

## *Church History*

In 1914, The Reverend Jake Turner called a small congregation together for the purpose of worship. Services were conducted under a bush harbor for a one year. Reverend Turner and the followers of Christ secured finances to have a building erected in 1916. The church was built on a tract of land donated by Brother John and Sister Mattie Briggs. This church was called, Union Gospel Baptist Church.

For several years, Reverend Turner served as pastor of Union Gospel Baptist Church. He was succeeded by the following pastors: Reverend R. A. Lane of Richmond, VA and Reverend W. A. Parham of Petersburg, VA and Reverend M. G. Skinner of North Carolina.

Among the first deacons of Union Gospel Baptist Church were Deacons: Sampson Barnett, Charlie Briggs, and Coy Ezell. These brethren did much to perpetuate righteous living and Christian fellowship. In 1916, Brother Harvey Hite became a member of the Deacon Board.

In the late 1920's, Reverend Mills G. Skinner was called as pastor of the Union Gospel Baptist Church. He later re-named the church Friendship Baptist Church. This Church was located in the Perry House (the Briggs property of Arlington Road).

Because of an increase in membership, it was necessary to build a large structure. Not only did the pastor and deacons contribute greatly to the development of the new church, but many of the early members accepted the challenge of duty and gave of their time, effort, and finances. Consequently, in 1930, a new frame edifice was completed.

Since the establishment of Friendship Baptist Church, there have only been two pastors: The Reverend Mills G. Skinner, who served until 1939 and The Reverend Dr. Lorenzo W. Jacobs, Sr. Dr. Jacobs began serving in 1939. Deacons John Lane and John Q. Parham were the first ordained deacons in the re-named church. Because of the dynamic leadership and Christian spirit of the Dr. Jacobs, the Friendship Baptist Church developed tremendously in its religious influence, membership, and financial status. Inspired by their leadership the members worked hard to erect a new brick building, which was dedicated in 1960.

While under Reverend Jacobs's leadership, improvements to the building were made to the interior and exterior to include a choir room, deacon's room, office space, additional bathrooms, handicap ramp and expansion of the fellowship hall and choir stand which was completed and dedicated in 1982. A new church van was also acquired which provided transportation for the

elderly and handicapped members. Reverend Jacobs licensed/ordained several ministers into the gospel to spread God's word: Reverend Samuel F. Greene, Reverend Judge Brown, Sr., Reverend Thomas Wallace, Sr., Reverend Harry Hatcher, Reverend Robert Watkins, Reverend George Lucas, Reverend Franklin Donaldson, and Reverend Willie Brown. Among the many auxiliaries, two youth groups played an integral part of the church, the Friendship Future Leaders of Tomorrow and Friendship Youth Club. Dr. Lorenzo W. Jacobs, Sr. served as pastor for 48 years, he retired after his health began to decline.

Reverend Willie Brown was elected pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in June 1987 and was installed as pastor, December 20, 1987. During Reverend Brown tenure, Reverend James E. Clements, Sr., Reverend Jerry Kelly, Reverend Willie Williams, Reverend Dwayne Jenkins were licensed to preach. Reverend Brown added the following: The Minister of Caring and the Women Fellowship were established also church van was purchased. Reverend Willie Brown was known for visiting the sick both hospitalized and at home. Dr. Brown motto was "Love is the Rule of the House." After 12 years of leadership, Reverend Dr. Willie Brown retired in December 31, 1999.

After the retirement of Dr. Brown Friendship called, the Reverend Dr. Harold E. Braxton to serve as Interim Pastor from January 2000 until May 2002, Dr. Braxton served Friendship faithfully, he will always be remembered by his favorite saying "Help Us Lord."

Reverend Carl M. Johnson was elected pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in May 11, 2002 and was installed as pastor July 28, 2002. As the membership grew, Rev. Johnson brought aboard Youth Minister Intern Reverend Michael Johnson (2003-2006 upon his graduation from VUU School of Divinity), Youth Minister Intern Reverend Emmett Young (2006-2008 upon his graduation from VUU School of Divinity) and current Youth Minister Intern Reverend Lacette Cross. Reverend Johnson also added Wednesday night Youth Bible Study, exercise classes with Reverend Reginald Thornton and the Senior Friends Fellowship. Striving to build a strong unity between Pastor and the Congregation, Reverend Johnson held Friendship's first Men's Conference (2004) and Women's Conference (2005) both held in Williamsburg, VA. Pastor Johnson ordained Reverend James E. Clements, Sr. in 2003. In 2004, Friendship licensed their first woman to preach the Gospel, Reverend Iver E. Watkins. Pastor Johnson also licensed, Evangelist Mary Dandridge and Reverend Rebecca Moody in 2005 and Reverend Sylvia E. Jones in 2010. The following deacons have been added to the Diaconate

Ministry: Deacons Goldie Bailey, Larry Delane, Ronald Bellamy, Victor Branch, and Haywood Washington, Jr.

Pastor Johnson's vision to move Friendship has added and accomplished the following: Church Community Development Corporation, the re-organization of the Trustee Ministry (Budget Control Manager and Assistant and Tellers), Office Administrator, Minister of Music (Sylvia E. Jones 2002 - 2008 and Marcell C. Wyche 2009 - 2015), Director of Christian Education, Discipleship Ministry, Pastor and Deacons monthly visitation of sick and shut-in and nursing homes, Radio and Television Ministry, Praise Dance Ministry, Events Committee, the completion and the purchase of several properties surrounding the church, new roof and new furnace

Reverend Dr. Norwood G. Carson was elected as the fifth pastor of Friendship Baptist Church on November 15, 2015.. Rev. Carson believes that God's divine appointment and will is that we embark upon a new work of mission and ministry as Pastor and People. Submitting to the Lord's urgings, he takes this opportunity to communicate the task God as set before us.

Under the pastoralship of Rev. Dr. Norwood G. Carson, not only are souls being converted, but membership numbers have increased. To God be the Glory for the great things He has done and continue to do though our Pastor and his vision.

Grace, Peace, & Mercy As We Labor Together in God's Vineyard...