

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF CANTON BAPTIST CHURCH

- **1809:** First steps are taken to build a meeting house in New Canton, as it was known at that time. It appears that, although meetings may have been held, a formal congregation was not organized at this time.
- **October 17, 1818:** 31 people - 26 members of Salem Baptist Church and five members of Cohansey Baptist Church - are dismissed from their respective congregations to form a new one at Canton. (Canton Baptist Church is considered to be a daughter church of Cohansey Baptist.)
- **November 12, 1818:** Rev. Henry Smalley and Rev. Joseph Sheppard convene a council in which two Deacons, Abram Harris and John Mulford, are chosen; Charles Mulford is elected Clerk.
- **December, 1818:** Rev. Thomas J. Kitts from Wilmington is ordained and becomes the first pastor of Canton Baptist Church.
- **May, 1826:** Rev. Ebenezer Jayne dies while in office. He was 70 years old and had served since February, 1824.
- **1838:** The congregation condemns the old wooden church building.
- **July 16, 1840:** The cornerstone of the new brick building, which will measure 40' X 60' is laid on the site of the original structure. Total cost of the building when finished is \$2,021.05, most of the construction having been done by members.
- **October 29, 1840:** The new structure is dedicated to the worship of GOD. Services continue for several days, with Rev. Samuel Smith of Salem preaching.
- **December 7, 1850:** the Church votes to give a special offering to a black pastor, E. Fellez, in order that he might redeem his wife and four children from slavery.
- **1937:** The Annex, measuring 34' X 40', is built, attached to the south (right) side of the sanctuary building. The brick structure costs \$2,421.58.
- **April 5, 1939:** The horse sheds are removed.
- **June 6, 1945:** The first telephone is installed in the parsonage.
- **April, 1946:** A new organ is purchased for a cost of \$1,700.00. Linwood Dilks had started the organ fund with a gift of fifty dollars while serving in the Army in Africa.
- **March, 1947:** The old iron fence is removed from in front of the church.
- **July, 1948:** After being completed in May, the new baptismal pool is used for the first time.
- **1950:** A brick-faced extension is added to the rear of the 1840 sanctuary building, providing new first- and second-floor classrooms. It also adds indoor restrooms to that building and connects it to the 1937 annex. Most of the labor was provided by church members.
- **October, 1952:** Canton Baptist, Quinton Baptist, and Elmer Baptist withdraw from the West New Jersey Baptist Association (WNJBA), State Convention, and National Convention (American Baptist), after - among other things - the WNJBA ordains, with a vote of 12-7, a Mr. Harlow, *who does not believe in the deity of Christ*. The WNJBA defends his ordination and is unwilling to reconsider. Another objection cited is that "The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society refused to recall a man definitely committed to a modernistic [i. e., non-biblical] stand and linked by his writings and associations with pro-communistic activities and position[s]."
- **November, 1952:** Canton Baptist joins the Conservative Baptist Association.
- **1955:** The brick vestibule which protrudes from the front of the sanctuary building is constructed.
- **March 17, 1968:** Having first been proposed by Pastor Albert Theis in July, 1960, the 36' X 80' educational building, on the north (left) side of the sanctuary, is dedicated. Fifty years later, this remains the last major addition.
- **2017:** A concrete ramp is added for handicap access to the south side of the educational building.
- **March, 2020:** For the first time ever, all meetings are suspended for several weeks, due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak.
- **Sept. 26, 2021:** Pastor Kyle Fisher retires after serving for 28 years (1993-2021).