

Ebenezer, Vernon (West Florida)

Other early female members include Sarah Cobb, Eliza Nelson, Mary Clark, Mary Ann O'Daniel, Roxy Potter, Rosy Evans, Phareby Davis, Sarah Nelson, Clark Dees and four persons whose first names are not shown on the church records. Their last names were Mercer, Clark, Jones and Cutts.

The membership adopted the Articles Of Faith of the Bethlehem Association of Alabama. Members of the church designated the fourth Sunday and the Saturday before as regular meeting days each month. The Saturday before the fourth Sunday in August 1846 was set apart for fasting, prayer and feet washing. The church became affiliated with the West Florida Baptist Association in 1847. Only those who walked "The Straight and Narrow Path of Righteousness" were secure in their membership in the new church. Minutes of the church often reflect the actions taken against members accused of specific violations from drinking alcoholic beverages to telling false hoods and from dancing to living in adultery. The best defense at least for the first offense appears to have been a confession a plea for forgiveness. That usually brought an erring member another chance. For a second offense, the penalty was usually exclusion from membership.

Holmes Valley Baptist first built their church in Vernon, but it was destroyed by a hurricane in late August 1856. After meeting in the courthouse for some period, the members started holding their meetings in the new Moss Hill Methodist Church. They continued meeting there until after the War Between the States. They then voted to "tender our thanks to the Methodist Brothers for the use of their house of worship for the indefinite length of time we have worshiped in it". Nearly two weeks later they voted to move their meeting place "down to the school house near Brother E. H. Martins". It was at this time that the membership changed the church's name from Holmes Valley Baptist Church to Ebenezer Baptist Church on December 2, 1865. Meetings were held in the school until 1894, when a new building, authorized in 1899 was occupied. It was replaced by a new building 1918. This building was damaged by a tornado in 1936 and has been rebuilt and expanded in the meantime. During the last three decades of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, Baptist home missionary work and church expansion gained such impetus and momentum that the denomination became and has remained the largest in Washington County.

Pastors of Ebenezer Baptist Church:
Past to Present

Lemuel Tippins
Dale Porter Everett
G.W. Underwood
W. W. ODum
W. M. Howell
D. A. Skipper
Robert Harris
W. A. Bryan

E. D. Nelson
W. P. Richardson
J. D. Courtney
C. T. Anderson
A. B. Wombell
D. J. Phillips
F. C. Hawk
J. W. Kent
W. H. McIntosh
Auburn C. Hayes
J. W. Baker
Bryon Nelson
W. W. Hawk
Lewis Rhymes
Eric Grant
Robert Earnest
P. Smith
Edward Jones
Grady Weeks
R. E. Upton
Hillard Brewer
Alcus R. Brock
Ray KuzMAUL

* The original minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church were donated to the University of West Florida Library in Special Collections on March 15, 1996 for preservation.