

**Davis First Baptist Church  
Homecoming after 150 years  
October 15, 2017**

# Complete History of Davis First Baptist Church

on its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Oct.15, 2017

Including I. Recent History, II. Buildings, III. Members, IV. Pastors Serving,  
V. Pastors Ordained, VI. Churches and Missions founded.

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## **I. Recent History DAVIS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH 1993 to present**

The Davis First Baptist Church invites you and your family to join and participate with us in this church.

We have many programs and services including Sunday School and a morning and evening worship service as well as a Family Night worship with suppers on Wednesday nights, Men's Brotherhood with food on Thursday nights, Vacation Bible School, Children's sermon, Summer Church Camps, as well as many other religious activities. Our church has 157 present members, and for the first time in its 150 year history has active present members who reside not in Davis, but in nearby villages like Atlantic, Stacy, Williston, Smyrna, Otway and Beaufort.

Our music program is the high light of our church and of eastern North Carolina's Choral Church Music. Our pianist for 55 years has been Mrs. Wanda Smith, and her daughter Kara Smith is, and has been for 24 years the Minister of Music for the Church. During that time, Kara has transformed the music of our church to a joyful experience of great church music. When Nancy Harris, our church organist of 40 years passed she was succeeded by Ms. Brenda Washburn on our electric organ. Reed Jarvis is the choral director of the men's choir, and Stephanie Jarvis is the director of our Hand Bell Choir. We also have a "Praise Band" led by Brent Baker.

In December of 2005 our church did not have a pastor, and it called an unknown preacher for a trial sermon. That preacher had been recently ordained, at Bogue Banks Baptist Church, and was a man named Edward Renfrow who had retired from a very successful business career, as well as NC Senator, NC Auditor and NC Controller. In early 2006 our church called Rev. Edward Renfrow and wife Becky Renfrow to become our Pastor Family. They served 10 years and ,with the Lord's help , lifted this church to a new level.

After Rev. Renfrow and Becky left for the Beaufort Baptist Church, our Church called Rev. Keith Wall and wife Christie. They are, with the Lord's help, well received by the Church, and they have started a "Bus Ministry".

Quoting from Rev. Blakely Matthews in 1897, "The church will stand as a mighty tower on the storm washed coast, warning and rescuing men, until earth's last storm is over and earth's last soul is redeemed."

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## II. DAVIS BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDINGS

By Thelma Davis Pittman

updated For 150<sup>th</sup> Church Homecoming October 15, 2017

Davis Shore Baptist Church was organized August 10, 1867. At the time the only house of worship in Davis Shore was a community church for all denominations, located near the place where Louise Willis Bedsworth lived. (*its location was S. West of the intersection of Mollie Lewis Road and Roy's Landing Road*). That church had a balcony to accommodate the slaves. Services for the newly organized Missionary Baptist were held in private homes. It was in 1881 under the leadership of the first pastor, Rev. T. J. Leary, that "thirty men took their axes and went three miles into the forest and cut and carted the lumber out" to begin construction of the first meeting house.<sup>1</sup> The land was acquired from Henry E. Frisbie and wife Harriett L. C. Frisbie, dated January 24, 1885 and recorded in Book MM, Page 478, Carteret County Registry<sup>2</sup>. That building served as the meeting house until Wednesday November 30, 1910. The last event to take place there was the wedding of the pastor, Rev. E. A. Paul to Minnie Davis, a local girl.



**~ Davis Baptist Church showing steeple repairs made following the 1933 Hurricane ~**  
 The right wing of above building was from the original Church started when land was acquired on Jan. 24, 1885. In 1946, the above right wing was turned to the north and is the North wing of the present Church. The above left wing and steeple with a single tall spire were built on to the original building after Preacher Paul's wedding on Nov 30 1910. The above four short steeple spires were repairs made after 1933. In 1946 the present building was started. The above steeple and left wing were torn down. Still today the right and north wing is from the original 1880's era building.

The next day renovation began and the building pictured here became the second meeting house. An ell was added to the south side and the door moved from the front to the side where the two sections joined. At the dedication service the sermon was delivered by Dr. Horton, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Bern. Special music was by Miss Lucy Davis, organist, who held a Music Degree from Meredith College and her brother M. Leslie Davis, soloist, of Beaufort<sup>3</sup>. The steeple was destroyed in the hurricane September 15, 1933 and the one you see here replaced what had been one tall spire. This building served as the place of worship until 1946.

Under the leadership of Rev. L. C. Chandler the third house of worship was constructed. The right section you see in this *photo* was turned and joined to the present building and today stands next to the parsonage on the north side. That part then of today's facility is the original building constructed in the late 1800's. Leon Styron designed and supervised construction of the present building. The first service was held the second Sunday of June 1948<sup>4</sup>.

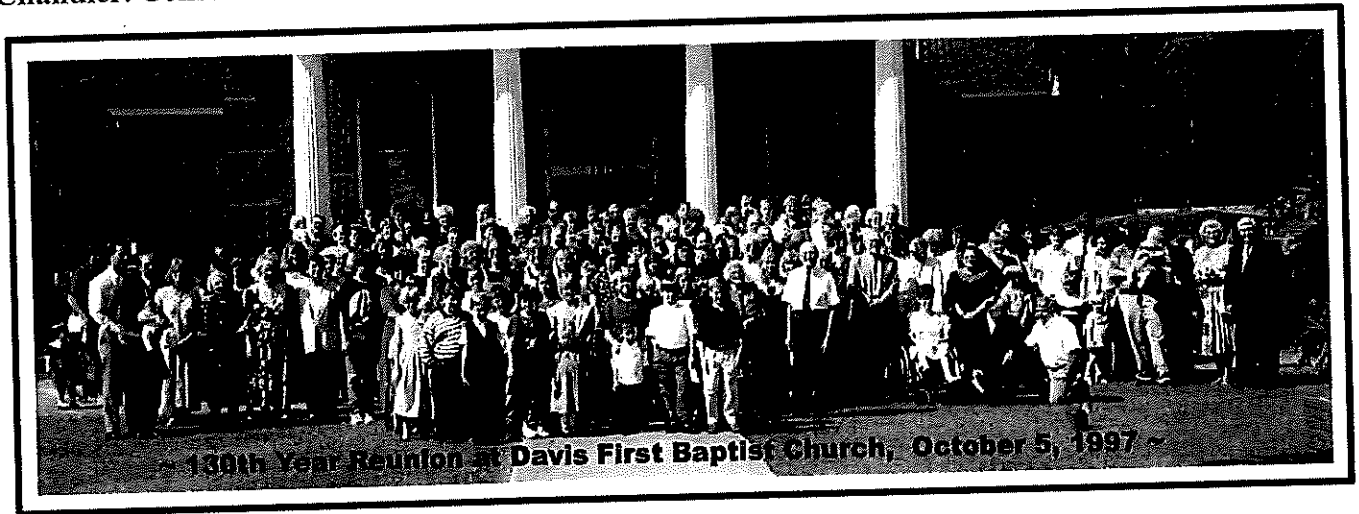


June 13, 1948 Re-Dedication Service for rebuilt Missionary Baptist Church, Davis Shore, NC  
many of the "Ladies of the Church" were fixing for "Dinner on the Yard" and were not in this picture

In 1962-63, the education building was added to the back, the entire facility was bricked and the baptistery installed.

The church has had two parsonages. The first one in this photograph of the second meeting house was erected in 1906 under the leadership of Rev. W. G. Hall<sup>5</sup>. *(It was moved and still stands on the Core Sound Shore NEast at the very end of Alligood Lane off US70, almost at the Oyster Creek. This original parsonage house is owned by in-law descendants of Preacher Paul from Lumberton, NC) .*

The second parsonage was built in 1949-50 under the leadership of Rev. L. C. Chandler. Construction of the second was by Charlie Alligood.



~ 130th Year Reunion at Davis First Baptist Church, October 5, 1997 ~

[The following was written and assembled by Thelma Davis Pittman for the 135<sup>th</sup>  
Homecoming Anniversary of the Davis First Baptist Church]

III. Members

CARRYING THE TORCH

By

Thelma Davis Pittman 2002

The history of the Davis Missionary Baptist has been written several times. The "Church History Davis Shore Baptist Church" by Blakely Matthews in the late 1890s is priceless. The message delivered by Charles L. Paul, at the 125 year anniversary celebration, August 16, 1992, shows his extensive research and great talent. It is outstanding. Both are available for future generations. Much of this paper is based on information found in those two writings. You will find the names of the charter members underlined and hopefully correctly identified.

When I was asked to write some things I had heard or personally knew about the church history, I felt there might be something, worthwhile, I was aware of, not yet put in writing for generations to follow. For that reason, I will try to write of things I know or have heard from reliable sources. One of North Carolina's most prominent historians, R. D. W. Conner once wrote: "No people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great." Based on that admonition I will attempt to record contributions made by some of the great leaders of this church through the years of its history.

Davis Shore Missionary Baptist Church (the community was Davis Shore then) was officially organized August 10, 1867 and now is preparing for the 135<sup>th</sup> (*now for its 150<sup>th</sup>*) anniversary celebration, but according to the wonderful histories mentioned before, there was an unorganized church at Davis Shore long before 1867. We are told in both of meetings held in "Kilby Styron House, and in the grove."

There are several reasons why I believe the unorganized church was in existence at Davis Shore for more than 60 years prior to the organized church being celebrated now. It

was the custom, and most parents did, name their children for someone they had a great admiration for. It was usually a relative, preacher or politician.. The reasons are:

1. In 1804, one of my ancestors, Martin Ross Davis, son of Whittington Davis (1775-1867) and Abigail Davis (1787-1838), was named for the great preacher Martin Ross (1762-1828), who “preached widely in northeastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia” establishing many churches. “He was a prime mover in organizing the General Meeting of Correspondence (1811-21), the forerunner of the Baptist State Convention and was strongly advocating the organization of the convention at the time of his death”. Information on Martin Ross from biographical sketch in the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 5, UNC press.

2. We are told in both histories of the many years Rev. James L. Warren labored in this neighborhood before the church was officially organized. I will quote from *Kith & Kin* by Sanders & Simpson, their information having come from *Yesterday Greets Tomorrow*, published as a history of the Smyrna Missionary Baptist Church: “In the late 1820’s a young ordained minister by the name of James L. Warren moved into the area and began preaching in the homes of the people of this eastern Carteret County community. He was a learned man, and after moving into the area quickly became part of the community life. The community was referred to as ‘Jarrett’s Bay’. (The boundaries of “Jarrett’s Bay” were from Davis Island to Tusk.)” Lorenzo Warren Styron, born in 1828, son of Kilby Styron (1793-1871) and Keziah Davis Styron (1798-1860), in my opinion, was named for Rev. James L. Warren. In all the published articles about Rev. Warren and the “Warren Meeting House,” at Smyrna, I have yet to find what his middle name was, but I believe it was Lorenzo.

3. In 1832, Ann Hasseltine Judson Davis, daughter of Martin Ross Davis (mentioned before) and wife Matilda Davis, was named for Ann Hasseltine Judson. Ann Hasseltine Judson was “the first American woman missionary to go overseas. She sailed with her husband, Adoniram, for Calcutta, India in 1812. Ordered to leave India, they began their missionary work in Rangoon, Burma in 1813. Ann learned the Burmese and Siamese languages, did translation work, taught Burmese girls and managed her household and

cared for her husband during his 18 months imprisonment in 1824-25.” Information on Ann Hasseltine Judson from “Christian Biography Resources” www.

When I read the names of the early pioneers in this church I am reminded of the great contributions they and many of their descendants made to further the work of Christ in our area. It was too long ago for me to remember any of them, but I am thankful I have some knowledge of their efforts. I do not find the name of Kilby Styron (1793-1871) as an officer of the church, or charter member, at the time it was organized, however, his children are well represented. He held his membership in the Smyrna Church. From *Yesterday Greets Tomorrow* : “In 1860, Benjamin Tyler, Kilby Styron, and Abram B. Davis were elected as delegates from Smyrna Missionary Baptist Church to represent them at the Association.” According to his marker in the Styron cemetery, he was 74 years old in 1867. He possibly was too infirm to hold an office, but we have proof he was a great man. His many descendants should be proud of him.

Quoting from the Matthew history: “A. B. Davis and L. W. Styron were appointed as deacons, I. F. Willis, church clerk.”

A. B.(Abram Baum) Davis (1819-1889) and his family were actively involved in the church through the years. His wife, Harriet (Hettie) Styron Davis (born about 1821), was a daughter of Kilby Styron. (*They were the Great Great Grandparents of the present minister’s wife, Christie Styron Wall*), Matthew’s history states: “While Askew and Baldwin were preaching at A. B. Davis’ the first subscription was made towards building a house of worship.” Like Abraham of old, Abram had many descendants. Edward Pond published a list of them a few years ago and there were hundreds. Most served faithfully in this church. Their daughter, Sabra Jimmy Davis Salter (1853-1936) and the entire Salter family have contributed much. Had not the newspaper clipping of the history by Matthews and her father’s obituary, published in the *Biblical Recorder*, not been found in her Bible, we possibly would not have them today; Their other daughters were Louellen (1857-1892)(Mrs. Oscar F. Davis). Louellen and Oscar named their first son, Lorenzo Warren Davis (1879-1899); Margaret (1845-1892) (Mrs. Anson F. Davis); and Mary (Polly) (born about 1848) wife of Dewit Willis. It would be hard for me to adequately tell of the many



good things I have heard of him and his family.. His name and that of his wife Harriet (Hettie) Styron Davis, were passed to their twin grandchildren, Abram & Hettie Davis (Murphy) born in 1883. Another granddaughter, Hettie Salter (Alligood) (1882-1959), was named for her as well.

L. W. (Lorenzo Warren) Styron (1828-1894) was one of the sons of Kilby Styron. I know very little about him except that he married Margaret (Mrs. L. W. Styron) (1838-1897), daughter of John Stencil Davis (1801) and Rosemond Harker Davis. They and some, if not all, of their children are buried in Bay View Cemetery at Morehead City.

I. F. (Isaiah Farren) Willis (1839-1900), the first clerk, quoting his great granddaughter, Marilyn J. Dixon, in a tribute to her mother Bernice Dixon (1904-1997) says: "Her grandfather Isaiah Farren Willis was a man of great faith who was instrumental in establishing the Free Will Baptist Church at Davis." Many of his relatives went with him to the Free Will Baptist Church in 1878. and became dedicated leaders in that church. I do know, however, his son, David Jones Willis (1871-1948), and wife, Georgia Davis Willis, were faithful members of this church through the years and their descendants are involved in the work today. I have said many times "I wish Miss Georgia had known her granddaughter-in-law, Charlotte, she would have been so proud."

Other charter members found in the early history are: Matilda Lewis Styron (born about 1810), widow of George Styron, Jr., mother-in-law of R. L. Paul, Samuel Babbitt, Isaiah Farren Willis and sister-in-law of Kilby Styron; Millie Davis (1832-1911), mother of Oscar F. Davis (1855-1940), deacon for more than 40 years, and Virginia (Jenny) Davis Pond (1863-1954), my ancestor; Kizzie Davis (1825-1870), wife of Wallace W. (Coish) Davis (1824-1870), father of Abbie Davis (1860-1944) and grandmother of Leah Davis Piner (1896-1957); Sallie Davis (born about 1819-1880), mother of Freeman (1848-1903), Frank (1855-1919) and Mitchell Davis (1854-1929); Daniel Davis (1805-After 1870), father-in-law of Asa Jones Willis (1830-1907), uncle of Millie Davis, uncle-in-law of Kizzie Davis and brother-in-law of Sallie Davis; Caroline Murphy (born about 1825), daughter of Kilby Styron, wife of Thomas Clifford Murphy (born 1815), mother of Malissa (1839-1911), wife of Alfred Davis (1833-about 1910), also the mother of Warden Murphy (1853-1931) &

Cason Murphy (1854-1938); William B.(Biddle) Davis (born abt 1810), husband of Kilby Styron's daughter Sarah; Abigail W. Styron (born abt 1833), daughter of Kilby Styron; Sabra Davis (born abt 1825), daughter of Kilby Styron, widow of James G. Davis (1813-1867) from Smyrna.

Another quote from the Matthews' history, written some thirty years after the church was organized: "Some of the brethren who have stood faithfully by the cause during the years are, Samuel Babbitt, R. L. Paul, Alfred Davis, Capt. Isaiah Wade, Isaiah Davis and their excellent companions and many others."

From Samuel Babbitt (born about 1830) and his wife, Ann Styron Babbitt (born about 1831), daughter of George and Matilda Styron, charter member, have come many outstanding leaders in the church. Their daughter Laura (1857-1925) married Capt. Isaiah Wade (born about 1856). Mr. I. Earl Wade (1895-1977), son of Isaiah and Laura Wade, was a deacon for many years and also superintendent of Sunday School.

The Murphy family so active in the church today is from their family. Arnold Murphy (1905-1989), deacon and superintendent of Sunday School and Wayne Murphy (1933-2013) deacon. Their daughter, Emma Clark Babbitt Willis (1866-1944), was the mother of deacons, Henry Clayton Willis (1897-1948) and Justin E. (Bug) Willis, Sr. (1886-1972) and Lena Willis Davis (1894-1982). Their daughter Henrietta (born about 1856-1901) married A. Bahm Styron (1855-1930) lifetime member, grandson of Kilby Styron though his son Whitford (born about 1831). They were the parents of Mrs. Lula Styron Willis (1880-1949), Mrs. Bertha Styron Davis (1890-1975) and Mrs. Maggie Styron Willis (1882-1982), who moved her membership to the Free Will Baptist Church with her husband, and was a dedicated member of that church. Samuel and Ann's son, George Babbitt (1854-1926), gave us our beloved Olive Babbitt Murphy (1896-1983), pianist for many, many years and who most of us fondly remember.

I was asked to write something I remembered funny. I have tried to think what would be funny, and I remembered the story my mother told of the first time they rang the bell under the communion table at the front of the sanctuary. A bell was installed under the table to sound when it was time for the Sunday School classes to break up. The classes

met in small groups in the sanctuary, the only room in the old church. Well dear old Uncle George had dropped asleep during the lesson and when the bell rang he jumped and said quite loudly, "My God, Clarie, have you broke every dish in the house?" (Wife Clara Linquish (1862-1930) was from Smyrna.) The last time I saw that table it was in the room on the right as you enter the church. If I see the table again, I will look under it to find out if the bell is still there. I may never find the bell, but I still hear it.

Raymond L. Paul (1843-1929), patriarch of the Paul family, and Fanny Styron Paul (1859-1921), daughter of George and Matilda Styron, charter member, are listed with those who "stood faithfully by the cause during the years." The pulpit furniture in the first church I remember, built by him, shows what a fine craftsman he was. I visualize the beautiful ceiling in that church designed by him. Three of the ministers ordained by this church came from their family. Charlie Brayman Paul (1866-1904), the first, was his son. He and his wife, Mittie Whitehead Paul, are remembered for their tireless efforts. My mother would tell me about Miss Mittie being her Sunday School teacher and Sunbeam leader and how much she and Mr. Charlie were loved. As a child his image in my mind was larger than that of George Washington or any other person I had ever heard of. Miss Mittie is credited with organizing the Women Missionary Society in this association and also in this church. Mr. Charlie died while preaching at Atlantic in 1904. I have been told that my grandfather Pond went there and brought his body home in his boat, and how the people gathered on the shore waiting for the sailboat to arrive. He is buried in the Paul Cemetery. His name was passed to his nephew, Charlie Brayman Paul (1905-1967), in part to his great nephew, Charles Livingston Paul (1930), and to his great-great nephew, Charles Brayman Paul (1968).

Another of Mr. Raymond's sons, William Luther Paul (1869-1946), was a church leader. He was the inventor. If I may quote from a lengthy tribute to him by Aycock Brown publisher of the *Beaufort News* at the time of his death in 1946: "Luther Paul was a Christian. He was an ardent student of the Bible. Before he moved from Davis he was superintendent of the Sunday School at the Baptist Church there and also director of the choir. Luther Paul not only read the Bible but he studied it. Many of his inspirations for the mechanical things he created were gotten from the Book." I would urge everyone to

read this tribute in its entirety. Others in the Paul family have been actively involved in the churches here and in the places where they moved.

Alfred Davis ((1833-About 1910) and his wife, Malissa Murphy Davis, daughter of Thomas Clifford Murphy and Caroline Murphy, charter member, gave us their son, Isaiah Davis (1857-1928), daughters, Emma Dee Davis (1869-1949) and Etta Davis (Salter)(1879-1956). Their contribution were notable. Mr. Isaiah's descendants included Mr. Leroy Davis (1886-1972) deacon for many years. I can remember during the depression in the 1930s, few people had money. Mr. Leroy had a job working as caretaker at the Club House. He and Miss Bertha stayed at Core Banks most of the time, but when the club house boat docked he came ashore and went straight to our house to give a contribution for the church to Aunt Libby, who was church treasurer. It was Mr. Isaiah's daughter, Minnie (1889-1978), who married "Preacher Paul" and I will write about them later. His other daughters, Mary (1884-1941) and Beulah (1887-1927), were dedicated members. Mary's grandchildren, Audrey Davis Salter and George Davis, are in the church today. Aunt Emma Dee gave us Mr. Curtis (1890-1977), faithful member and his son, Charles Monroe Davis, one of the ordained ministers from this church. Who will ever forget Aunt Etta and Uncle Sam? In my opinion they should be given sainthood, if there were anything like it in the Baptist Church. Uncle Sam was from the Salter family who have been leaders in the church.

When I look at the deed to the property where the church is located, I see the names of the trustees in the year 1885: M. Vanburen Davis, Raymond L. Paul and Samuel Babbitt. Raymond L. Paul and Samuel Babbitt I have already written about.

Martin Vanburen Davis (1831-Aft 1900) grew up in Marshallberg, grandson of Benjamin Davis of Davis Shore, and he married Ann Hasseltine Judson Davis (1832-Aft 1900), daughter of Martin Ross Davis (1804-1875) and Matilda Davis (1805-1865). They made their home at Davis Shore. They had a large family which included: James Webster (Uncle Jim) Davis (1859-1943), the grandfather of our Charles Monroe Davis, (minister); William A. (Uncle Billy) Davis (1854-1942), grandfather of Claude Willis (1901-1973), and Hubert Willis (1902-1979), deacon for many years. Another of Uncle Billy's grandsons, L.

Braxton Piner (1917-2001), was a deacon, teacher and held many other offices in the church serving until his death; Eugene O. (Uncle Dean) Davis (1866-1955), father of Minor Davis (1902-1984) and. Buren Davis, who lives in Florida and must be in his mid to late 90s; Martin Ross Davis (1862-1929) father of Leonard Davis (1901-1977), and we remember how dedicated he and Miss Rosalie were to the church.

The first Salters I have been able to find, in this community, was the family of James N. Salter (born about 1809) and Sarah H. (Sallie) Lewis Salter (1812-1903). They lived at the head of Oyster Creek. Others were still in Portsmouth in 1880. No family served more faithfully. Deacons from the Salter family I recall were: Samuel Salter (1879-1949); Alonza Salter (1915- ); Gerald (Peck) Salter (1915-1987); Ronald Salter (1914-1983); George Salter (1922-1995); Alonza Bryan Salter (1947- ). Chris Paul Salter, ordained minister, is related to this family. There possibly were others. Many Sunday School teachers came from the Salter family. I remember how impressed I was as a child when I saw Aunt "Eliza" (1861-1946) fall on her knees in front of her seat during prayer. She was the grandmother of Alonza Salter and Rena Pearl Salter, church treasurer for many years and the present church clerk. Dena Salter (1915-2000) cannot be overlooked in her efforts. It would be amazing if we knew how many preachers Dena ever fed. I believe it would be difficult to remember one person in the Salter family, who has not held a leadership role in the church, in one capacity or another. Jean Audrey Lewis is a Sunday School teacher, and Nancy Salter Harris, church organist today.

The Gilgo family came from Portsmouth Island after the church was organized. Iona Willis Garner (1915-1994), Alma Willis Pake (1919-1997), and Cecil Gilgo (1912-1995), church leaders, were from the Gilgo family.

The family of Elijah Willis, Sr. (1815-About 1885) and Elizabeth Clarissa Lewis Willis (1821-1868) produced many leaders. Elizabeth Clarissa was a sister of Matilda Lewis Styron, charter member. Their daughter Matilda Ann (1852-1913), gave us deacon William Judson Willis (Uncle Willie) (1870-1955); his son, Elijah Glover Willis (1896-1970), minister; Harlan Murphy (1926-1995), deacon; Mr. Ernest Salter (1883-1974); and the T.B Smith's, active leaders today. Their son Elijah Willis, Jr. (1862-1905) gave us Mr. Carlie

Willis (1896-1972) deacon, and many other leaders including the chairman of the deacons today, Louie Piner (1947- ). Their daughter Elizabeth "bet Jones" Willis (1855-1929) via her daughter Rebecca "Girly" Davis Styron, gave us, Leon Styron (1915-1994), deacon and Sunday School superintendent, who built today's church in 1948 and gave the roof its attractive pitch; Virgil Styron (1908-1968); and grandsons Richard (Dickie) Styron (1954- ) deacon today as well as Elizabeth Styron Ritchey; Elizabeth "Bet Jones" Willis was the mother to both Irvin Davis (1886-1965), who was church clerk for at least 35 years; and my father, Alvin Davis (1898-1955). Leon, Virgil, Dickie, and Elizabeth Ritchey, all Styron children also descended from Kilby Styron through his son John Wallace Styron (born 1824).

The first superintendent of Sunday School I remember was Mr. Thorwald Tallakson (1887-1947). His wife, Gertrude, was my first Sunday School teacher. They were immigrant natives of Norway, who came to our community, united with the church and served faithfully. They made a lasting impression on me.

Other deacons I recall, not already mentioned are: Leland F. Piner (1889-1973; Roland E. Styron, Jr.; William C. Pake; Elbert Pittman (1921-1992); Donald Steven Buck (1950-2001); James Tosto.

We must not forget the name of Rev. E. Asbury Paul (1877-1949), pastor 1909-1920. He came to the neighborhood as a young man. I have heard it was the first church he served. He boarded at the Pond home until he married a local girl, Minnie Davis (1889-1978). "Preacher Paul's" (as he was fondly called) name was given to his nephew-in-law, Paul Davis (1910-1981). He is remembered for his powerful messages, his love of missions, the work he did in the neighborhood to help anyone and everyone he could. He helped plant and harvest crops, cut wood for people, tended the sick and dying. As a child I remember when he, Miss Minnie and their daughters, Janice, Hazel, Elizabeth, and Doris Lee would come back for visits. *(Their in law descendants still own the original parsonage on Core Sound's east shore near the Oyster Creek at th intersection of US70 and Alligood Lane.)* Quite often, Preacher Paul would be asked to preach and on many occasions, he came back and held funerals. He was a great man.

During World War II a Service Flag hung in the old church, with a blue star for each person in the military from the community of Davis. Only one star eventually turned from blue to gold. When the flag was taken down the following article appeared in the *Beaufort News*:

**“Davis Takes Down Church Service Flag**

A service was held at the Davis Baptist church recently for the purpose of removing the service flag from the church, and also as a memorial, for E. G. Willis, Jr., who lost his life in the service of his country.

The choir entered the church in processional led by Rev. L. C. Chandler, pastor. They were followed by 30 service men in uniform who were preceded by the Rev. Boyd Tucker who served as a chaplain in the army.

The program opened with the choir singing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Scripture reading prayer were by Mr. Chandler. The choir then sang “America the Beautiful” after which the pastor made a short talk to the boys, expressing thankfulness to God for their return, and pointing out the difference in the scene that night and the night the flag was first unveiled.

He then introduced the Rev. Boyd Tucker who made the memorial address, and told of his work with the service men. The roll of service men was called by Miss Libby Pond. Jimmie Willis and I. W. Davis, Jr., took the blue stars from the flag and as each name was called Charles Paul and James Paul Lewis presented him his star.

A short talk was made by Clifton Styron expressing the appreciation of the boys for the prayers and many things the church did for them while in the service. Braxton Piner and Weston Earl Wade then took the service flag from the wall and passed it to Harlan and Marlan Murphy, cousins of E. G. Willis, Jr.

They slowly rolled the flag while the choir sang "Nearer My God to Thee." Mr. Tucker asked the veterans to stand in silent tribute to the departed comrade, after which he offered prayer. The flag was presented to Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Willis, grandparents of E. G. The program closed with the congregation singing "Faith of Our Fathers." Benediction was pronounced by Mrs. Pearl Alligood."

**Thelma Pittman from 2004:**

In this writing I have tried to show how the torch, lit at least two centuries ago by our forefathers, to serve the spiritual needs of the people at Davis Shore, has been carried by their descendants, and others moving into the area, until today. May I quote Preacher Blakely Matthews again, it is my hope, "The church will stand as a mighty tower on the storm washed coast, warning and rescuing men, until earth's last storm is over and earth's last soul is redeemed."

(This church history written by Preacher Blakely H. Matthews, Pastor in 1893 was published in a newspaper during period of R. D. Carroll, Pastor 1895-1900. The clipping has no date or newspaper heading, but I believe it was written for an event held at the church Jan. 22, 1897, under the direction of Mr. Matthews, for the purpose of raising money for the Missionary Society. The clipping was found by Dena Salter in the family Bible of her grandmother, Sabra Jimmy Davis Salter. (Thelma)

## **CHURCH HISTORY**

**Davis Shore Baptist Church Jan 1897,  
Atlantic Association Carteret County.**

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Davis Shore was first inhabited by a family named Davis, from a territory in the British Isles named Wales. This was a remarkable family in a great many respects.

The first preacher that visited Davis Shore was a man by the name of Garento from New River, in 1836

The first Missionary Baptist who did a good work on Davis Shore was Geo. W. Wallace. He preached during the years 1840-'44. During this time he held some glorious



meetings in Kilby Styron House, and in the grove. He baptized twenty five in one day, This was the first baptizing on the Shore. Daniel Davis, Hettie Davis and Sabra Davis, were among the number who were baptized that day. Some of that 25, or nearly all of them, have gone home to live in the mansions above, A few have been left to tell the glad news on that good day long ago.

From 1844 to '67, they had no church organization on Davis Shore. The people held their membership at Smyrna but would have their meetings in private houses on the Shore.

In 1844 to 46 Elwell preached for them on the Shore.

Askew from 1846 to 48.

Montague and Baldwin from 1848 to 1852.

Jones in 1854, Rayfield in 1855.

The members soon saw the necessity of a church house and began to build the first house in 1855. It was for all denominations except the Roman Catholics. The house was finished in 1857, during James L. Warren's administration.

J. L. Warren did the preaching from 1857 to 1865, Kingsbury in 1867, G. W. Sanderlin in 1866. During these good old times they sang such songs as "Father I stretch my hands to thee," "Show Pity Lord," "Hark from the Tombs," "On Jordan Stormy Banks I Stand," etc. The preacher would usually line them out.

While Rev. James L. Warren was preaching he organized a Bible Baptist Church but it did not last long. Its days were few and full of trouble.

While Askew and Baldwin were preaching at A. B. Davis' the first subscription was made towards building a house of worship. The first house was built by the community.

In 1867 Elders Jacob Utley and T. J. Leary came upon the scene and held a good meeting, baptizing quite a number and on the 10th day of August, 1867, organized the first Missionary Baptist Church on Davis Shore. The presbytery was composed of Jacob Utley and T. J. Leary. The sermon was preached by T. J. Leary from John 15:4. In September the church applied for admission in the Eastern Association.

A. B. Davis (*Great Great Grandfather of the present minister Pastor Keith Wall's wife Christie Styron Wall*), and L. W. Styron were appointed as deacons, I. F. Willis church clerk. This was the first organized effort to bring the people of Davis Shore to Christ.

The church then elected Rev. T. J. Leary as its first pastor. He served the church from 1867 to 1891, a period of 24 years. During this period untold good was accomplished. Among a great many good-deeds he did was to build a good house of worship.

In 1881, thirty men took their axes and went three miles into the forest and cut and carted the lumber out. T. J. Leary led the way. They sawed the lumber up with saws brought up from Harbor Island. The brethren would work on the building while Bro. Leary would go off and solicit contributions. The old church was built for all denominations except the Catholics, but the new church was built for the Missionary Baptists. During the 24 years that Bro. Leary was pastor many turned to the Lord. But one day a cohort from Heaven heaved in sight flying nearer and nearer and soon it was to the earth and carried the Sainted Leary nearer and nearer towards his mansion above, until with a great clang the gates hoist and with an embrace wild with ecstasy of heaven, he enters the place of infinite and eternal sociality. The sooner the last hour comes the better if we are fitted for entrance in the celestial world.

Rev. B. W. Spilman was pastor in 1892 and did a good work, during this year a Missionary meeting was held in which Ford, Dennie, McLeod, Spilman and Mathews took part; Blakely H. Mathews was pastor in 1893.

The church was dedicated, and a good meeting was held by the pastor and J. B. Moore then pastor at Beaufort, in which quite a number was added to the church.

E. C. Bobbit served the church 1894, Rev. R. D. Carroll is the present pastor and is leading the host of God on to great victory. The spark of love for God that was kindled in the hearts of the few that worshiped in Kilby Styron's dwelling house in 1839 has grown into large proportions, now the church has 95 members.

Some of the brethren who have stood faithfully by the cause during the years are, Samuel Babbit, R. L. Paul, Alfred Davis, Capt. Isaiah Wade, Isaiah Davis and their excellent companions and many others.

The true church is a prophecy for good. Before that imperial carriage in which Napoleon rode, the pride of all France, a dozen epauleted and bespangled soldiers proudly walked, holding brilliant flambeaux above their heads. More imperial is that lordly conqueror before whose mighty chariot you and I walk. The church of Davis is proud to proclaim such a prince and conqueror.

**The church will stand as a mighty tower on the storm washed coast, warning and rescuing men, until earth's last storm is over and earth's last soul is redeemed.**

**Rev BLAKELY H. Matthews**

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**IV. Pastors Serving Davis First Baptist Church 1867 to Oct 15, 2017**

**PASTORS**

<b>Rev. T. J. Leary.....</b>	<b>1867-1891 .24 years longest term in last 150 years</b>
<b>Rev. B. W. Spillman.....</b>	<b>1892</b>
<b>Rev. B. H. Matthews.....</b>	<b>1893</b>
<b>Rev. E. C. Bobbit .....</b>	<b>1894</b>
<b>Rev. R. D. Carroll.....</b>	<b>1895-1900</b>
<b>Rev. N. L. Gaskins.....</b>	<b>1903-1904</b>
<b>Rev. W. G. Hall.....</b>	<b>1905-1906</b>
<b>Rev. W. L. Britt.....</b>	<b>1907</b>
<b>Rev. I. E. Wishart.....</b>	<b>1907-1908</b>
<b>Rev. J. D. Howell .....</b>	<b>1909</b>
<b>Rev. E. A. Paul.....</b>	<b>1909-1920</b>
<b>Rev. I. E. Belch.....</b>	<b>1921</b>
<b>Rev. R. E. Ingram.....</b>	<b>1922</b>
<b>Rev. S. S. McGregor.....</b>	<b>1923-1924</b>
<b>Rev. G. P. Lanier.....</b>	<b>1925</b>
<b>Rev. E. G. Willis.....</b>	<b>1927-1928</b>
<b>Rev. J. S. Stegall</b>	
<b>Rev. C. W. Blanchard</b>	
<b>Rev. R. A. Miller</b>	<b>Interim Pastors</b>
<b>Rev. Z. V. Parker</b>	<b>1931-1935</b>
<b>Rev. N. H. Shepherd</b>	
<b>Rev. G. D. Hedgepath</b>	
<b>Rev. W. B. Sprinkle.....</b>	<b>1935-1939</b>
<b>Rev. Frank Israel.....</b>	<b>1940-1942</b>
<b>Rev. L. C. Chandler.....</b>	<b>1943-1950</b>
<b>Rev. Marvin R. Haire.....</b>	<b>1951-1952</b>
<b>Rev. Maurice P. Garner.....</b>	<b>1953-1956</b>
<b>Rev. James E. Womble.....</b>	<b>1957-1960</b>
<b>Rev. Donald Morris.....</b>	<b>1961-1962</b>

IV. Continued: Pastors Serving Davis First Baptist Church 1867 to Oct 15, 2017

Rev. Jerry Privette.....	1962-1963
Rev. Lowell Willis.....	1964-1965
Rev. Lee Pridgen ( <i>Interim Pastor</i> ).....	1966
Rev. Claude A. Hightower.....	1966-1968
Rev. Ralph Knight.....	1968-1969
Rev. Charles Middleton.....	1969-1971
Rev. Gilbert Cook.....	1972-1974
Rev. J. G. Bailey.....	1974-1979
Rev. Bruce Hill.....	1980-1983
Rev. Henry Huggins ( <i>Interim Pastor</i> ).....	1983-1984
Rev. Marvin R. Haire.....	1984-1990
Rev. Charles Davis ( <i>Interim Pastor</i> ).....	1991
Rev. Billy Hutchinson.....	1991-1993
Rev. Vernon Gilmer.....	1993-1996
Rev. Billy Webb ( <i>Interim Pastor</i> ).....	1996-1997
Rev. Richard Wade.....	1998-2000
Rev. Jeff Everett.....	2001
Rev. Troy Mason ( <i>Interim Pastor</i> ).....	2002
Rev. Billy Webb ( <i>Interim Pastor</i> ).....	2003
Dr. Larry Cain.....	2003-2005
Rev. Edward Renfrow.....	2006- 2016 ten year.term longest in last 100 years
Rev. Keith Wall -----	2016 -Present

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V. **Ministers ordained and licensed to preach by Davis Missionary Baptist Church:**

**CHARLIE BRAYMAN PAUL (1866-1904), son of Raymond L. Paul & Fannie Styron Paul.**

**ELIJAH GLOVER WILLIS (1896-1970), son of William Judson Willis & Sabra Bertie Davis Willis. Was pastor 1927-1928.**

**CHARLES MONROE DAVIS (1923- ), son of Walter Curtis Davis & Mary Willis Davis. Served as Interim Pastor 1983-1984.**

**CHARLES LIVINGSTON PAUL (1930- ), son of John Wesley Paul & Ruby Davis Paul. Professor Chowan College.**

**CHARLES F. MIDDLETON ( ) moved to the area, united with the church, was ordained and served as the pastor 1969-1971.**

**HAROLD T. CUMMINGS ( ) moved to the area, united with this church, was ordained and served many years on the foreign mission field.**

**JAMES HERBERT PAUL (1948- ), son of James Wesley Paul and Lydia Lee Whitehurst Paul.**

**CHRISTOPHER PAUL SALTER ( ), son of Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Thomas Salter of Stacy.**

**VI. Churches and Missions sponsored by this church:**

**It is my understanding that the Davis church was instrumental in establishing the Baptist church at Atlantic. It was while our revered Charlie B. Paul was preaching there, he was taken sick with his final illness and died.**

**Members of Davis church worked to reestablish the Woodville Baptist Church in Bettie during the period of E. A. Paul as pastor. Aunt Libby Pond (1892-1955) or Mrs. Lula Willis, perhaps others as well, would go with him to play the piano.**

**In the early 1950s during the first term of Mr. Haire as pastor, Davis church sponsored two missions - one at Newport and the other at Harkers Island. The mission at Newport soon became self supporting. Many of our people traveled there every Sunday afternoon for services in an upper room over Moses Howard's garage. Uncle Blake filled his automobile every Sunday and would not have missed a meeting for anything. It took the Harkers Island mission longer to go on its own. For several years members of Davis church went and established Sunday School, Training Union and Bible Schools. Perhaps Billy and Alma Pake labored longest. The church now is "Huggins Memorial Baptist Church." Both Charles Davis and Charles Paul have served as their pastor.**

**During Mr. Haire's second term 1984-1990 a mission was established on Harkers Island road. It is now doing a great work and is known as "Island Road Baptist Church." Our own Chris Paul Salter served as interim pastor.**

**Reference Footnotes:**

- 1. Newspaper article without name or date, published while Rev. R. D. Carroll was pastor and found in the personal records of Sabra Jimmie Salter, photo static copy in the possession of Thelma D. Pittman. Location of church by local tradition (Rev Carroll, pastor 1895-1900.)**
- 2. Register of Deeds Office, Carteret County Courthouse, Beaufort, N. C.**
- 3. Based on the personal memories of my mother Delia Davis, age 86 and corroborated by Ruby Paul, age 80.**
- 4. Based on my personal memories and conversation with Leon Styron.**
- 5. Brochure published at Centennial Observance, August 6, 1967, copy in possession of Thelma D. Pittman**