Cindy. Ethan went right in and absolutely loved it! David then took me to the Mary/Martha Sunday school class, taught by Jonda Lockhart, and the ladies were so welcoming.

Well, I suppose that God spoke through Ethan by suggesting the church with the big steeple because we came for our first visit and we've been there ever since!

David and Donna Huffman, Amber, Aaron and Allison

Donna and I attended Unity Baptist Church for a short time in the early 80's. We came to know some of the people there. We slipped away from church with the addition of a second child and a move to Flatwoods. By 1990 and now with three children and two careers, the stresses of life were taking a toll on our lives. In the fall of 1990 the Lord began a work in my life. I knew that the only thing that could hold our family together would be found in church. I began attending church (on my own) and would go with my in-laws and at times by myself. Sometimes Donna thought I was just going to church to escape the family.

In the early spring of 1991 a coworker (Janet Church) invited me to see the Easter pageant at Unity. During the crucifixion scene, God spoke to my heart. It was just as if He said, "David, see what I went through for you." I went home and knelt at my bedside and asked the Lord to save me and he did. I started visiting churches regularly. Donna decided that she and the kids would go with me and one Sunday morning as we started out to leave she said she wanted to go to Unity. I told her that I didn't want to go there because I thought it was too big. We almost started to argue and she said it was too late to make it there on time anyway. That was just enough to make me prove her wrong. We were going to go to Unity even if I had to drive fast.

When we arrived, brother Cathey greeted us in the back hallway and a handshake and said, "Where have you folks been?" We took the kids to Sunday school and we went to Larry Fletcher's class. We were accepted and made to feel right at home. On Mother's Day that year we decided if we were going to go, we would be "all in". If we could we would be there with our children, Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. Donna was saved about this time, and we've been there since. Our children grew up here and both of our daughters were married here.

Vessie and Frances Hughes

Frances had been a member of Unity since the 1970's, but Vessie was unsaved. As Vessie said, "Gene Ray and Gary Wurts came to visit me out at our home after Frances joined." Vessie was still unsaved and unchurched. Frances would do anything to try and get her family to come to church. She sang in special music programs because, as she said, "They will come and watch when I sing in these programs." Frances worked in Judgment House, and didn't get home one night until 2:00AM. When she tried to tell Vessie where she had been, he answered by saying, "No way you've been at church!" Later, Larry James and Harold Cathey visited Vessie at home, trying to witness to him. It always seemed that it was a bad time. Vessie told them that he was working on their vehicles, trying to keep them running. He continued to make excuses.

"Brother Floyd Paris and Fred Boggs came to our house, and Brother Floyd told me that they had sent my son to prison. It was a very difficult time. That week, I had been thinking hard about the Lord and had made up my mind that I was going to be in church when Sunday came. As it happened, we had a sick child, and that knocked us out of going to church that day. During the week that followed, I couldn't sleep. I was afraid that if I went to sleep, I'd die. Again, I made up my mind to go to church the next Sunday. When that next Sunday came, Frances and I had words that morning, and it made her mad. She looked at me and said, 'I cannot wait 'til the Lord saves you!' We went on to church. I was so anxious to go forward; I couldn't wait until the invitation, so I could go down! It seemed that Brother Floyd was really long-winded that morning! The invitation finally came, and I went forward and gave my heart to the Lord. A week later with many of the Unity congregation watching, I was baptized in the Big Sandy River, and that's when my life really began!"

Vessie joins many as he said, "I was so reluctant to come to Unity for so long, thinking it was too big! After I was saved, I found it to be so comfortable, and very enjoyable with all the people here!"

I

Armana Irvine

When Dave and I moved to Ashland, I met Delores Spradlin. She invited me and brought me to Unity. We've been friends ever since. We raised our children, Larry and Vicky here at Unity. Dave has since gone to be with our Lord.

J

Cindy Jackson

I was "born" into Unity Baptist Church. My earliest memories are playing with cardboard blocks in the old nursery (where the youth kitchen is now) and having a crown on my head for my birthday and sitting under an arch decorated with flowers to have my 5-year-old class sing to me. I remember walking to church from Monroe Street with my Dad and arriving at least 15 minutes early for Sunday school. Sunbeams (I still know the song!), children's choir with Jerry Douglas after school once a week, songs from the 2nd grade class especially where Carolyn Smith was my teacher. In 4th and 5th grade, my Dad, Bob Reynolds Sr., led opening exercises and Beverly Carr led the singing. We sang, "I found Happiness..." and Dad always concluded with "Whisper a Prayer." Sunday night services in the summer were my favorite times with the windows open.

My favorite teachers in Sunday school were Beverly Carr, Willa Hensley (who taught me the books of the Bible), Woody Hill, Miriam Mc David, Wanda (Rusty) Walters, and many others.

I was baptized by Brother McMillen at age ten and have had three other pastors, Harold Cathey, Gary Frizzell, and Floyd Paris. I remember W.K. Wood as interim before Brother Cathey and his sermons from the first, "My little children..."

I remember Choir directors Jerry Douglas, Ken Johnson, Dean Olive, Mike Daniel, Cliff Callaway, Ty Lovette, and Sam Norrod. We had Youth Choir at 4:30, a snack break at 5:30 provided by parents in the old kitchen, then training Union at 6, with Roger Robinson and Larry Fletcher as our teachers.

As a youth, we had a huge bus ministry. People who were “bus captains” were my brother, Bob Reynolds, Scott Setters, Pat Conley, among others. I worked with Joe McDavid and Scott Setters.

Our Youth Group Leaders were Larry and Joyce Fletcher.

This was my foundation and I’ve raised all three of my children here. They can give their own stories. I also met my husband, Greg Jackson, through his Dad, Paul Jackson, and his sister, Cindy.

Larry and Sonja James

We came to Unity in 1959 from Olive Hill First Baptist Church. Larry had gotten out of the service, so we moved to the big city of Ashland, because he had found a job at Sears. We were looking for a church, and we visited Unity. We met four couples that really reached out to us. They were Kenley and Janet Dobyns, JD and Alice Welch, Harry and Shirley Wheeler, and John and Carol Tartar. Only one person of those couples is still at Unity—Janet Dobyns. All of the others are no longer here due to moving away or death. Everyone at Unity made us feel at home, and made us feel like they had known us all of our lives. So we looked no longer for a church.

Sonja worked with small children with Ann Oliver. Ann and her husband, Carl, became our best friends.

Larry has taught the 55-Class for over 50 years.

It is definitely our home now.

Rick and Mary Beth Jones

Rick was attending Unity when I met him, so I visited the church with him some while we were dating. But, I grew up in a small church of about 100 people where everybody knew everybody and the pastor and his wife stood at the back and hugged each one on their way out the door. Unity felt very big to me, and I did not think I could make it my home. So after we got married, Rick and I began to look for a smaller church. We visited several and actually attended one for a while. The people there were very kind to us, but we could not seem to settle in. So we went back to Unity. Brother Cathey was pastor then and we loved to listen to him preach and teach. There were several other young couples, and we made friends.

One Sunday morning, Brother Cathey was preaching on baptism and I realized that I had not been baptized since I'd been saved. I was baptized as a child when I went forward in church, but I actually did not get saved until I was 15. So I got baptized and that's how I became a member of Unity. It has been a great place to serve and grow and to raise our kids. I am thankful for my church, for the staff and all the people we've known and loved over the years. We've been here for 23 years, and truly it is home to me.

Rosemary Justice

I came to Unity because I needed a place where my foster children would be welcomed. At the time, I was caring for a 15-year-old girl who had been a runaway from another foster home. She was four months pregnant. The people at Unity were compassionate toward her and made her feel loved. I knew immediately that I had found a home church for me. In the years since, there have been many foster children come and go through my home. Most of the time, they do not know anything at all about God when they first come. I remember one little five-year-old boy who was telling me what he had learned in his first time in a Sunday school class. We were standing at the top of the steps in back as we were leaving. He was so excited and yelled, "Mommy! Ain't God great?!!" He loved coming here. All of the children have loved coming here. That has made me so appreciative of my church family. I know the teachers and staff will help me teach them about God and His unconditional love for them. Some of them have accepted Christ as their personal Savior. Brad Callaway has been a trusted leader and friend to so many of the children and especially the teenagers who have come with me. They like being with him and he helps them understand that one does not have to give up having fun when you become a Christian. Sometimes when I see children after they have left my home, they say that living with me and coming to Unity was the best thing that ever happened to them.

I love singing in the choir. My friend, Donna Day, and I joined together shortly after I transferred my membership here. Essie Flieman got me even more involved when we were at a church picnic. She casually asked me if I sewed. I said, "Yes," and she yelled for Ty. He needed help in sewing new king's costumes for Christmas. He said I had to make it to fit any body—short, tall, skinny, or fat. He drew a picture of approximately

what he wanted it to look like. He handed me a bunch of different materials and said, "Design and conquer!" Steve Cole was the king for the costume that first year. Our choir director now, Sam Norrod, is wonderful to work with. He says his job is to lead the church in worship. I believe he is preparing us all for God's Heavenly Choir. I am looking forward to singing with the angels.

My Sunday school class has been my ear to listen and advise, as well as my shoulder to cry on many times. Being a single woman and doing the job God has called me to do is not easy. Many times David Watts has been the answer to my prayers. I always feel better after being in his class. Brother Floyd Paris has been my rock where I run to when I need counseling and other types of help. He is truly a pastor in times of trouble. I come to church expecting to hear a message from God. Sometimes Brother Floyd delivers one directly to me from God. His insight into the Bible helps me apply it to my life. He is trustworthy. I love Unity. When I walk through the doors, there is sanctuary from the evils all around. I feel safe. I feel loved. I feel needed. I feel at home. Thank God for directing me here. He said, "Where two or more are gathered in my name, there I will be also." His presence is at our church.

May God bless and reign at Unity Baptist Church until He comes again.

K

Todd and April Keelin

We were married in 2006 and lived in the Ashland area. We had been going to church in Grayson, and we realized that our children, Kylie, Caleb, and Morgan were getting older. We just could not keep going back and forth for events in Grayson. So, we started talking about where we would go here in Ashland. We wanted to find a church with a great Youth program that also would have some things that we could get involved with, too. In talking about it, we thought of Gary and Willa Hensley. They had lived down the street from Todd. They were so sweet! Gary had invited us to come to "The Living Christmas Tree". We were very impressed by the music and the message. So, one day we came, and we've never left!

Betty King

When I started coming to Unity, I was a little girl. I was not saved at the time. I wasn't raised in a Christian home. A friend, Sarah Click Brown, walked to get me and bring me to church. I remember Maurice Barbour being in Bible School. I was saved in 1959, at Belmont Baptist Church. There came a time when I thought I was going to have to leave my home church. It broke my heart to leave there. I thought to myself that if I ever went to another church, it would be Unity, because of all the memories I had of that church. When I did leave, the Lord led me back to Unity, and I feel so blessed to be here. There is nothing outstanding, but I could just cry and shout because of the joy I feel here. The church is full of just lovely people.

L

Rachael Lebrun and Alex

I started attending Unity Baptist Church because of my son, Alex. I grew up going to church with my family. I got married there and when my son was born I dedicated him there. But when he became a young teenager he was not happy going to church, mainly because he was one of three teenage boys in the youth department. I wanted him to enjoy going to church because I knew he would lose interest in the Lord if he wasn't, so I started letting him visit other churches on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights with some of his friends. He was very happy at Unity. One day he asked me if I would go to Unity with him. I told him I would (although this was difficult for me). Even though I had never been to Unity I found some comfort knowing that my son is a fourth generation Unity Baptist member. Some members may remember Anna Belle Ball (great grandmother), Joyce Ball LeBrun (grandmother) and Gene LeBrun Sr. (grandfather), Gene LeBrun (father). We have been attending Unity for almost two years now and feel very blessed to be part of the Unity family.

Paul and Kathy Lewis

Kathy and I attended a church out of state for 28 years. We had been involved in various departments through the years...mostly with the children. After the Pastor left and while the church was searching for another pastor...we felt the need or desire to look for a church that was closer to home and where we could also be involved in a children's ministry. We had been invited to visit Unity by both Dana Hennecke and Penne Paris numerous times. The first time we visited Unity was a few years ago to attend the baptism of a former ballplayer of mine who I led to the Lord on the baseball field after a game during devotional time. We were really drawn back several more times due to the preaching of Pastor Paris. He reminded us of the pastor we once sat under for so many years. Each Sunday as we visited several churches, we would get in the car and ask each other where we wanted to visit on that day. All of a sudden we realized that we had been going to Unity for a few months without discussion on where we were going to go. At this time we knew it was Unity that the Lord had led us to.

Dale and Robyn Litchfield

We moved to Ashland in 2002. Dale had retired from his Insurance Underwriting job just north of Chicago. At that time, Ashland was the only city we had grandchildren in so that was our destination. Dale was only retired for a few weeks before he felt the need to go back to work. He got a job selling cars and sold one to Gary & Willa Hensley. Gary came back and gave Dale an invitation to The Living Christmas Tree. We attended; Bro Floyd gave his micro sermon. As we were leaving, Dale said that he thought that this was where he wanted to go to church. So, here we are...

Arlene Little

I married into Unity Baptist Church. I married Marvin Little, son of Jim and Lillian Little, and grandson of Tom and Lula Little, on January 14, 1958. After a while, we came to Unity. I was saved when I was younger. Reverend Bardowell had a big revival here, and Marvin was saved at that

time. He was 26 years old, in 1966. We were both baptized together by Brother McMillen.

I have been to Africa on one of the first trips with Harold and Beverly Cathey. We stayed in tents. We had to catch rain water by catching it in part of the tent. I've also been to Israel with Harold and Beverly Cathey in 1983, and what a wonderful trip!

Janet Little

I have been coming to Unity Baptist Church since I was a child. My Mom allowed me to come to Bible School, and then I enrolled in Sunday school, and I've been going ever since! Brother Coots baptized me in the Old Building on 29th Street in 1953. I remember Maurice Barbour and the Felty's. I went other places through the years, but I always came back to Unity, because it felt like home here.

I met my husband, Sam, when I was working at Myer's Pharmacy on 29th Street. He was working at the Ashland Filling Station on the corner, and he would come in for headache medicine. A girl that I worked with suggested that he was coming in to see me. I thought he was kind of cute, so when I waited on him, I said, "Boy, you have a lot of headaches!" We started dating after that, and we were married. Sam wasn't a Christian at the time, but Brother McMillen visited him in our home, and he was saved. Brother McMillen baptized Sam, and later on, Brother Cathey baptized our son, Sammy. Sam and I were married almost 43 years when he went to be with the Lord.

Judie Little

I came to Unity when I married Bill Little, in 1961. The pastor at that time was Brother McMillen, and the new sanctuary had just been built a few years. I have very special memories of Unity Baptist Church, and most of them center on Bill's family—his parents, Cecil and Marie Little, and his grandparents, Tom and Lula Little. I had been digging around in genealogy, and when I did, I discovered that Tom was a direct descendant of John Young, one of Unity's founding fathers. Bill was at the hospital with his grandfather and said, "Grandad, I know you've always loved your church, Unity Baptist. Do you know anything about the history of Unity?" Tom

began to tell him some of the history, and he was able to name the three Johns who were at the very beginning. Bill went on to ask him, "What if I told you that you descended from one of those founding fathers?" Bill showed him the chart that I had made which showed the connections. His eyes lit up, with a twinkle; all he could say was, "I just wish I had known!" It was my desire, then, to find more about John Young. As I dug around into his history, that led me to find out more about Unity Baptist Church. I know in my heart that Grandad is happy that I did!

Another of my most special memories concerning Unity happened when Bill's Granddad, Tom Little, died. He was a man who lived the Christian life both inside and outside of church. When he died, Brother Cathey was the preacher, and of course, we wanted him to conduct Tom's funeral. He was in Tennessee at the time, holding a revival. Claude Messinger, who was a pilot, flew to Tennessee to bring Brother Cathey back to preach the funeral, and then flew him back in time for him to continue the revival. I'll never forget the tremendous effort and kindness that was shown to us during that time.

Rob and Jonda Lockhart

When we moved to Ashland in 2001, we attended a few churches in the area, never feeling comfortable. Our daughters, Leah and Anna, began attending various youth and children's activities. Over the next year, we began attending Unity as a family. Through the encouragement of Brother Floyd Paris, deacon Kenley Dobyns, and various other friends and members, we decided to become members. We most appreciate the commitment of members toward church unity, the foundational character of Bible teaching and adherence, and the missions-mindedness of the church body. Jonda grew up in this church, we were married in this church, and we now feel that we have come home. We could not find a better place to raise our family. We have enjoyed our membership, and we have embraced the opportunities for service through Sunday School, the Living Christmas Tree, Judgment House, discipleship training, and countless other activities. We look forward to what God has in store for our family and the church in the upcoming years.

Joy Lowe

I can tell you the exact date that my husband, Harry Clark, and I came to Unity. It was on April 15, 1946. I remember it well; because that was the day that Harry was saved. He was baptized the very next Sunday—it was Easter Sunday.

I married Harry Clark on Feb. 27, 1946. We lived on Belmont Street, and I wanted to go to Central Baptist Church, because of the pastor there, Clayton Caudill. We went for a few Sundays, but Harry slept through the service! We talked about it, and he said he really wanted to go to Unity Baptist Church, where his “Pop” went. Harry’s “Pop” was his Dad, William Clark, whom everyone called “Uncle Billy.” William was senior deacon at the time of his death. So, we started coming to Unity because that’s where Harry wanted to go. Later on, our son, Benton F. Clark, was saved on April 14, 1946, and he was baptized the next Sunday, which was Easter Sunday, just like his Dad had done.

This past April, I’ve been coming to Unity for 66 consecutive years!

M

John and Laura Malone

We felt led to search for a new church home. We visited several churches in the area but did not feel they were where we should be. We had been to the Living Christmas Tree on several occasions after being invited by a neighbor. After visiting the church and attending several Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening services, we decided that Unity should be our new home. As they say, “The rest is history.”

Bob and Mary Martin

We were looking for a church, and we just couldn’t decide on one. We had visited several churches. Someone told me that I would like Unity and the new, young pastor that they had there. Vesta Layne invited me and so we visited Unity. I felt at home as soon as I walked in! Brother Harold Cathey preached that day, and I did love it! Brother Cathey was at our home the next week to visit us, and we’ve been there ever since!

Ralph and Monica Martin

My (Monica's) parents moved to Ashland, from Tennessee. We bought a house on Jackson Street, and came to Unity because this church was close to our house. Also, Harold Cathey had just come from Tennessee, and we wanted to hear him. So, my Mom brought my brother, Jim, and me. When I married Ralph, in 1979, he joined me here at Unity.

Mark and Beth Maynard

Mark Maynard/ Unity Baptist

I became a member of Unity Baptist less than a year before marrying Beth Boggs, a lifelong member of the church, in April of 1981. I went to Oakland Avenue most of my life before moving to Unity in 1980. It was a decision we made with much prayer but one that we believe the Lord had in mind for us. Beth's family (her parents are Fred and Alva Boggs) have always been highly respected at Unity. We tried to follow in those considerable footprints. We've been workers at the church in many different capacities. Both of us have taught Sunday School and children's church, worked Bible schools, sang in the choir, participated in Judgment House and tried to follow the Lord's leadership in many other areas as well. You never know how a decision is going to impact you but deciding Unity Baptist would be our home church was one of the better ones we ever made. We consider our church family like family (and, in fact, much it is on Beth's side!). We were fortunate enough to sit under Rev. Harold Cathey for many years and have been proud to sit under Bro. Floyd Paris as well. Those are two of the giants in Unity Baptist history in my opinion. They both are true men of God who love the Lord and have been outstanding leaders for Unity throughout the years.

The music at Unity Baptist has become special to us as well. For more than 20 years, we've sung in the choir and almost never miss participating in Christmas Tree or Easter performances. Music is a way we have been able to contribute to the church. I've been fortunate enough to even lead the music on occasion for song directors during that time as well. I do it not because I'm qualified but because the Lord has put me in that position to be used. Beth, an elementary teacher by profession, teaches the oldest women in the church during Sunday school. She always comes away blessed from her

Sunday morning “job” with these precious women. I don’t know how many times she has told me that over the years.

My Sunday Schools over the years have been spent patrolling the halls as a lot as the Sunday school superintendent. Again, it wasn’t something I was necessarily prepared to do but I was available to do it. If you make yourself available, the Lord will use you.

Both of our children, Stephen and Sally, who are now grown adults living in the Cincinnati area, were active in Sunday School, Youth Group and other activities. Both of them became Christians while attending Unity Baptist Church. We feel blessed to have had them around so many Godly examples to follow. When you are part of a church family, they become your extended family for children as well. It’s hard to imagine how many prayers have gone up for them (and us) throughout the years through the gracious people of this church.

In closing, we are proud to be members of Unity Baptist Church where the Bible is preached with power. Many Jesus Christ get the glory from any contribution we’ve made over the years.

Walter McCall

The reason I came to Unity was because it was the only church in the community that invited me! Brother Harold Cathey visited me and invited me to come.

Pat and Dana McCoy

After moving back home from Virginia Beach we started looking for a church. Alex has always had anxiety issues and did not do well in new settings. We visited several churches in the area, all of which Alex would have an anxiety attack and become ill. We were invited to Unity for church and I was very reluctant to go. I agreed to come on a Sunday night to AWANA to see how he would do. I, of course, was expecting to spend the church service in the bathroom with Alex, because well, that's what he does. We arrived and he looked around the gym and shouted "There's Leslie and Zach!" and took off running through the gym. I knew at that moment that we had finally found a church that he was comfortable in. Hallelujah! Praise God! And a special thanks to Leslie Stringer and Zach Jones for being there

that day.

Alex, Christine and I were all baptized at Unity and have proudly called it our church home for the past 10 years.

Nick and Phoebe McCoy

I, Phoebe, came to Unity Baptist Church when my parents, Denvil and Edna Nolen, purchased a house at 2248 Smith Street in the Spring of 1945. My sister, Martha Clara and I were immediately enrolled in Sunday school, Sunbeams, GA's and Training Union. We had a revival with W.K. Wood as the evangelist and on March 8, 1948 at 8 years old, I was saved and baptized.

I grew up under the leadership of Tommy Dixon, Junior Department Sunday School Director; Mrs. Burdette, Sunday school teacher, who always baked each girl a lamb cake for her birthday and Mable Felty, GA leader. In later years, I sang in the choir led by Ray Mayer, Choir leader. I was fortunate to have had wonderful Sunday school teachers such as Jean Dowdy, Elwood McGuire, Virginia Lanthorne, Maxie Patton and Alice Welch. My pastors have been L.H. Tipton, C.B. Coots, Ira McMillen, Harold Cathey, Gary Frizell, Mike Rice (Associate Pastor) and Dr. Floyd Paris.

I can remember when we had to have two church services because we were having 450-600 in attendance for worship service. VBS would have 200-350 at the 9:00 in the morning for two weeks every day. Being raised in a good Christian home and taught the Bible by example concerning church participation including tithing is essential and will last a lifetime. I have 67 years invested in this church and plan to be here and active until the Lord is ready to take me home.

I, Nick, came to Unity because of Phoebe. We met at the Bluegrass Grill. Phoebe was working at Evan's Supermarket at the time. We've been married 53 years. We were married on June 20, 1959 in Jellico. I guess you could say we kind of eloped. We left the Bluegrass Grill one night, and went home and told her mother that we were going to get married, and we took off. After we were married, we decided that Unity would be our church.

John and Karen McIntyre

We were looking for a church, and we had always heard about Unity. We just decided to try it. When we did, we liked it and came back. We came off and on for about six months before we started coming regularly. John had known Larry James and Ralph Clere beforehand, and when we went to Sunday school, John was in Larry James' Sunday school class and he enjoyed it.

Kathy McLain

Many years ago, Betty White invited my son and me to participate in Unity's Easter cantata. The music and the people blessed my soul. It was the first time I heard Lori's voice soar to the sky. That December, I sang in the Christmas Cantata and knew that I had found a home.

Jim and Frankie Meeks

December of 1962, Columbus Gas of Kentucky transferred us from Charleston, WV to Ashland. Since we were both from Kentucky, we were happy about the move. Our long time friends, Woody and Lorraine Hill were members at Unity, so we never considered going anywhere else. Brother Ira McMillen, Jr. was the pastor at that time. He came to visit us and we liked him and his preaching right away. We had two small children at that time. Darrell was seven and Tammy was three years old. We were all happy and felt at home at Unity. We have lost many dear friends since we first came to Unity Baptist Church. Our children have married and moved away, but Jim and I will be members as long as the Lord leaves us here.

Joe and Emma Mullins

My daughter, Susan Mullins Thompson, started coming to Unity, and I came with her. Brother Cathey was the pastor at that time. I was saved at another church on November 2, 1980, and then I was baptized about a month later by Brother Cathey. He baptized both Susan and me, but not at the same time.

The Melvin Family

Our family came to Unity in 1975. At this time, Jennifer was the only child. Lisa followed in '76, and then me (Rachel) came in '78. Our parents, George and Brenda Melvin, taught Sunday school off and on through the years. Mark came in '82. My Dad worked with the Bus Ministry for years and worked in the garage on the vehicles. As we all got older, we all went different ways and different churches. After I had Caiden, my son, to the Bible School in 2009, I felt led to come back to my church home. Unity is where we feel our church home is!

Chris and Cristin Mertz

Both of my (Christin's) parents grew up in Ashland, and my Dad, Mark Walter, was baptized here. We were living in Knoxville, TN, but AK Steel brought us to Ashland. When we came, we were going to try different churches, to see which one was best for us. In fact, I had pretty strong feelings about trying different churches. My aunt, Jenny Walter, and my cousins Amy and Scott Walter were members here, so we came to Unity. When we did, we loved it. We appreciated that Brother Paris taught from the Bible, and Unity had a great Children's Program for our girls. We felt very welcomed. We loved it, and still do.

Maybelle Messinger

Claude, my husband, worked for Ashland Oil, so we moved around a lot to different places. Our first priority when we came to a new place was to find a church. When we came to Ashland, we visited several churches, but we always came back to Unity. One of the main things we wanted from a church was for our children to be happy there. Our boys had already gone away to college, but our two girls were still at home. They liked Unity, so that was important to us. Brother McMillen was the pastor at that time. I taught nine-year-olds. I loved to work with the children. I worked with them until I had problems with my hearing, and I couldn't hear them. Claude served as Chairman of the Deacons. Unity offered us a place to serve and we loved the people.

Van and Charlotte Miller

We were members of a church in Proctorville, driving a distance to get there. Harold Cathey held a revival there, and it was wonderful. After hearing him preach, we decided that if we came to Unity, our drive to church would be closer. It was important to our children to be closer, so that they could have an influence on the kids they knew, to get them to come.

Vickie Miller Shelton

When our family joined Unity, my Mom, Betty Miller, was looking for a church close to where my parents lived. She walked by Unity and thought it was a nice looking church. She started going there, and taking her children with her. Later Mom became pregnant with me. It was then that my Dad, Walter Miller, started taking my brother and sisters to church. Once he joined the church, he never missed a Sunday after that. My mom worked in the nursery for years. Mom and Dad's children are: Cecelia Justice Tackett (now deceased), Shirley Justice Hendrickson, Billie Justice Kersey, Ellen Miller Hogsett, Jim Miller, Vickie Miller Shelton, and Pamela Miller Fitzpatrick.

Glenn Morgan

I told a friend that I was looking for a new church. My friend told me to meet him at the front door of his church the next Sunday morning, and we would go inside together. I went to the front door of his church the next Sunday and waited for him until after church started. When my friend did not show up, I decided to go home. As I was driving up 29th Street, I remembered that Larry Fletcher had told me that he had a new pastor at Unity Baptist Church and that he preached from the Bible.

I parked in the church parking lot and went inside and sat down near the back. I looked around at the congregation for a few minutes and realized that I knew more people at this church than I did at the church that I was attending.

After a few minutes, the pastor went to the pulpit and began to preach. His name was Harold Cathey and he quickly convinced me that I had found my new church.

Robert and Doris Mowery

When our kids were little, other kids asked my kids, Jonna and Robby, to come to Unity. They had Sunbeams and other programs that were so good. I helped in the nursery, and when I had our youngest son, Mike, I started bringing him when he was just two-weeks old. We had lived downtown, but then we moved to South Ashland. I knew some people who went to Unity—Jenny Griffith, Lucille Henry, Vivian Riddle and Bonnie Blanchard. When I went there, it seemed like such a nice church, and the people there were so friendly. We've been coming for fifty-five years, and we're still here!

Danny Mulvaney

I started coming to this church with my mom, Dorothy Mulvaney, when I was 6 years old. Brother McMillen was the pastor at that time. I was baptized when I was around 12 or 13 years old. I've been here ever since!

Nona Musser

My brother, Van Miller and his wife, Charlotte, were attending Unity Baptist and they invited us to come. We did visit, and after a while, we felt that the Lord was directing us to join Unity. We did join, and what wonderful memories we have! Of course, Judgment House is a wonderful memory. We enjoyed working in it and I enjoyed fixing peanut butter fudge for the workers. I also enjoyed taking pictures for The Living Christmas Tree, Judgment House, and different children's programs.

Charlie enjoyed working at Unity as the treasurer, and he worked closely with Brother Floyd Paris. When Charlie passed away on Dec. 31, 2002, I wanted to do something with the money that was donated to the church as a memorial to him. The church was finishing a renovation of the sanctuary, and a picture for the baptistry was mentioned as a possible way to spend the money that was donated. So, Brother Floyd and I chose the picture that is there, of the cross and the Bible.

Rick and Debbie Musser

We have been members twice—once shortly after we were married in 1974. Pat Conley invited us. We became part of the choir under the leadership of Dean Olive and learned much from Harold Cathey’s sermons. I taught a youth girl’s Sunday school class. Our daughter, Jennifer, was born in 1977 and received a testament from the Cradle Roll. The second time we became members was when Jennifer started dating Mark White and took part in Judgment House. We also take part in choir activities including the Living Christmas Tree, which I believe to be an effective outreach ministry for our neighborhood community. We have renewed some friendships for high school days as well as made many new friends with fellow believers. I have tried to be a good mentor to youngsters by teaching Vacation Bible School and the Awana program. We are proud to be a part of the 175th year anniversary of Unity and pray that God continues to bless it until His return.

N

Kevin and Mar y Faye Nibert

When Kevin and I began looking for a new church, we had no idea where we would go. I suggested Unity Baptist and we decided to try it on a Sunday night. We thought we would slide in a pew and slide out afterwards, but that didn’t happen. We were met by smiling faces and everyone was super nice to have us. Bob Carr came over to say welcome and I told him who my family was. My family knew the Carr’s as they were all from Catlettsburg and he really made us feel welcome. Since we were looking for a church we decided to try different ones on Sunday nights. The next Sunday evening we went to a friend’s church and enjoyed it, but didn’t feel the same way we did about Unity. So the next Sunday as we were deciding where to go, we both just looked at each other and said how much we liked Unity. We continued to attend Unity and felt such a part of the church family there that we decided to join. We love our church family and know that we are in just the place God wants us to be to worship and serve.

O

Eula Oldham

My Aunt and Uncle, Denvil and Edna Nolen, and Aunt and Uncle Jim and Mary McDavid were how I became associated with Unity.

I was saved at Unity on April 21, 1981. Brother Charles Davis baptized me.

Aletha Osborne

I was saved in 1941 in a tent revival in Barboursville, WV and was baptized in the Guyandotte River. Later, I had attended a revival in a Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio, and had heard Harold Cathey preach. It was there that I heard about Unity Baptist Church in Ashland. I helped the women of the WMU serve a dinner that day, in Dayton. That is how I first met Brother Harold Cathey.

Elwood and I came to Unity in September of 1982. I remember visiting door-to-door to invite people to church. I've worked in the Cradle Department with Vesta Layne, and I've worked with the WMU for sixty-three years, starting at age 19. I have sung with the choir during Christmas cantatas of the past. Now, I enjoy the Prime Timers, visiting the hospitals, homes and sending cards. Elwood and I celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary at Unity.

When we came to Unity, Bill Sturgill was "our deacon" at that time. Elwood had gone to an old country church—Old Regular Baptist, I believe. He was unsure of bringing his membership to Unity. Bill Sturgill had visited and talked with him several times. During the time that Bill was talking with Elwood, I had to be hospitalized for a while. When I came home from the hospital, Bill came over to our house to be with Elwood, helping to get me settled in. When I was settled into my room, Bill came in and said, "Aletha, Elwood and I had a wonderful time when you were in the hospital." Elwood had been saved. Bill Sturgill was instrumental in winning Elwood to the Lord. He wanted to be baptized by Brother Cathey, and he was.

The Lord has blessed me with many years and in many ways. I love my church and my church family.

P

Gavin and Jessica Patrick

We were looking for a church, and we were visiting several churches. We decided to try Unity. On the day that we came, we didn't know anyone. We went to Sunday School, and there was no one there that we knew. When we came into church, we still didn't know anyone. We were sitting there, waiting for church to begin when Leslie Allison came up to us and asked, "May I sit with you?" Of course, we said that she could, and that started a wonderful friendship. We've been best friends since then! Later, Leslie told us that she just felt that the Lord was leading her to sit by us. I'm glad that He did, and very glad that she obeyed His prompting!

Deidra and Tanner Patton

We came to Unity because a dear friend and colleague, Beverly Carr invited us to The Living Christmas Tree and she always talked about Unity Baptist Church at school. Also, Unity had a very organized and impressive Children's Department for Tanner. I loved Mike Rice's Sunday school class.

I was saved July 11, 1974 at VBS at First Baptist Hindman, and baptized by Brother Gary Frizzell at Unity Baptist on July 17, 1994. Tanner was saved after a Revival at Unity on May 3, 1999, and was baptized by Dr. Floyd Paris on June 5, 2005. We enjoy serving our Lord and Savior in a variety of ministries at Unity, but one of my personal favorites is The Living Christmas Tree which was the ministry I saw in action the first time I visited Unity Baptist Church.

Gary and Susan Parsons

I don't have "family" at Unity but I will be forever grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Clauda Bowen (Willa Hensley's parents) for seeing to it that I attended church. Willa and I were close friends in school and my family did not attend church. I don't remember how many years ago exactly but Willa and her parents invited me to go to church with them. Mr. and Mrs. Bowen faithfully picked me up every Sunday morning to see to it that I was in church. In fact, I was saved at Unity during that time at a revival held by

Homer Martinez and then baptized by Rev. McMillen. My husband and I were married by Rev. McMillen. Gary also accepted the Lord as his Savior during a revival at church. We can't remember the preacher's name, but Gary was under such conviction at this revival he just knew every time that preacher pointed his finger, he was pointing at him! Rev. McMillen then led Gary to the Lord and baptized him. Then, when our son was born, one of our first visitors when I was in the hospital was the new preacher, Rev. Cathey and his wife. Sadly, we strayed for several years and drifted away from God. Then again, Willa and Gary Hensley invited us to come back to Unity. We transferred our membership back to Unity on the day that Rev. Paris was voted as our new pastor. So we have come full circle and thankfully God never gave up on us! I am so thankful that Mr. and Mrs. Bowen gave of their time and shared their love of God with me!

Greg and Gwen Peach

We came to Unity in the process of looking for a new church. Our family being originally from Central Kentucky, we didn't know much about the churches around here. We were both members of a Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. Greg worked with Glenn Puzey, Steve Cole, and Mike Rolen at Ashland Oil. Mike and Samantha Rolen invited us to come to Judgment House and then the Living Christmas Tree, and it was then that we decided that we wanted to become members and have our kids raised in this church!

Sandra Perkins

When I was twenty-four years old, I stopped going to church at my former church. In the year 2000, my Dad passed away. God impressed upon me to go to Unity Baptist Church. I told him, "No!" I felt that church was too big. At my other church, there were only about sixty people. I just felt that this church was too big for me. My mom and I did come, but we didn't come back for a while. However, in April of 2001, God impressed me to go again. I followed His leading, and as soon as I walked in the door, I knew I was home!

Dave and Beth Perry
Daniel and Philip

In 1988, the same year that Pastor Floyd and Penne Paris moved to Ashland to become Unity's pastor, the Perry family at long last were able to move back to the area where I grew up, namely Hurricane, West Virginia. We moved from Greenwood, Indiana where we'd lived for nine years and previous to that we had lived seven years in Bartlett, Tennessee, a suburb just east of Memphis, Tennessee. We at first attended another church that had been recommended to us by Woody Church, Bob Church's cousin, who had been on staff at the church we attended in Greenwood, The Community Church of Greenwood. Incidentally, the pastor of that church, Dr. Charles Lake, is also from Ashland, Kentucky.

It is an interesting note that in the 80's I worked in the jet engine shop for FedEx at our hub in Memphis all the while not knowing the future pastor of the church I'm attending today was a part time handler sorting and moving (I hate to say throwing) boxes at our hub there while attending seminary, not even a half mile from where I worked. In all likelihood, he worked the graveyard shift and I was on dayshift.

Now, back to what brought us to Unity. We quit the first church that was recommended and started attending another church of the same denomination, not Southern Baptist. Philip, our youngest son, was starting Third Grade at Rose Hill Christian School. I'm thinking it must have been about 2002, about the time Philip was entering Seventh Grade that something happened at the church that made us start looking elsewhere. My wife, Beth, came from a Baptist background and an active dynamic youth group was one of our top priorities. We knew the Watts family from their two sons attending Rose Hill Christian School and from David Watts coaching our son Philip's youth basketball team. The Watts had been attending since Pastor Floyd had arrived.

We investigated about the youth ministry and were happy to find out that it was an active group and under the very capable, loving and spiritually mature direction of Kevin and Wanda Riddle. We started attending at that point and have been there for ten years now. As we look back we can see growth in our spiritual lives as we've been on this journey, both on the mountain top and in the valleys. And we've seen the same in our church family from the things we have shared for prayer and praises in our Sunday

School class to the life lessons we've learned from seeing how our Pastor has dealt with the home going of his beloved wife, Penne, by not just talking the talk but walking the walk. Pastor Floyd, Kevin, Wanda, Brad, Sam—you all don't know what a blessing you've been to the Perry family. Thank you and God Bless you and Unity Baptist Church.

Hector and Maritza Pittore

Hector was taking classes at Tri-State Bible College in early 2000. Some of his classmates were Dorothy Ferris, Ruth Jones, Clyda, and this crazy guy named Brad. The job market for Hector was limited; bills were piling up, and no prospect of a better job. Maritza was homeschooling Manny, Mariana, and Ephraim. His friend, Patty, called him one night and asked him if he would be interested in going on a mission trip with a church where her sister Linda attended. The church needed bilingual people to help with a program called Judgment House, to interpret for those who didn't speak English. Hector was given the pastor's name, Dr. Paris. Hector called him that night and told him that he would be interested, but with almost nonexistent income; he could not contribute financially except for gas money. Dr. Paris assured him that they would have a cabin for the family and feed them as well. We were headed to Winston Salem, NC to serve in Judgment House. As we were asked to join the caravan at the I64 rest stop near the Hal Greer Exit, Hector was shockingly surprised to see Crazy Brad waving at him from the back window of the church van. After this ministry experience, God continued weaving our ministerial interests, Christian growth needs, and the hunger to trust God with the threads of opportunities that were laid before us with this newly found family. This is how the Pittore's became embedded as fibers of the Unity Baptist Church tapestry.

Charles and Donna Powers

We have a lot of history with our family belonging to Unity Baptist Church for many years. My mother, Martha Maggard, came to church for years with her daughter, Brenda Lewis, and Wayne and Angie. Our two daughters, Allison Powers Pierce and Vanessa Powers McKenzie, were saved and baptized by Bro. Harold Cathey when they were teenagers.

Allison started coming to Unity when Larry and Joyce Fletcher were youth leaders.

I, Donna, was saved on the last Sunday that Brother Cathey preached before he went to Africa and the last one he baptized. When Charles was saved and decided to join Unity Baptist, our granddaughter, Stephanie McKenzie, had gotten saved in their church in Richmond, Va., and they had planned on coming home for Christmas. She agreed to get baptized with her Pappaw at that time, and that was a great time that they will always remember. They were baptized by Brother Charles Stewart.

While working in Judgment House in the Heaven Scene, I remember the night Larry Carr came running in between scenes and told me that our granddaughter, Brooke Pierce, had gotten saved and I told the other workers and we were all rejoicing. A few years later, our other granddaughter, Haley Pierce, got saved at Judgment House. It is worth all the work that the people put in to have Judgment House when you see your loved ones get saved. We love our pastor and staff and have made so many friends by working in the different activities and know they are there for us if we need them. Unity is a very friendly church.

Bonnie Prince

I came to Unity because God led me here. I was out of church for several years. My children, Aaron and Amber, came along. Then, my I lost my brother, who had appointed me guardian over his children, Heather (14) and Jeramie (10). I felt that I needed to get them all in a good church. I started visiting churches, and when I came to Unity, they had a good Youth Group, and a good pastor, Harold Cathey. Everyone was so friendly. I just felt that God was telling me that He wanted me here!

Glen and Cindy Puzey

When we first came to Ashland, we came from Illinois. There were no Southern Baptist Churches in the neighborhood, and I really didn't know a lot about such a church. So, when we came to Ashland, we were looking for an Independent Baptist Church. We visited different churches. We were going to a church for the Sunday morning service, another one for the Sunday evening service, and another one for the Wednesday night service. I

talked to Mike Rolen at work about looking for a church, and he told me about Unity. We had visited several churches and had gone back for repeated visits to a few of them. Brother Harold Cathey was what kept me coming here. There were several things that we were looking for when we visited. One was that the people needed to have their Bibles. Another was that the preacher actually taught from the Bible. Another was listening for the congregation to actually turn the pages in their Bibles to find the passage and follow along. These were good indicators that the church was following God's Word. After visiting two or three times, we talked to Pastor Cathey about Southern Baptist beliefs. We felt comfortable with what he told us. When we decided to join Unity, Brother Cathey told us ahead of time that he would be leaving the church to go to Africa. That didn't change our minds. When he announced publically that he was going to the mission field, we joined the next week. We were confident that Unity's congregation would have a leader who would stick to the Word of God, and that they would be genuine and know what they were talking about. We felt that we could come here and be spiritually fed and grow in His Word.

Q

R

Viva Ratliff

We moved to Ashland in the year 1961 and transferred our letter one year later, in 1962, from Tucker Memorial Baptist Church in Huntington, West Virginia.

Our daughters, Sheree and Janet, grew up at Unity and were saved and baptized in 1972. Brother Ira McMillen was Pastor at that time. We give all the credit to their Sunday school teachers, World Friends Leaders and Brother McMillen, for winning them to the Lord. We love the people at Unity. The Lord called Charlie, my husband, home on August 21, 2001. We have had wonderful pastors at Unity Baptist Church, who preach the Bible. I love hearing God's Word. I am still a member at Unity and I love it.

Gene and Pat Ray

I retired from the Air Force in June of 1972; I had been a good soldier for the Devil. My salvation didn't seem to bother me at all. I never did really think about it.

Then, in the week of March 22, 1980 due to circumstances beyond my control, I came under conviction. I was in San Demas, California. I didn't know what to do, but everything I did was wrong. The only thing I knew was that I had to get back to Kentucky. I drove back, and was on my way to find a party, but the Lord had other things in mind for me. I came home and went to my bedroom; I didn't know what to do. The Lord persisted to deal with me and I prayed a sinner's prayer without even knowing what a sinner's prayer was. I know that I told the Lord that my life was in complete shambles and no matter what I did, I could not straighten it out. I needed His help. The Lord saved me there on the bedroom floor. I didn't know what to do; what is a new Christian to do? What am I supposed to feel? I had no answers.

I asked several people who I knew were Christians, but none of them seemed to know how to help me. Arlie Wheeler, my brother-in-law, called Larry Fletcher, who was a member of Unity Baptist Church. Larry came to my house and went over the Roman's Road Plan of Salvation. It helped me a lot. Up to this point it never occurred to me that as a new Christian, I was supposed to go to church. I had no idea where to go, or to what denomination. As Larry was leaving, it seemed like an afterthought when he asked, "Why don't you come to Unity and attend church with us there?" I told him that I would. So, on March 29, 1980, I went to Unity. I went forward and made my public profession of faith. It has now been over thirty-two years, and I'm still happy at Unity Baptist Church. I was honored to sit under Harold Cathey for eleven years and under Floyd Paris these past fourteen years. I've been so blessed and feel that I have grown under these pastors.

Mark and Connie Renfroe

We had been looking for a church. Our kids, Sarah Hicks and Ashley Layne, along with our grandchildren, had moved back to town. We felt we needed to find a church where the kids could be involved and grow. We knew Jamie and Stephanie Lester, and we had gone to Unity back in the

early 1980's. So, we came again, and the kids liked the activities. We felt this was the church we had been looking for all along.

Eli and Carrie Rawlins

I, Carrie, started coming to Unity when I was in the Second Grade, at age 7 or 8. My Dad, Cliff Callaway, served as Unity's Minister of Music here for ten years. We later moved to Michigan, where he continued serving as Minister of Music for two years, and later returned to Ashland. Dad now serves the Lord as Minister of Music for Fairview Baptist Church, five years so far. I married Eli Rawlins, and became Mrs. Eli Rawlins! I continue to serve my Lord by providing special music for both Unity Baptist Church and Fairview Baptist Church.

Tommy, Amy, Mitch, and Nathan Reynolds

I began attending Unity in 1987 when my family moved back to my Dad's childhood home. I was a sophomore in high school. My sisters and I became involved in the youth group and children's programs. My sister found a best friend, Amy Cossett, who I fell in love with and married in 1992. Amy was raised at Unity, coming with her mom and dad, Lindsey and Vicki Cossett. After completing my degree at UK, Amy and I moved back to Ashland and started a family of our own. Mitch was born in 1995 and Nathan in 1997 and have been raised at Unity.

Zach Roberts

In the summer of 2001, I visited the services at Unity with my aunt, Linda Haynes (Grizzle) and her daughter, Beth. Over the next few years I visited Unity off and on and even participated in Judgment House and The Living Christmas Tree. By the spring of 2005, I faced a dilemma: God seemed to be leading me to make Unity my home church. At the time of invitation in each service, Brother Floyd's statement, "If this is where God wants you, this is where we want you," would pierce my conscience and force me to ask, "Is this where God wants me?" Yet, I lived in Wayne, WV and was already involved at a church with my parents, though unhappily so. The obstacles seemed too great: a forty-minute drive to a church of a

different denomination while I owned no car and had no other means of transportation. I prayed, “God, if you want me at this church, You’ll have to provide a way there.” The very next week, we received a phone message from Hector and Maritza Pittore who also lived in Wayne: “We’ve moved our membership to Unity.” Because of their willingness to pick me up each Sunday and Wednesday before church, I was able to commit my membership to Unity where I have learned and grown so much. I’m grateful for God’s leading me to this church where the people have shown me such love, the staff have afforded me so many outlets for ministry, and God’s Spirit has continued to move in my life, ever making me into a clearer reflection of Christ. To God be the glory; great things He has done.

Roger and Margie Robinson

Roger: When I first came to Unity, I came by myself as a twelve-year-old boy. I was saved when Brother Coots was the pastor. I met Margie when we were in the Youth Group. We were married by Brother McMillen. Both of our kids, Roger and Jill were saved here. We’ve been here ever since!

Frank and Ella Mae Rolen

Our first visit to Unity was really a random visit. We were looking for a church, and Unity was close to our home. We were a bit unsure about it, because of its size; it looked really big. But, we came and tried it. We liked it, and we’re still here!

Bob and Pat Ross

In 1997, we moved to South Point, Ohio from Rome, Ohio which is about 30 minutes farther up the river from South Point. We wanted to be nearer our grandchildren in Ashland who were ages 5, 3, and newborn. We visited Unity with them and were happy to find that it was only about a 15-minute drive from our house. It was a wonderful service. Unity was welcoming their new pastor, Dr. Floyd Paris, and it just seemed to be the right time to move our membership there from the church we had been members of for over twenty years. Since our former church was Baptist, but

not Southern Baptist, it was decided we should be baptize and were among the first Brother Floyd baptized. Kenley Dobyms was assigned as “our deacon” and was a wonderful helper to us. Walter McCall and Tommy Dixon came to visit us in our home and welcomed us, which we appreciated very much. Many others greeted us kindly and we now call them friends.

Jack and Pauline Ross

I, Jack, was in the hospital. Dr. Paris came to see me. I told him at that time that I had accepted Jesus in my mind and heart, but I had never professed Him publically. He talked to me about that, and when I was released from the hospital, both Pauline and I made our public professions of faith in Jesus, and we were baptized.

S

Terry Skaggs

In 2003, I was looking for a church for me and my family. I would drive by Unity, but I was intimidated by the size of the building. One Sunday morning, I came by myself to visit. I was welcomed by Kenley Dobyms when I came in. Not only did he make me feel welcome, but so did everyone else. That morning, I heard a fantastic sermon. I came back two weeks later, and I heard a different speaker, but another fantastic sermon! When I left, I asked who the speaker was. I was told that the speaker that morning had been the Pastor, Dr. Floyd Paris. I was curious to find out who the other speaker had been. When I inquired, I was told that the name of that speaker was Harold Cathey, who was the former pastor at Unity, and was filling in for Dr. Paris that particular morning. I thought to myself, “If this church has two pastors that preach the Word like they did, I think this is the place!” When I first came to Unity, Ty Lovette was the Music Minister, and what he chose as music just captured me. Since then, I’ve become involved with Awana as a Handbook Listener, and I have served in the Praise Band, playing guitar. Unity is home now.

Janie Smith

I started visiting Unity in 1997. Brother Gary Frizzell and his wife, Kay visited me about once a month. I went to a “Time Out for Women” program with Lori Stringer, Rhonda Alley and Amy Alley, and I loved it. Holly became involved in the music program because of the encouragement of Cindy Jackson. We were interested in Unity because of the children’s programs that it provided for Holly. We made it our home!

Roy Smith

Ruth and I moved here from Portsmouth. We landed over in Midland Heights. We were close to Pollard Baptist and we knew a couple of boys who went to Pollard. So, we went to Pollard Baptist for seven or eight years. Then, as time went on, we moved to South Ashland, and we were closer to Unity. Ruth didn’t want to drive to Pollard, and I didn’t want her to have to drive. I worked a lot of shift work, so that is why she would need to drive. We had heard Brother Harold Cathey and we liked him a lot. So, because of those things, we decided to join Unity. When I retired, I worked a lot at the church with Doug Borders doing whatever needed to be done. We liked it very much!

Ted Smith

I came to Unity in November of 1956 because of an invitation to come by Carrington and Margaret Webb. Unity was having a revival at the time. Brother Coots was the pastor. I was saved when I was eight years old. I kept pestering my Grandma about it. She would talk to me about the things of God. I would ask her lots of questions and some of them got pretty deep. She would look at me and say, “Well now, son, that’s all I know about it! If the good Lord said it, then it’s true!” That settled any questions for me, too!

Lucille Stafford

The reason we came to Unity was because we were looking for a church. We visited Unity and when we heard Brother Cathey preach, we just felt that he was one of the best preachers that we had ever heard! So, we moved our membership. Our son, Brent, was nine years old when we came, and it was important to us to have a good youth program, which Unity did have. As he grew, the Fletchers were the Youth leaders, and they were just wonderful. That is why we came, and I'm still here!

Mary Sterling

I came to Unity with my husband, Joe. He worked at Ashland Oil and had a restaurant on top of England Hill. That's how I met him. He was going to Unity, and so that is where I went, to be with him. I had been raised in the Methodist Church. When I came to Unity, I was baptized by Brother Tipton. During our time at Unity, Joe felt that he was called to preach, so we left for a while. Joe was the pastor at Ashland Baptist Church, which was a mission of First Baptist Church. We were there for about ten years. He was also at Rush Baptist for about two years. When Joe died, I came back to Unity because it was our home church. We had two sons, Harry Joe, Jr., and Scott. I've been going to Unity now for 64 years.

Randy and Delores Spradlin

Delores: I can't remember why I started coming to Unity! I was baptized in the "Old Building". We raised our children, Glenn and Randi, here at Unity, and we're still here!

Carl and Omera Sparks

I lost my Mom when I was 4 years old. My Dad, Glenn Sparks, remarried a woman who I call Mom, when I was 5 years old. Her name was Mildred Click. Mildred was a member of Unity at that time. She was the daughter of Lum Click. That family belonged to Unity for a long time. They go way back! She was influential in bringing us to church. She made sure we were in Sunday school, Bible School, and church services. Dad was converted in 1942. I was converted the spring of 1945, when I was 15 years

old. I've been going to Unity for 78 years. Omera and I were married by Pastor C.B. Coots 60 years ago, in 1952. Omera started visiting Unity when she and Carl were dating. She was saved in 1957. Omera worked with the 2-year-olds, and was secretary of the Adult Sunday School Department when Carl was the Sunday School Superintendent. She also worked in Bible School. Carl served as Sunday School Superintendent when Harold Cathey was called to Unity. He remembers during Brother Cathey's tenure, that we had the highest attendance of 1,000 and we hit 800 a few times! I remember an incident that happened with Brother L.H. Tipton. He called his Sunday school class every Saturday night, to remind them about Sunday school the next morning. One particular year, every boy in his Sunday school class was saved.

Anita Baker and Lori Baker Stringer

The year was 1977 when my Mom, Dad and myself moved to the area from Columbus, OH. We found a house to rent on Jane Hill Road in Bellefonte. My Dad was visiting Third National Bank to open an account for our new business, Stanley Steemer Carpet Cleaning. There, he met a lady by the name of Janet Dobyns. My Dad asked if she knew of a good Southern Baptist Church to visit, and of course she told him of Unity. They proceeded to talk more about the church and she said, "They have a great youth group for your young teenage daughter!" The next evening, we got a knock on the door, and there stood two bubbly teenage girls at our door. They said, "We are from the Unity Baptist youth group, and we heard you have a daughter who might be interested in coming to our church." They introduced themselves as Cathy England (Sizemore) and Melanie Fuller. I thought they were the prettiest girls I'd ever seen. I felt so special because of the fact they took time out to visit a lonely 13-year-old girl who they'd never laid eyes on. That is one visit that made such an impact on my life and I may not be where I am today if it were not for those two girls. Thank you, Cathy and Melanie!

Our first Sunday at Unity was wonderful. I was greeted with more youth, ones my age. They were Becki Little (McDavid), Cindy Reynolds (Jackson) and Teri Tilton. They took me in and made me feel very welcomed. We went into the worship service...a packed house I might add...and heard a beautiful soloist by the name of "Beverly Oliver," who my

Mom and Dad raved over and over. Then when Brother Cathey preached, that sealed the deal. We found our church.

Over the next thirty plus years, I became involved in various choirs, ensembles, trios, and church soloist. It has been such a blessing to be part of an active church. I've also been blessed to sit under such great preaching like that of Brother Cathey, Gary Frizzell, Mike Rice and Floyd Paris. There are also lay people here such as Larry Fletcher, Wanda Riddle, Jane Forth, and David Watts...and many more, but I can't name them all. What an impact this church and its teaching have made on my life. I am forever grateful. I'm grateful also for this church to be a praying church, who three years ago prayed for my healing. You all gathered at the St. Mary's waiting room and prayed me through my brain surgery. You also took time out to write me notes of encouragement. I will get those notes out when I'm feeling lonely or discouraged and I'm reminded of how blessed I am to be part of this body of believers. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Today, Unity continues to have an impact on my next generation. My children have been greatly influenced by many of you—Laura Malone, Frances Hughes, Brother Brad, Kevin Riddle and Mary Beth Jones...just to name a few.

If the Lord should tarry, I pray the next 175 years will be just as prosperous if not better for our church as we strive to win our world for Christ. With a loving heart we can be a light that shines for others just like your lights shined for me. Thank you, Unity Baptist Church.
(written by Lori Baker Stringer, on July 13, 2012, the 3rd Anniversary of her brain bleed)

Peggy Sturgill

Gary Wurts and Brother Cathey came to visit Bill and me, because Gary's aunt had told Gary that we were looking for a church. They invited us, and we came and kept coming. Bill got involved in teaching—he loved it. He taught the Men's Class and taught until he couldn't do it anymore due to Alzheimer's Disease.

Paul and Nell Stringer

We were both members of another church which had no youth program for our boys, P.J. and Alan. We had heard that Unity had a good youth program, and we decided to try it out. Brother Cathey was the preacher at that time. When we came, we liked it; the boys liked the Youth programs. We've been here ever since.

T

Mike and June Thaxton

The Holy Spirit had been dealing with me (Mike) for a while. I had gone to church for years. I visited Unity, and when I did, several people came to visit me on visitation night. Gary Wurts, Mike Rice, Brother Cathey, Bill Wright, Glenn Morgan, and others from my work, such as Dave Davania came to visit. We'd talk about the things of God. One of those nights, Gary Wurts told me, "I had you on my heart." That touched me, and I kept coming. On the evening of December 13, 1982, Gary Wurts and Mike Rice visited me. They went through the plan of salvation. Gary looked me in the eye, and asked me a question. He asked, "Will you take the Lord at His Word?" I said, "Yes! Why not?" I followed the Lord in baptism, and that was the beginning of my time with the Lord and with Unity Baptist Church.

Joy Downs Thielen

I was born into Unity. I started in the Cradle Roll Department. My parents are Jim and Ruth Downs, and my grandparents are Ralph and Eunice Walters. My grandmother, Eunice Walters, started the library here at Unity and took care of it for many years. I think she probably read every book before putting it on the shelf. My brothers are Paul, David, and Ralph Reed Downs. We all grew up here. I was baptized on April 7, 1963. I moved away and now I'm back home! I'm enjoying the Mary Martha Sunday School class. My life was formed by this church, mostly by Brother Harold Cathey

Carl and Marlene Thompson

In the summer of 2006, after 27 years of Christian life, and by our own decision, Marlene and I found ourselves without a church home. We had never stopped attending church, but we knew that being a “visitor” somewhere was not what God intended for us. It was (spiritually) a very trying and frustrating time, always feeling that we did not belong, could not be comfortable, and were just not happy. Every ride home from services on Sundays and Wednesdays was usually very quiet with little or no conversation. We knew that God had something better for us and that if we prayed and depended on His leading, we would eventually be where He wanted us to be and we definitely wanted that to be His decision and not ours. At home, we frequently talked about the various Baptist churches in town; we visited, either in person or on websites, and compared thoughts and feelings about each one. It was a very spiritually challenging time and we had only one comfort, and that was that we knew that if we were patient and looked to Him, God would place us where we could commit ourselves to a new church family and serve Him. We knew that this was a critical and most important time of decision in our lives.

One evening at home, we were having the usual conversation of what to do about a church and what we should do while waiting on the Lord. Suddenly, and for what reason I really didn't know at the time, I said, “Let's visit Unity Baptist on Sunday.” I had never been to Unity, except for a wedding several years ago and I didn't think we knew anyone who was a member. Marlene had visited with a friend some years ago and had attended a couple of Living Christmas Tree presentations but knew very little more.

Our first visit to Unity was the very next Sunday evening service. We'll never forget the two smiling gentlemen who met us at the door and made us feel so welcome. We now know them as Fred Boggs and our dear departed brother, Kenley Dobyms. There was definitely something about that night and now we know that God was finally, in His good time, beginning to show us our way. For the first time in a very long time there was a bit of guarded excitement and conversation on the way home and even a bit of anticipation. In a short time Unity Baptist Church was the only church on our mind and heart and we were coming back for most every service. Within a month we began to know that this was the church home that God intended for us—without any doubt.

In less than a short time, Brother Floyd and Gene Ray paid us a visit in our home. We are so thankful for that visit—we definitely felt welcomed and wanted. In the same short time, Phoebe McCoy and Larry James invited us to attend their respective Sunday School Bible Studies. Everyone at Unity seemed to go out of their way to make us feel welcome. Looking back we can truly say that the congregation of Unity “loved us into their midst.”

On November 19, 2006 we went forward and offered ourselves to the church for membership. That was six years ago, at this point in time, and it’s as if we have been part of Unity for all our lives. We know this for sure, when God leads you to where you need to be, there is contentment, happiness and blessing. We know everyone has their own great story about how Unity became their church family—this is ours.

June Thompson

In 1963, my family moved to Ashland, Kentucky when my husband was transferred to this city. I began attending a church which was within walking distance to where we were living. Approximately three years later, we moved to West Virginia due to a job transfer. Our stay in West Virginia lasted only two years. It was a relief to us to learn we were being transferred back to Ashland. We moved into a small neighborhood across town from where we had previously lived.

I returned to the same church I had attended when we lived in Ashland the first time. I reconnected with my church family and became active in the ministries of that church. In my new community, I quickly made friends with my neighbors. I learned that one of my new friends was not saved and that she did not attend church anywhere. I began witnessing to her and would invite her to attend church with me.

While my friend was visiting out of town, she attended a revival and was saved. She decided to be baptized at Unity Baptist Church. Since the church I was attending did not have Wednesday evening services, I would go to Unity with my friend. I really thought that if I attended Wednesday night with her she would be more faithful in going. I enjoyed our Wednesday nights together and attended the weekly services for quite some time. Everyone was so nice to me at Unity. They knew that I attended my church on Sundays and therefore understood why I wasn’t at Unity.

In the spring of 1981, I had a mole removed from my arm that was diagnosed as Melanoma. My surgeon was able to remove all of the cancer so I did not require any additional treatment. I was relieved and optimistic that everything was fine. Then five weeks later, while dressing one morning I discovered a knot under my arm on the same side where the mole had been located. I was very frightened as the knot had appeared so soon after the surgery. My oncologist insisted that it be removed immediately. Before I went into the operating room, Reverend Harold Cathey and his wife, Beverly, came to visit me. While they were there, Rev. Cathey prayed with me. His words were just what I needed to hear, especially before my surgery. The minister of my home church did not come to see me during this monumental event in my life.

I have been a Baptist since I was a young girl. However, I had gotten away from the Baptist Church and was worshipping on Sundays with another denomination. At this time in my life, I began to feel like I had nothing to hold on to. That is when I decided I needed to get back to my "roots". After writing a letter to the church I was attending requesting that I be removed from their current attending roll, I moved my church membership from my home church, First Baptist Church, in Madison, West Virginia to Unity Baptist Church.

Darrell and Sandy Tucker

Darrell came here by himself for a while. He wanted me to come with him, and I promised that I would, but it took me a while. God spoke to my heart and I finally came. We came for four years, and after one service, Darrell said that he felt led of the Lord to join Unity. I told him that I was with him!

Howard and Linda Turner

Judgment house 2006- my daughter Chelsea and her best friend, Anna Lockhart, had an acting spot in one of the scenes. Chelsea asked us to come every night to see it...on the last night, we agreed to go. At the end, a group of men offered to pray with us, and although I didn't go forward, my son Christian did...I asked him what they prayed about, and he told me that he prayed for me...because he wanted to go to Heaven, but would be scared if I

wasn't there...heartbroken, I gave my life to Christ that night, joining the rest of my family. We became members soon after and were baptized together as a family. Christ worked through our children to reach us that night...we now serve in Judgment house and anywhere else we can to bring the word of Jesus to others.

Howard, Linda,
Chelsea and Christian Turner

David and Linda Turner

We were looking for a church, and we were familiar with Unity because of our daughter, Leslie Allison. We came to Judgment House and The Living Christmas Tree and loved them. So, we decided to make this our church home!

U

V

BJ and Betty Imes VanHoose

My Name is Betty Jane Imes VanHoose, and I am married to B.J. VanHoose. He is retired from Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, and I am retired from the City of Ashland, having faithfully served for fifty years. We live on Bear Creek in Catlettsburg, Kentucky.

The Imes Family lived in Ironton, Ohio for many years, but in 1934 we moved to Ashland and settled on Walters Hill Drive. Our neighbors, the James Chaney Family, who were very active in our church, Unity Baptist, invited us to come to church with them, which we did, and loved it ever since. Remember what the Bible tells us—Honor your Mother and Father and definitely your neighbors.

I became a Christian in 1935, was baptized at the First Baptist Church, in Ashland, and my brother, Wilford Imes, my sisters Erma Jean Imes Clere and Ruth Imes Rahlmann, also our Mom and I went into Unity Baptist. Erma Jean and husband, Ken Clere, and I were members of the choir for a long time. Our choir picture is in the foyer of our church. That was when we were younger. We are not as able to come to choir practice now.

My brother, Lloyd Imes, the Judge, and sister Edna, were the musicians in our family.

Our Dad, Joseph Imes, died when I was five years old, and I am now 88 (in 2012). He was murdered by his best friend, and later the friend committed suicide. It certainly was a sad time for our family.

My nephew, Ralph Clere, is also a member of Unity and can be seen at our church whenever there is something to be done. His brother, Don, would be right beside him in the workload if he didn't live away (in Georgia). Ralph's son, John and his wife Becky, are very active in our church, helping out with church needs. Don was a member of Unity for many years, and he has had a lot of medical problems. Unity has been so faithful in prayer for Don, and the Lord has healed him. What a miracle!

My mother, Mollie Imes, passed on to Heaven in 1960. She had it hard raising seven children—no Social Security back then, but my brother, Judge A.R. Imes, of the Ashland Police Court, was just starting his Law Practice, so he could help some, and also my older sister, Edna, helped some by working in the Insurance business. Although we didn't have much money coming in, we were a happy respected family.

We, my husband and I, have two children—Suzanne Campbell and Stephen VanHoose, four grandchildren—Terri Arhurs, Kristen Brown, Stephanie VanHoose, and Bobby Joe VanHoose. We also have three precious great-grandchildren, Isabella Brown, Emileigh Grace VanHoose and Mia Kathryn Brown.

Traci Sanchez Vanhose

I first came to Unity because Michelle Beason brought me. She introduced me to Brother Floyd Paris several months ago, and I love it. Everyone's been so wonderful to me. My son, John, is seven years old and he loves Awana. We both love Unity.

Dan and Julia Vencil

We were at Second Baptist Church, and that church started the 45th Street Mission (Blackburn Avenue Baptist Church). I, Julia, was saved and baptized there at 45th Street. A problem arose, and Second Baptist was not going to be able to support the mission any longer. That was the time when

Unity Baptist took over the support of that mission. Dan had been the treasurer at 45th Street, and JD Welch was the treasurer at Unity. They had to co-ordinate together quite a bit because of that. We came to Unity in 1991 because Unity had supported the mission at 45th Street, and they wanted to support Unity because of it. Brother Cathey had left, and Mike Rice was the Interim preacher at that time.

W

Brock and Shelly Walter

We were invited to attend a service at Unity Baptist Church by David Watts when he reached out to our kids/family to come and see the bees at the Career and Technical Center. We accepted his invitation, and our first visit to Unity was a welcoming service with amazing Bible teaching and wonderful music. The next week we visited with our whole family. During that service, Scott Walter and the entire boys' Children Church got up and walked back and sat in the pew where we were sitting. After the music, the boys from Unity invited our boys to come to Children's Church. When we arrived home that day our son, Tyler said, "Do we have to visit anymore churches? I want to stay at Unity.

Jenny Lanthorne Walter

I was blessed with having two Christian parents, Norman (Red) and Virginia Lanthorne, who brought me to Unity Baptist Church. I first came when I was ten days old, and through the years I was active in Sunday school, Training Union, Sunbeams, Gas, YWA, and choir. I was saved in April of 1948 in a revival here at Unity by W.K. Wood and baptized by the pastor at that time, L.H. Tipton. I was eight years old, and I had to stand on a bucket in the baptistry.

I remember different experiences with different pastors. Of course, L.H. Tipton baptized me. I remember C.B. Coots. The first wedding ceremony that Ira McMillen performed was mine and Jack's wedding, on June 15, 1962. Brother Mac also baptized my husband, Jack, and our three sons. Brother Cathey baptized our daughter, Amy (Alley). I remember

Gary Frizzell, and Brother Charles Stewart when he served as Interim Pastor, and now Dr. Floyd Paris.

I've been here for a good while, and I will be here at Unity until the Lord calls me home!

Scott and Sheila Walter

Our immediate family became part of Unity a little at a time. Scott grew up here, coming with his parents, grandparents and siblings over the years. I first visited Unity with Scott and became a member after our engagement in 1994. Our twins, Chloe and Sean, were saved here and baptized together in 2010. We are happy to all be a part of the Unity Baptist family.

David and Jennifer Watts

We were looking for a church. The very first time that we came, we had dropped the kids off downstairs, and we were late, as usual! Kevin Egan helped us find our way to the sanctuary. We were visiting other churches, and it took us a while to decide on a church. One Wednesday night, Brother Cathey gave an invitation that was truly convicting, and we felt that the Lord was leading us to Unity, so we joined at that time. The very next Sunday, Brother Cathey announced that he was leaving for Africa. (David says that he and Jennifer ran Brother Cathey off, for sure!) As I think back, I'm glad that we joined on that Wednesday night, because if we had not, we might not have joined otherwise, due to Brother Cathey leaving. As a result, we feel it was God's providence. I know as I walked into this church afterwards, I felt at home.

Philip and Dreama Webb

Our Unity story begins at Wrightsville Beach. Philip and I were at the beach the summer of 1979. Jim and Rosemary Graham were also there. Rosemary and I were talking on the beach about church. I told her that we were looking for a church. Rosemary told me about Unity and invited us to visit. She was sure that we would like it.

When Philip and I came to visit I remember sitting down front, about five rows back. Brother Cathey was the preacher, and we were really moved by his preaching and the response of the congregation. We shared our experience with my parents, Bob and Lucille Carr, who then came and eventually moved their letter to Unity, also. My brother, Larry Carr, was saved later on and joined Unity.

Our children, Amy and Brandon, grew up through the church. Amy was baptized by Harold Cathey, and Brandon was baptized by Gary Frizell.

Donna Welch

J.D. Welch and I were married in 1999, two years after our mates' deaths, two days apart in 1997. At first we took turns going to my church and Unity and I could see he was not comfortable in my church. So, we chose his church and I've been quite happy there. Everyone is so friendly. I knew a lot of people there and have made many new friends. We attended together for twelve years. J.D. has been gone a year, and I continue to attend there. I am in the Alice Welch Sunday School class where they make me feel very welcome. I enjoy the messages, the music and the fellowship!!

Kathy Whitely

The reason I am at Unity is because my daughters, Amy Compston and Amanda Evans invited me to come. "Bear" who is Amy's son, said, "How come Mammaw doesn't come to church with us anymore?" We had all gone to church in Greenup, but they had recently moved their membership here, to Unity. So, what Mammaw won't do anything for a little six-year-old grandson? So, I came to Unity. It's a farther drive for me, but a shorter drive for my daughters. They reminded me that they had been making the long drive to Greenup to attend church, so now it was my turn to do the long drive!

Bobby Jack and Peggy Woods

Bobby Jack and I were looking for a church and we were visiting different ones. We were invited to go to one that was in the county. We started out on that Sunday morning in October 1999, and as always were running late. We

were at a red light and would have had to turn right to go to the church. He said there is no way we will make it on time so let's go over to Unity. We didn't know anyone there except Harold and Beverly Cathey (Tim, his brother, had married their daughter Janet). BJ said that maybe Harold would be there. Tim and Janet were still going to another church. We walked in and were surprised to see several people we knew. We looked at each other and agreed we liked it there. The music was good and we enjoyed Dr. Paris's message. The back two rows were our favorite. The Conleys, the Jacksons, the Gobles, Francis Hughes, and of course, Ralph Felty, all became our buddies. From there we ventured into Sunday School and choir and have a wonderful church family.

X

Y

Ruth Yates

I was saved out at a Boyd County ballpark where they were having a special service of some kind. Afterwards, my sister, Opal Caudill, asked me about somewhere I was supposed to go. I told her no, I wasn't going there, I thought I'd go to church with her, and her husband Lovell. When I told her that, she knew that something special must have happened to me. I was saved at age sixty-nine. I just love Unity! I think it's the perfect place, at least for me.

Z