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Leonia Baptist Church

Many of the early settlers in the Leonia area were Confederate Veterans who raised cattle and sheep. After 1882, when the railroads came, logging became the major industry, followed by turpentine.

Among the first settlers in the area was William (Bill) Green, a cattleman. One of the first schools, a one-room log cabin, was located on his property.

Confederate Veterans who homesteaded the area included Green, who served with Co. B 8th Florida Regiment, Stanley (Dick) Morrison, Jonah Nelson, Elijah Padgett, Thomas John and G. W.

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Broxon. All served with Laird's Gulf Rangers. Some of their descendants still live in the Leonia area.

Leonia Baptist Church was organized beneath a dogwood tree in 1889. The organizing pastor was J.F. Register. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. Azariah Watson, Mr. and Mrs. William (Coot) Spears, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stanley.

In the beginning, a couple of small buildings were used for both church and school. On August 5, 1905, Mr. and Mrs. Coot Spears gave an acre of land on which to erect a church. A framed building was the first Leonia Baptist Church.



Church Building

Legend has it that Rev. Register wished aloud for a memorial stained glass window installed in memory of his wife, Sallie Leonia Register. She had died during his early ministry. D. F. Green was

a Presbyterian, but attended Leonia Baptist Church frequently due to the distance from his home and the Euchee Valley Presbyterian Church. He made the preacher's wish come true by importing and installing the window. The cost was fifty dollars.

Mary Green and Millard Owens were the first couple to have a wedding in the church.

One of the most serious discussions in the Leonia Baptist Church was over the question of drinking and dancing. Two young men were coming home from a baseball game in Caryville and as they came through the community of Prosperity, they passed a place where people were fiddling, dancing, and having a lot of fun. Naturally, they stopped to observe, although neither of them participated, so they say. However, word got around and their "indiscretion" was brought to the attention of the church. Neither of them felt that he had committed a sin, but one made an apology. He said, "If I did anything that was wrong, I'm sorry." The apology was accepted.

Rev. Register resigned from Leonia Baptist Church on September 13, 1921.

In 1946, the old frame building was torn down and a new brick structure erected. The new church was built entirely with love offerings and gifts.

The present pastor is Bro. Stacy Stafford. He, and his wife, Ann, have two children, Seth and Lacey. When some of the older people were told the church was contemplating calling Bro. Stacy as pastor, our thoughts were, "This will never work. There is no way one so young can pastor Leonia Church with the history it has." God proved us all wrong. Bro Stacy has been an instrument for God in the pulpit, and Ann has stood with him.

At the time of his calling in 1998, until now, Leonia Church has continued to grow.

Sunday School Averages in 1998 and Present: Enrolled 20, 159; Average Attendance 10, 80; Vacation Bible School no data, 150.

Discipleship Training Averages: Enrolled 0, 83; Baptized 0, 15; Letters and Transfers 2, 6; Budget \$3,000, \$105,000; Missions no data, \$30,850.

An Educational Building was erected in 2003, measuring 110 x 50 feet. The building is debt free. According to the Holmes County Baptist Association, Leonia Baptist Church is second in the Association in giving and is first in per capita giving.

Looking toward the future, Leonia Baptist Church has 64 children enrolled, ages birth to 17 years of age. We believe the Lord has a great future for the Leonia Community.

Submitted and written by: Mrs. Pat Andrews. Sources: Holmes County Advertiser, Church Records, and the memories and the people of Leonia Baptist Church.

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Hudson Hill Church

oysters and fish from West Bards at the church on the 4th Sunday in May. This tradition has continued since that time. Salads and such things that would not spoil in the heat were brought to use as side dishes. Church meetings were held on Sundays and it was reported that the folk had to run the goats out of the church and sweep the manure out before services were conducted. The existing building was initiated by Kenneth Bradley, a local gospel minister. A cemetery is located beside the church with graves that include Civil War veterans. A man with the last name of Clark was the first to be buried there and his grave is currently marked with surrounding bricks. The current church building has been vacated for many years. A new church has been organized since March of 2005 and is currently experiencing growth.

Submitted and Written by: David H. Davis, Pastor of Hudson Hill Church, 1514 Spears Rd., Westville, FL 32464.

Hurricane Creek Baptist Church

Hurricane Creek Baptist Church was organized in 1895. A few



Hurricane Creek Baptist Church

families got together and decided to start having church and called J. E. Register to pastor. The first meeting place was a 20' x 20' one room log school house. The benches were also made of logs.

In 1905 a one room frame building was erected. This served the needs of the congregation until 1951 when it was replaced by a concrete block building.

Hurricane Creek was a member of Geneva County Baptist Association until 1925 when it joined Holmes County Baptist Association.

Submitted by: The Heritage Book Committee. Source: Information provided by Holmes County Baptist Association.

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