

Community News

Section B

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35th Pastoral Anniversary of Rev. John D. Fuller, Sr

“The Servant Who Answered The Lord’s Call” - Isaiah 6:5-8

Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church * Fayetteville, NC

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a pastor, he desireth a good work.” ~ 1 Timothy 3: 1

Our Pastor, John D. Fuller, Sr., the son of the late Deacon Leon and Mrs. Pearlie Mae Fuller, the father of John, Jr., Eva Regina and Frankie Bernard, grandfather of Gamarkis, Raven, Brittany, Farrah and Fahron, was born in Thomson, Georgia, on May 23, 1946.

He received his early education in the McDuffie County School System, Thomson, Georgia and graduated from R. L. Norris High School in 1965. Despite many hardships, typical of a sharecropper’s family, he was an honor student. His higher education began with one year of study at Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, followed by his obtaining a B.A. Degree in Sociology from Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, North Carolina. He began his Masters Degree program at Shaw Divinity School, Raleigh, North Carolina, however he transferred to Morehouse School of Religion, Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia where he received his Master of Divinity Degree, with a concentration in Parish Administration and Biblical Studies. He began studies toward a Doctorate Degree at Boston University’s School of Theology, Boston, Massachusetts. He was awarded honorary Doctor of Divinity Degrees by Virginia Seminary and College, Lynchburg, Virginia and Shaw Divinity School, Raleigh, North Carolina. On November 17, 2000, he received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina. Our Pastor also received in 2001 the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Morehouse School of Religion, Atlanta, Georgia. Nominated by Fayetteville State University in March 2004, he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education. On May 3, 2008, Rev. Fuller was honored by his alma mater, Morehouse School of Religion, Interdenominational Theological Center, with the honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree.

John D. Fuller, Sr. was called to the ministry at the age of sixteen. At the age of seventeen (September 23, 1963), he preached his initial sermon during a church business session at Jones Grove Baptist Church, Thomson, Georgia. In 1966, he was drafted into the United States Army and after an overseas assignment in South Korea, he was assigned to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. While stationed at Ft. Bragg, the young minister was often a guest preacher for local congregations. This exposure caused Baptist Union Baptist Church, Hope Mills, North Carolina to call him in 1969. In 1970, the Beauty Spot Baptist Church, Fayetteville, North Carolina, called him as Pastor. The Union Baptist Association ordained him July 12, 1970. During the period that he served both churches (Baptist Union, 1969-1973; Beauty Spot, 1970-1973). Both churches grew spiritually and financially, while both churches’ worship structures were expanded.

Our leader assumed the pastorate of Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church the third Sunday in October 1973 in the small white frame church near the intersection of Skibo and Raeford Roads. Eleven months later, ground breaking for a new facility took place. The new structure was dedicated in 1975.

Under his leadership, numerous programs, activities, organizations, and boards have been implemented and/or expanded. Among those were the Young Adult and Youth For Christ Choirs; Deaconess Ministry; and the Birthday Club. The existing bus ministry was expanded; Annual Black Emphasis Services (for Black History Month); the first female Sunday School Superintendent; the first female Trustee; a departmentalized Sunday School; two earlier morning Sunday Worship services; expansion and reorganization of choirs; an improved Church Training Union; the male usher group; a Music Ministry with a full-time Minister of Music; two softball associations; for 20 years, a state accredited 4-Star day care center; a Scholarship Committee (funded); a centralized treasury; a tutorial program; children’s church; Saturday Academy; Interfaith Hospitality Network for the Homeless; Caring Hands; Mother’s Board; SHARE Program; Health Services



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Ministry; Overseas Ministry; College University Liaison Ministry; Yokefellow Prison Ministry; food pantry; coat ministry; satellite campus for the GED Program; Senior Citizens’ Noon-Day Prayer Service and Bible Study; Laymen’s League; an A-1 Missionary Department; a loan program for qualified members who want to start small businesses.

Following the mortgage burning for the 1992 erected sanctuary, Pastor Fuller led Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church into a higher level of service and productivity. Affordable housing has been a major thrust. To this end, J. D. Fuller Place, consisting of forty-seven apartments, is now a community of senior citizens. The church has also built and dedicated a home in Habitat Village. To reach the growing Hispanic population in our area, a new ministry was established in 1998. It has grown to become a church (1st Spanish Missionary Baptist). To serve our growing congregation, new positions: Assistant to the Pastor for Administration, Music, Congregational Care, Christian Education, Development, Environmental Concerns and Finance have been added. Looking forward to the 100th Church Anniversary, a Historical Centennial Committee has been appointed by Pastor Fuller to research and compile the rich history of Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Inc.

Pastor Fuller has served as Moderator of the Union Baptist Association, which encompasses fifty-nine (59) churches. On the state level, he has held the office of 4th Vice President, Vice President-at-Large, as well as, Vice Chairman of the General Board of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc. and is the Immediate Past President. For the Lott Carey Foreign Missionary Convention, he is the former Secretary of the Executive Board. A former Trustee of Shaw University, Pastor Fuller served on the Morehouse School of Religion Board of Directors over twenty-two years. Governor Jim Hunt appointed Pastor Fuller Vice Chairperson of the Task Force on Racial and Religious Violence. Locally, this minister has been a member of the Board of Directors -Cumberland County Community Action Financial Counseling Service, Life Member - Fayetteville State Alumni Association, Fayetteville State University Board of Trustees, Fayetteville State University Foundation, Life Member of the NAACP and a member of the 100 Black Men of America, Cape Fear Region.

On October 31, 2002, Pastor Fuller’s tenure as President of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc. ended. He led the Convention for four years under the theme, *“The Challenge Is The Same: Reach The Masses”*, developing and implementing plans to reach and teach approximately 1,800

churches, God’s mission for His people in this millennium.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, sound doctrine and on the principles of tithing, Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church has grown to a membership of more than four thousand three hundred (4,300). More than sixty (60) men and women have been called into the ministry. Many are pastoring churches and serving as chaplains. Amongst those were Keith Jones, Chaplain - U. S. Army; Theodore Bryant, Chaplain - U. S. Navy; Louis Hackett, Chaplain - J. D. Fuller Place; Dexter Alexander, Chaplain - Ashton Woods Homeless Community; Darryl Fort - True Vine Ministries, Lompoc, California; Joseph Smith - Shiloh, Northern VA; Marchall Brunson - Morning Star World Harvest, Raleigh, NC; Reginald Wells - New Christian Chapel, Rosehill, NC; Gene King - Rockhill, Raeford, NC; Bishop Wayman Kirkman - Hope Christian, Fayetteville, NC; Luis Berrios - 1st Spanish, Fayetteville, NC; Gary Cannon - Kingdom Ministries, Raeford, NC; J. W. Canady - 1st Baptist, Marston, NC; Richard Bethea - New Ben Salem, High Falls, NC; Perry B. Irby - Restoration, Fayetteville, NC; Edward St. Julian - Eastern Star, Tarboro, NC; Dennis Leach - 1st Baptist, High Point, NC; Lei Knight - Manna Fellowship, Spring Lake, NC; William P. Janey - First Baptist, Red Bud, OK, and Frederick Hendley - Hood Memorial AMEZ, Fayetteville, NC. Adopted ministerial sons are Larry Alford - St. Peter Baptist, Raeford, NC; Antonio Burroughs - First Pentecostal Assembly of God, Sanford, NC; Darryl Ferguson - Shiloh Baptist, Wilmington, NC; A. McKinley Royal - Pilgrim’s Rest Missionary Baptist, Memphis, TN; Otis Clayton - Mt. Zion, AR; Robert G. Hedgepeth - Pine Chapel, Hollister, NC; David Camps, Sr. - Baldwin Branch, Elizabethtown, NC; Eric Mansfield - Poplar Springs, Rockingham, NC; Virgil Reaves - Fayetteville, NC; Tomi King, Sr. - Swan’s Creek, Hope Mills, NC; Mark Powell - Bearskin Baptist, Clinton, NC; Louis Hackett - Garland First Baptist; Lionel Cartwright - First Baptist, Chadbourn, NC; F. Bernard Fuller - Manna, Spring Lake, NC; Keith I. Jones - Shiloh, Norfolk, VA; and Wayne Stafford - Fellowship, Allen, TX.

Rev. Fuller is never idle. Like the gears and wheels of mechanics, his mind is constantly in motion with thoughts of what’s best for the people that God sent him to Lewis Chapel to shepherd. He listens when God speaks, and then implements the vision that God imparts to him. He is not only a builder of men, but of buildings also, and is a firm believer in ownership. Most of the property owned by Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church was acquired under the leadership of our Pastor. Properties include the pastoral residence; the JD Fuller Place Retirement Community; office buildings located at 5412, 5414 and 5416 Raeford Road; 24 acres on Old Bunce Road where the John D. Fuller Sr. Recreational Athletic Complex is located. The Church also owns property near the South end of Skibo Road, Strickland Bridge Road, Ramsey Street, and on Highway 421 South of Clinton, North Carolina. Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church has acquired 40 acres of land, purchased and built over one hundred thousand square feet of space under the pastorals hip of our Pastor with an estimated value of \$20 million dollars.

Reflections of Rev. John D. Fuller, Sr. reveal a giant of a man who has proven to be a teacher, minister, advisor, administrator, builder and friend to all mankind ... *“an uncompromising servant, laboring in word and doctrine, worthy of double honor.”*

“Build A People And They Will Build A Church: God’s Uncompromising Servant” in the person of the Dr. John D. Fuller, Sr., has led this flock for thirty-five years with God as his Leader. As he knelt behind the old wooden church to ask God for guidance, his prayer was answered. To God Be the Glory!