



NOVEMBER 2021

THEME: Our Church, The Building



MORATTICO BAPTIST CHURCH

THE HILL

PASTOR'S CORNER

Incredibly, we find ourselves in November! The leaves have begun to change, the air has that familiar crisp feeling of fall. Fall is a beautiful time on the hill at Morattico Baptist Church. Farmer David has cut his corn and we pray he has a bountiful and profitable crop. The oaks will drop their leaves and the well-worn grey of fall and winter will paint the sky.

This month, The Hill celebrates the building that we call Morattico Baptist Church. It is an historic church and her story mirrors the birth and maturing of America. Our present building celebrates her 165th birthday this year, and with each passing year our church becomes more beautiful. But what is even more beautiful is what is happening with the real church, you! There is a sense of purpose and confidence among the Morattico church family and we have a gracious and loving God to thank for that.

We must always remain mindful of the fact that a church is only as worthy of our

Continued on page 2

WHAT IS A CHURCH?

The Bible presents the church as an entity made up of followers of Christ from every nation. When the Bible speaks of a "church," it means believers in Christ. However, when we speak of a "church," we are often referring to the building in which a group of Christians meet. The first Christians did not have a designated building for their meetings. They met in homes, just as described in our beloved Morattico Baptist Church history.

The mother church of Baptists in the Northern Neck of Virginia, historic Morattico Baptist Church was constituted on January 7, 1778, at the residence of Alexander Hunton, which is called Morattico Hall.

Acts 2:46 describes a large gathering of Christians meeting in the outer courts of the temple. Scholars believe that, in the first two centuries throughout the Roman Empire, Christians would gather in public places, to attract unbelievers. It is interesting to note that, even when there may have been several

Continued on page 2

WHAT IS A CHURCH?

Continued from page 1

places available for meetings, all the Christians in one city met together in one place. There were no denominations or factions meeting independently.

Archaeologists unearthed what is believed to be the first Christian church ever built. It's located in a cave underneath the Saint Georges Church in Rihab in northern Jordan – where it's thought early Christians fled to escape persecution. Built in 230 AD, Saint Georgeous is believed to be the oldest “proper” church in the world. So far, 30 churches have been unearthed in Rihab.

Many church buildings are valuable in that they are multi-purpose. Some house Christian schools during the week. Some offer meals, shelter, or other daily provisions for struggling members of the community. A church building is usually viewed as a safe place, a refuge for travelers or those in need. Regardless of denomination, most churches represent a link to God for those outside the faith and are often a drawing card for people in crisis.

Some church buildings lose their importance when they become “whitewashed tombs” such as Jesus spoke of in Matthew 23:27. They are opulent, beautiful, imposing—and dead. The grandeur of a building has no connection to the faith of its people. God can meet with His people anywhere. A building is merely a shelter for their bodies, not a factor in their worship.

A church building can be important, but whether a church uses a building, a tent, or a grand stadium, it should teach biblical doctrine, proclaim the gospel of salvation, and glorify Christ.

THE FLOWER BOX



CAN YOU HEAR THEM RINGING?

Yes, it is that time of year when we start to prepare for the joyous season of Christmas. Soon you will be receiving information about ordering poinsettias which will grace our sanctuary during Advent.

When you bring them home after Christmas services, they will bring festive color to your home.

As always, the Sunday bulletins during Advent will contain a list of the dedications for each poinsettia. Be on the lookout for order forms with all the information in early November. Please consider order a poinsettia (or two).

For more information contact:

Anita Hart at

flowers@moratticobaptistchurch.org

PASTOR'S CORNER

Continued from page 1

Savior as the people within her walls, and in that regard, we are blessed beyond measure. We have musical talent, we have willing workers, we have excellent business people, we have literary experts, we have Bible students and we have genuine, caring congregation. It is a blessing for me to walk in her doors and know that within the walls of this amazing building, we serve a loving God. Yet, the greatest blessing is that I get to worship with you! You are the Church of Jesus Christ and my heart is full when we are together.

Our Church, The Building

Morattico Baptist Church, has a long and storied history. Her members have travelled the world and carried her influence to the farthest reaches of God's earth. One of the most compelling pieces of the history of Morattico Baptist Church is in the story of the two houses of worship that have graced the hill.

Morattico Baptist Church was established at the home of Alexander Hunton, known as Morattico Hall in January of 1778. Morattico Hall stood on the shores of Lancaster Creek, a tributary of the Rappahannock River, just over the county line in Richmond County. Morattico Hall was a fine and stately manor that served the church for a short while.

The future of Morattico Baptist Church was forever altered in those early days when Robert Carter was baptized in Totuskey Creek in early September 1778. Robert Carter was an aristocrat and at the time was the wealthiest man in Virginia. There are two reasons why his aligning with Morattico Baptist was so significant. First, in 1778, the Baptist church was known as the denomination of the "lower" ranks of society. Our Baptist forebears were farmers and fishermen, men and women whose meager lifestyles were below the status of the wealthy, landed gentry of the Northern Neck. It is well documented in Morattico Baptist history that with Robert Carter's abandonment of the Church of England and alignment with Morattico Baptist Church, persecution of Baptists in the Northern Neck came to an end and the status of all Baptist's rose quickly.

The second reason Carter's joining of Morattico Baptist was so significant is that he was wealthy and able to fund the coffers of this fledgling church.

Continued right

Continued from left

Robert Carter owned 70 thousand acres of prime Northern Neck land, he was a member of the Virginia Council and garnered great influence as a result. Robert Carter empowered the Baptists with legitimacy and standing.

Carter provided materials and labor for the construction of the first meeting house on the property we call, "The Hill." The building was known as the Kilmarnock Meeting House and was one of at least three other meeting houses of Morattico Baptist around Lancaster and Northumberland counties. Very little is known about the first building on the hill other than a description offered by pastor Jeremiah Bell Jeter as, "simple, crude and generally uncomfortable." Nevertheless, Carter provided materials and labor to see that his newly adopted church had a house of worship, simple as it may have been.

On February 17, 1855, a building committee was appointed to prepare for the design and construction of a new sanctuary. The committee included pastor Addison Hall, and on June 16, 1855 the church voted to construct a larger, more comfortable building. The location of the church is interesting as well. The road we know as Route 200 was the main thoroughfare between Heathsville and Kilmarnock and it was also our church's property line. It is believed that the original meeting house was in close proximity to the current building, and if so then both buildings were constructed on the highest elevation and very close to the main road. This would have given Morattico Baptist a commanding view of the surrounding land and a prominent landmark for travelers. Being so close to the main road was an attraction for travelers who were on horseback or horse and buggy during those early days.

Continued on page 4

Our Church, The Building

Continued from page 3

The church is both Federal and Greek revival in architecture. Many of Morattico's daughter churches built sanctuaries in the 1840's and 1850's and as a result, the Mother Church looks very similar to them, particularly Coan and Lebanon Baptist churches. Like most brick structures of that period, there was a brick kiln set up on the property and local sand and clay were used to make the bricks. Within the newsletter you will find an excerpt from a document that was written by Virginia Carter Pittman and it mentions Richard Edmonds, Sr. who so impressed Elias J. Carter with his plaster work in the sanctuary, that Carter hired him to craft the walls and molding in their farmhouse that is located behind the church.

The current building is largely unchanged since its construction. Prior to electricity coming to the Northern Neck, the church was lit with the oil lamps that are in the sanctuary today. The oil lamp fixtures were filled with oil and lit each Sunday morning. The church had wood stoves in each corner for winter heat. The stove pipe openings are still visible in the four corners of the sanctuary. The original floors were heart pine and are still evident under the pews (**see photo page 6). To date, we have not found interior photographs from the time of construction, however, we have included a photo from 1856 that was taken shortly after the church was completed.

The balcony was for slaves and the two side entrance doors were their access to the church. The sanctuary has a center rail that divided the men and women.

In October 1953, Mrs. Alfred I. duPont turned the first shovel of soil in a ground breaking ceremony for the Sunday School and Fellowship Hall addition.

Continued right

Continued from left

Lalla Gresham Ball, the mother of Jessie Ball who married Alfred I. duPont, was a member of Morattico Baptist Church and as a result Mrs. duPont and her family were very generous with Morattico Baptist Church. The building was dedicated in May 1955 with Mrs. duPont in attendance.

Morattico Baptist Church has, since 1778, continued to serve Almighty God through the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Great Depression, malaria, yellow fever and flu epidemics and most recently, the Covid pandemic. Since 1856, her faithful members have worshiped in the building that adorns the hill today. Her front doors are original and through those doors have walked some of the most revered Baptist ministers in history. Today, through those doors walk the heirs of those great men and women of faith who endured great hardship and enjoyed great success over these last 165 years. Morattico Baptist Church is in many ways, America's church. This wonderful building in Federal and Greek-revival style is the center of worship for the honored heirs to the history of Baptists in the Northern Neck, Virginia and the world. Her bricks were made by man, this church was ordained by God.



Circa 1856



Ken Bransford
 Lewis Brothers and family
 Charles Carlson
 Gail Dawson
 Eleanor Delano
 Dan Ficklin
 Bill Fletcher
 John Gilbert
 Linwood Gresham
 Marbary and Virginia Harcum
 Linda Herring and family
 Amy James
 Holly Whaley King
 Kim Mann
 Michelle Metzler *
 James Newton
 Richard and Rosie Pruett
 Jonell Robertson
 Sandra Scripture
 William Scott Smith
 Fran Stout
 Patsy Sylvia
 Margaret Welch
 Travelers over Thanksgiving

Please note when you add someone to our prayer list, please provide their address so we may send them a card.

** address needed*

Prayer list contact

Mae Shelton at 804-366-3817

Excerpts from

THE OLD ORIGINAL CARTER HOUSE *

(the house directly behind MBC)

By Virginia Carter (Pittman)

As told to her by cousin

Fannie Edmonds Noland in 1933

*let us know if you would like a copy of the full story

This house was built in the year of 1856 by my great-grandfather, Elias James Carter.

On the second floor, there were four rooms, two bedrooms, a parlor and a living room. The parlor ceiling had beautiful, fancywork on it and a fancy figure in the center of the ceiling. This fancywork was made and fixed by Richard Edmonds, Sr. who also constructed the beautiful fancywork in Morattico Baptist Church.



Parlor Ceiling in The Carter House



Ceiling in Morattico Baptist Church

NOVEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries

2 Page Carlson
 5 Dustin Crenshaw
 9 Jordan Abbott
 16 Darlene Nonnemacker
 29 Brenda Crowther
 29 Crystal Whay

November 16, 1968
 Richard and Rosie Pruitt

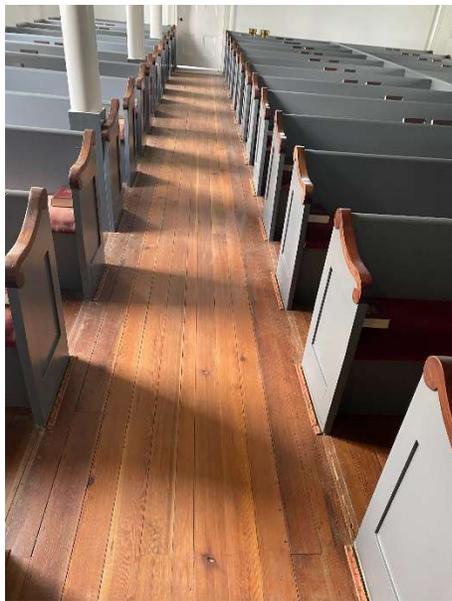


If you have ideas, suggestions, family news, articles or photos, submit them to newsletter@moratticobaptistchurch.org or call Kathy Pittman at (804) 761-2441.

Each month the newsletter has a theme. The theme for the following month will be noted in each newsletter to give you time to prepare a submission if you wish.

Deadline:
10th of each month

Theme for December:
The Poinsettia



**Pine floors when carpet was removed



Weekly events:

Sunday: 10 am Sunday Service
Thursday: 7 pm Facebook Bible Study

Special events/music:

Nov. 7th Alabaster Grace
Nov. 18th Business Meeting
Nov. 24th Thanksgiving Eve Service
David & Phillip Humphreys
Nov. 28th David & Phillip Humphreys

Calendar events:

1st All Saint's Day
7th Daylight Savings Time ends
11th Veterans Day
25th Thanksgiving
28th First Sunday of Advent



Deaths in Our Church Family

*We remember our dear friends
Nell Brothers and Ron Herring.
We rejoice in their homegoing and pray for
their families and friends whom they leave
behind.*

Morattico Baptist Church

Richard C. Abbott, Pastor
924 Morattico Church Road
Post Office Box 228
Kilmarnock, Virginia 22482
phone: 804-577-3043

e-mail: pastor@moratticobaptistchurch.org
website: moratticobaptistchurch.org
Facebook: The Morattico Baptist Church