

THE INFORMER

Spotsylvania Sunday School Union Newsletter

MAY

Vol. 2021 #2

President's Pen

Hello my Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I continue to thank everyone for your patience and prayers for our Sunday School Union. This has been a challenging time for all of us and a time that requires much prayer. The recent events in America have made us question some of America's basic beliefs and moral foundation. I encourage you to continue to read the Bible and find the strength in the Word of God that you will persevere in faith. Find assurance in the very word of Jesus Christ when Satan told him to jump from the top of his position unless he was afraid to hurt his toe and he replied, "We should not tempt the Lord our God." That means to me that God has given us a cure for this Pandemic, and we should not ignore it. Some will listen to others, but I implore you to have faith in the very words of Jesus Christ. I strongly encourage everyone to get their vaccination as soon as possible!

The death of Mr. George Floyd has left our nation in a moral dilemma questioning the impartiality of our judicial system. I again would like to take the opportunity to remind all that God is in control! Our decisions matter because God will be our final judge and will judge each of us based on the decisions and choices we make. Stay strong in the word of God and you will find peace and solace.

We thank everyone for their patience as we continually evaluate the situation of opening the Park Site. This is a decision we do not take lightly that is being constantly evaluated because the safety of the community is our utmost concern. The Sunday School Union will continue to pray for our community, and we ask that the community continue to pray as well. **We hope that you will join us virtually on Sunday, May 30, 2021, at 10:00 am by dialing (301) 715-8592, meeting ID 505 488 0636, on Zoom.**

Dea. Thomas Roberson, President SSSU

Executive Board Update

The May general SSSU meeting will be held virtual by Zoom on May 30, 2021 through Little Mine Road Church where Rev. Carson Jackson is Pastor. The dial in number information is highlighted at the end of the President's Pen message. So, please mark this date and copy the Zoom meeting number on your calendar! This meeting is scheduled mainly for the installation of our new incoming executive officers.

The nominating committee of Rev. Charles Hilliard, Loretta Hill, and Betty Parker gave the following report at the SSSU December executive meeting. These are the officers that will be installed.

President – Thomas Roberson

1st Vice President – Carolyn Chew

2nd Vice President – Rev. Randy Phillips

Secretary – Jerri Fortune

Assistant Secretary – Open

Treasurer – Deborah Tibbs

Assistant Treasurer – Billy Banks

The Executive Board meets monthly on the 3rd Saturday of each month by teleconference call at 10 am.

SSSU General Meetings Schedule

May 30 - Little Mine Road by virtual Zoom

Aug. 29 - Mt Olive (Pending)

Oct. 31 - Mt Zion (Pending)

Scholarship Update

The SSSU Cora L. Wright Scholarship is available on our website along with other scholarships. Please visit: www.spotsylvaniasundayschoolunion.com

CONGRATULATIONS!

**TO ALL THE 2021 HIGH SCHOOL
AND COLLEGE GRADUATES!
CHURCH NEWS AND COMMUNITY**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beulah Baptist Church

High School Graduates:

Sequoia Goode - graduating from Caroline High School and Majoring in Marketing and Communications at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts

Shatiera Walker - graduating from Spotsylvania High School with an Advanced Diploma on May 13, 2021. She will be graduating with her Associate's Degree from Germanna Community College on May 22, 2021. She hasn't decided which college she will attend yet, but and has until May 3 to decide that so I will try to get that to you.

Jalen Suber - graduating from Riverbend High. His major will be Engineering, college TBD. He has been accepted at VA Tech, UVA, GMU, VCU, ODU, & NC A&T.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

High School Graduates:

Kyla Winston

Graduates on May 22, 2021 from Chancellor High School and will be attending Germanna Community College, in Fredericksburg, VA; Majoring in Education. She is aspiring to be a High School Government Teacher.

Troy J Jones Jr

Graduates from Forest Park High School, Woodbridge, VA on June 5, 2021

Troy will be going into the Air Force.

Sylvannah Baptist Church

High School Graduates:

Christiana J. McCurdy

Parents: Jarvis & Sharon McCurdy
Grandparent: Peggy Tyler
Will graduate from Spotsylvania High School on May 22, 2021.

IB Honor Student, Perfect Attendance 2nd-12th grade, Accepted to 14

Colleges. Will attend George Mason University in the Fall of 2021 with plans to major in Biology



Jordan Harris

Parents: Countess Harris & Dwayne Minor
Grandparent: Peggy Tyler

Graduating from Massaponax High School on May 22. Will work as a lead cleaning technician after graduation.

Sylvannah Baptist Church



Kyla Garnett

Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Garnett
Grandparents: Ronnie & Estella Curtis

Kyla will graduate from Spotsylvania High School on May 22, 2021. She plans to attend Germanna and then finish the last two years at UMW majoring in

Kinesiology and become a physical therapist.

Zion Hill Baptist Church

July 31, 2021 - Back to School Community Day
We are asking for donations.



Sending Birthday Wishes to

Rev. Paul Lewis and Dea. Percy Lewis!

Zion Hill would like to thank you both for your dedication and hard work for the church.

If anyone has an event such as graduation gathering, baseball game, or etc. Zion Hill has a Pavilion and field beside the church that can be rented. For more information, please contact Zion Hill by email at: zionhill2778@gmail.com.

SHOUT OUT TO OUR PASTORS!!



APRIL 2021

Elder Donnell Comfort – Celebrated 16 years as Pastor of Branch Fork Baptist Church

MAY 2021

Rev. Dwight Hargrove – Celebrated 14 years as Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church

May God continue to bless you both in your ministry for preaching and teaching His word!

CHURCH NEWS AND COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Second New Hope

Student
Spotlight



“Rissa (Marissa) Morton”

Rissa is adjusting to her freshman year of high school at Orange County High School via virtual classes. She really enjoys making one dish/mug microwavable meal recipes in her Independent Living class on Fridays. She also likes the scientific experiments that they do on Fridays. Rissa is adjusting

g to Aunt Sherida as one of her teachers during virtual school from home or Aunt Sherida's job. Both teacher and student are trudging their way through Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone being used as a teaching tool in one of her classes. Rissa would like to get to school in person to meet new classmates in person.

Rissa is enjoying new walking trails in downtown Fredericksburg with Aunt Sherida and Cousin Tracy, especially a recent walk into Hurkamp Park where photo opportunities were available. She looks forward to discovering new adventures in 2021.



The next scheduled Second New Hope Baptist Church, Sunday School Ministry, Spring Drive by Food Drive is Saturday, May 22, 2021 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at the church. All monetary, can and/or non-perishable food items will be greatly appreciated. Proceeds are given directly to the Fredericksburg Regional Food Drive. Thank you for your support!

DaNiya Johnson

Today, we will drop in on the busy student life of DaNiya Johnson; proud parents Donald and Devetrias “Dee” Johnson. Let’s see what’s been going on in her world!



First, we find DaNiya taking it literally to the streets of Fredericksburg and other places. As of February 23rd “DaNiya is now officially a licensed driver! “It’s bittersweet for mom as DaNiya was her riding buddy!”



Now, lets take a turn and see what’s going on in the academic life of DaNiya. DaNiya continues to excel in her studies. She is a part of the Harvard Writing and Justflix Project who partnered with James Monroe High School and Harvard University in which she received an Alumni Award of Excellence.

DaNiya was featured in *The Free Lance Star*, along with some of the other students from James Monroe High School that are participating in the Harvard writing and Just flix Project. DaNiya received an Award of Excellence for being a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders. On February 12, 2021, DaNiya was admitted as an alumnus to the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists. “DaNiya continues to make mom and dad, as well as her entire family so proud as she continues to fulfil her goal to become a *cardiothoracic surgeon!*”

She also was recently accepted into the Gladys P. Todd program at Germanna Community College to receive a two-year Associates Degree by the time she graduates from James Monroe High School.

CHURCH NEWS AND UPDATES

Second New Hope



We send birthday blessings to **Aaliyah Mickels** and **Michael "Mikey" Mickels Jr.** Our twins, went from tweens to teens on February 1st, celebrating their 13th birthday!

Aaliyah's future goal is to become a lawyer. Her favorite pandemic pastimes are playing games with friends and watching anime.

Mikey's future goals are to become a National Football League player, and if that doesn't work out, he doesn't know what he wants to be, but he loves cooking so maybe a chef. His favorite pandemic pastimes are working out, cooking, and playing video games.

On March 24th **Jeremiah Mickels** turned the big 4. Hopefully, this Fall he will be headed to preschool. He is currently working on sight words, addition, and subtraction. He loves taking road trips, snacking, watching Ryan's World, and playing games with family.



He just recently started working out, getting his summer physique ready;-) When asked what he wants to be when he grows up, he says Iron Man. He is such a happy little fellow, bringing mommy and daddy and all in his presence such great joy.



Our handsome little man **Jaden Carter** turned the big "1" on April 3rd. Jayden is such a happy and playful lad who don't mind being held. He's gives out hugs and smiles all the time! Let's see what the proud parents, grandparents and aunts have to say about their precious Jaden.

From Dad and Mom, "We love everything about Jayden, how he is so bright and love his smile and his laugh that makes everyone around him so happy. We love how sweet he is to people, and every single possible thing about our son. He is a true blessing from God."

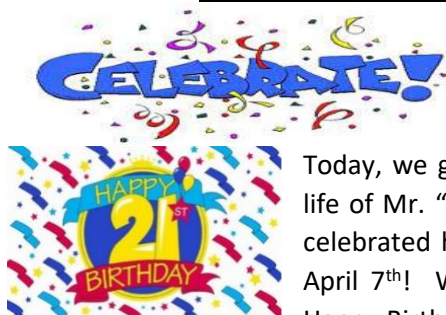
From Pop-Pop and Gi-Gi, "Jayden can say hello, bye, walk, wave, clap hands, feeds himself, recognize nose and ear, loves story time and Gi-Gi-s is teaching him to put hands together to pray. Jayden keeps Pop-Pop and Gi-Gi-busy. We love our park outings, ice-cream runs, and story times!"

From Aunt Nae, "I love dancing around with my nephew."

From Aunt Di, "I love Jayden. He is very active and fun!"

CHURCH NEWS AND UPDATES

Second New Hope



Today, we get to look into the life of Mr. **"Isaiah Bundy"** who celebrated his 21st birthday on April 7th! We wished Isaiah a Happy Birthday with much love and blessings! We are so proud of Isaiah—big 21! It seems like yesterday he was a toddler singing in the "Twilights" Choir as well as "stepping" with the Step Team Ministry. Your 21st birthday is a milestone and we're elated to be a part of it! Keep God close to your heart, continue to study hard and smile as you go.



A LOVE NOTE FROM MOM KORI:

"Isaiah will be 21 on April 7th. He plans to chill and reflect for his birthday. I'm so blessed to have a loving, caring, handsome son. His younger brother Braxton idolizes and adores him. He

is still attending Hampton University virtually because of COVID but will return in person this Fall."



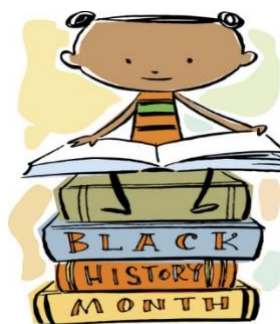
A LOVE NOTE FROM NANA SANDI:

"My first and oldest grandson is such a blessing to me. We can and have talked about anything. He loves my baked chicken wings and peanut butter cookies.

He has an engaging personality and is seen as a confidant, counselor, and leader by his friends. He is kind and courteous. He loves his family and believes in "figuring things out for himself." I look forward to his 21st Birthday and I love him dearly. I am proud of my grandson and his accomplishments in life.

A LOVE NOTE FROM POPPY DERON: *"Isaiah is a great grandson and is always willing to help!"*

"Jaden McNease"



Let's now read and see what's going on in the life of Jaden and find out what he has to say about the Black Lives Matter movement. Speak Jaden:

"Black Lives matter to me because we should all get along. As in don't label us as bad people. Our lives should be treated as any other race. Black lives matter because we should not be judged by our skin color."



Jaden has also been busy with virtual schooling which includes homework and study and shares with us:

"My favorite subject in school is science, because I get to learn about the environment and learning

about the planets."



When Jaden was asked what he has been doing during the pandemic, he said:

"I get to play, look outside my grandparents' yard at deer's and working on my Sunday school lessons to learn more of

God's word."

We thank Jaden for sharing HIStory with us. We love you! Keeping studing! You're a grand scholar!



CHURCH NEWS AND UPDATES

Second New Hope



Tanear “Coco” Washington

Let's read and see what's going on in the life of Coco and find out what's been going on in her life since the pandemic and what she has to say about the Black Lives Matter movement.



First of all, Coco, what has been your favorite pastime indulgence since the pandemic? *Reading books on topics that I have been curious about for some time. I'm truly grateful to have such resources to occupy my mind with. Spending my days singing and dancing has always been fulfilling for me, so I have also been trying to learn how to produce so I can create and release my own songs soon."*

While virtual schooling, what is your favorite subject in school and why? *My favorite subject in school is English because I'm pretty good at it and my teacher is incredibly understanding, patient, and carries the social capacity to interact with so many students daily and I admire those rare qualities very much.*

Finally, Coco, why do Black Lives Matter to you? *Black*



Lives Matter because ever since the colonizers traveled to the motherland, kidnapped Africans, enslaved them against their will, and deemed all people who are not white, "the white man's burden" racism has existed. Despite America being built by Africans, pop culture

consistently being inspired by black culture (that we had to create on our own because colonizers couldn't help but that continues to seep into African Americans today who

have no idea where they come from or anything about their lineage), black ideas and concepts being stolen and used, etc... we are still discriminated against and looked down upon by white people and nonblack people as a whole. A lot of people in other minority groups say now, that we need to come together and unify but we cannot do so until we recognize just how divided we are as minorities and how much anti-blackness goes on in every single community. How people of lighter skin tones are seen as more desirable than people of darker skin tones, that right there is what the white man has the world convinced of and that is a product of the colonization that has taken place and continues to take place. Which is also encouraged by overpopulated white society and the entertainment industry, the education system all of which are whitewashed."

Marissa “Rissa” Morton



Next on our list of talented and gifted youth, we find Rissa busy with a school project; making a brownie in a mug. Sounds delicious and yummy! We can't wait for Rissa to make us some when we meet up again! Let's now check in with Rissa to see what she has to say about somethings.

Rissa's favorite past time during the pandemic has been "watching YouTube videos". Her favorite classroom subject is "Applied Independent Living Skills". She likes it because "it is about every day stuff." When asked the question, why Black Lives Matter, Rissa's response was "because all lives matter. God loves everybody."

Thank you, Rissa, for reminding us that God loves everybody. We are so proud of you and your accomplishments! Keep learning and thank you for your contributions to the world. You make us proud. We love you! Let us all be mindful that God loves everybody.



CHURCH NEWS AND UPDATES

Second New Hope



**Margaret "BeBe"
Rollins**

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH IS NICE, BUT...

I am not a fan of Black History Month. I make no apology for the fact that I believe Black history (in America) is American history and should be woven as such. My dream is a history book that combines all of the makings of America into the fantastic story that it is.

I have been black all my life and I have never, ever let that be a problem for me! When I was in third grade (1957), school integration was passed into law and I was bussed to Spotswood Elementary School. I was the only "colored" girl in my class, and I was okay with that! I knew my mission. I was in school to get an education. That was my focus. At that time, I was blissfully ignorant of the racial tensions that surrounded me. There may have been slurs behind my back or jokes on me that I didn't get, but that wasn't my focus. I remained true to who I was and what my mama sent me there to do!

I have never let my blackness be a hindrance to anything I set out to do. Being black just wasn't forefront in my mind as I journeyed through this life. That's not to say that I haven't lost opportunities or suffered setbacks because I was black, but when I put my best foot forward and confidently attack a challenge, I had faith that 'I' (in all of my apparent blackness) would prevail. I like to think that so many of our Black pioneers were of this same mindset. How difficult the journey must have been! Living in a country that they built, by hand and free of charge, yet suffering the degradation brought on by ignorance! I'm overwhelmed and often heartbroken when I read biographies of so many of the unsung heroes of African origin who contributed so much to our American way of life. Where would this country be without them!

As a teenager in the late 1960's, I was in the midst of racial and economic strife in America. I was aware of uprisings of racial tensions and the inequality that many black people suffered. Yet, in my corner of the woods, the struggle of being black wasn't the dinner table discussion. I had not yet settled on a worldview. My life was centered on every day. How to survive this day and make it to tomorrow. Simply put, there was no time to dwell on those things that we could not change. The mission was to put one foot in front of the other and keep it moving. We would celebrate accomplishments and learn from failure.

Today is so different from my days growing up. The rise of the black voice, social media in all of its forms, protests for equal rights, social justice demands, and other forms of activism have opened my eyes to so many realities that I simply was not aware of. Technology has turned on the lights! Real time video, camera recordings and other outlets have opened many eyes to the reality of living black in America. It's disheartening, it's disgusting and it's scary. It's deep rooted and it's pervasive. It's sad. So much of our lack of progress is manmade. Imagine a world where "each one teach one". A world of people dedicated to the progress of all. It's a dream that must become a reality for all of us to survive. I am not scholar, and I don't know how best to navigate what has become the "task" of living black in the USA. The struggle is real, and we must continue to 'make good trouble' and pray that equality is realized.

In the meantime, I'm going to allow the Lord to direct my steps, be prepared, having confidence in my every endeavor and have faith in the knowledge that my best IS good enough!"



During this pandemic time, it has been a challenge for the "church" to continue with the encounter of spreading the gospel to those within the church family as well as abroad. The pandemic took away some sports, restaurants, and gyms. The most alarming, it took away some regular church services; however, there is no pause button for a pandemic. The Great Commission is still at stake. The Word of God must continue to ring out. Outreach must continue. Discipleship must keep happening.

The church has to beat the pandemic by trying new things. *We have to develop new or improved ministries, to share messages of hope. In other words, we have to reimagine ministry.*

What if we saw this time of disruption not as simply a time to tolerate changes to ministry, but as a divine invitation to shift our perspective on ministry.

CHURCH NEWS AND COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Second New Hope

Let's flip the page and see how one of our Sunday School facilitators, Catherine Hilliard, reimaged her method of teaching the Primary and Nursery students during this pandemic time:



Ms. Cathy's Nursery and Primary Class Ministry

Beginning the third Sunday in March 2020 after the pandemic shutdown church services around the world, I felt the need to

continue to reach out to the Nursery and Primary class students; teaching them the word of God.

Each lesson is mailed to the following students weekly or monthly: Jeremiah Mickels, Gerald Burnett, Melody Samuel, Jaden McNease, and Braxton Joseph. In response to the lessons being mailed out, some students return them to me with pictures of themselves enclosed, some talked to me by telephone and others, I talked to face to face--six feet--more like eight feet apart!

The lessons I have mailed to the Nursery and Primary students are:

- Good and Bad Fish - Matthew 13: 7-49
- The Mustard Seed - Mark 4:30-32
- Jesus Is the Son of God - I John 4:15
- God's Kind of Love - I Corinthians 13:1-13
- God's Patient Love - Nehemiah 9:25-31
- God So Loved the World - Matthew 1:18-25

Teaching class away from my students is challenging for me because I love and miss seeing the children's smiling faces when asked a bible question. They each would answer truthfully and innocently. NO SUGAR-COATED ANSWERS!

LUV U, Ms. Cathy

Gently Used Clothing Drive



Date: Saturday, May 22, 2021
Time: 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
Place: Second New Hope Baptist Church

The youth ministry of SNHBC will be hosting a gently used clothing drive. All clothing items collected will be donated to **"Kay Jay's Kreationz"** where Khamiya Monae Jenkins is the CEO and founder. The youth ministry wants to support Khamiya by helping her to give back to the community. So please, look through your closets and donate those gently used clothing items. Here's a little something about Khamiya:

My name is Khamiya Monae Jenkins, and I am the daughter of Michael Jenkins and Carlisha Barnett-Jenkins. I am nine years old and in the fourth grade at Lafayette Upper Elementary School. I attend Shiloh Baptist Church New Site where I am active in the Praise Dance Team and Sunday School. I started Kay Jay's Kreationz during the Covid-19 Pandemic. I was trying to occupy my free time and decided to start making gourmet popcorn. As new ideas popped in my head, I started making other sweet treats such as pretzel sticks, rice crispy treats, chocolate covered Oreos and marshmallows. I recently added hair bonnets, face masks, personalized cups, and tie-dye bags to my list of kreationz. After receiving an overwhelming love and support from the community, I decided I wanted to do something special for other people. I thought a clothing drive would be a good way to give back to the less fortunate people in my community.

- Clothing **MUST BE WASHED** before dropping off.
- No stains, broken zippers, missing buttons.
- Clothing accepted of any size, for children, adults, male, female.
**For separating purposes, please indicate clothing type on bag or box*

We will follow the same safety guidelines as we do for the Drive-By Food Drive which will also be held on the same day. Make this a two for one trip; food and clothing donation!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Are you a member of the Union? Have you renewed your Union membership this year? If not, now is the time to do so! We solicit your membership and support.

Annual dues - \$12.00 per year from Jan. to Dec.
Lifetime membership - \$125.00
Union Church representation dues - \$300.00
(If any church wishes to give more, it will be gratefully appreciated).

For a membership application visit our website at:
www.spotsylvaniasundayschoolunion.com

Checks should be made payable to:
SSSU
Mailing address:
SSSU
Attn: Deborah Tibbs, Treasurer
PO Box 78
Thornburg, VA 22565

WHAT'S NEW AT THE MUSEUM?

John J Wright Museum

To the Community We Serve,

As a public health precaution, the John J. Wright Educational Culture Center and Museum temporarily closed to the public on Tuesday, March 23, 2020. We are not announcing a reopening date at this time and will provide updates on our website and social media. We appreciate your understanding.

In the meantime, we invite you to register for our upcoming newsletter or follow us on Facebook to stay current with museum happenings and to learn more about the exciting new project that offers the opportunity to archive your family's story with the National African American History and Culture Museum's Digital Community Curation Program. If you have questions about scheduling your family's oral history session, or for further information on upcoming programming and events please send an email to MyMuseum@JJWMuseum.org Or by phone 540-582-7583, X-5545.

We look forward to greeting you once the museum reopens. Thank you for your patience.

Respectfully,
Rev. Gilbert Garcia, Board Chairman,
John J. Wright Museum

NAACP NEWS

The "Rites of Passage for Young Men" Will be Conducted on July 17, 2021.

The mission/objective of the event is to inspire, enable, challenge, and empower boys and young men to realize their full potential by putting forth their maximum efforts to become responsible, healthy, productive, and successful members of society. Young men ages 10 to 18 (and in high school) can register. For more information and to apply, visit www.naacpspotsylvania.org.

For more information contact Moe Petway at: pmozett@gmail.com or call (540) 847-7637.

Let Them Soar! -Young People Have an Opportunity to Fly on June 12!

The Eagle Flying club members are bringing their aircrafts and gathering at Shannon airfield to provide an aviation experience to young people. They will take individuals into an airplane and allow them to see and touch the controls of an aircraft. Anyone interested in having their child or are willing to participate in this event should contact the branch to obtain a registration application or contact 540-847-7637.

You Can Vote Now! Early Voting has Started for the VA Primary Election.

Your Vote is Your Voice! Early voting is open from now until June 5th at the Office of Elections Office, 4708 Southpoint Parkway, Fredericksburg.

The deadline to register or make changes is May 17th. May 28th is the last day to request a mail-in ballot. June 5th is the last day to vote absentee/early in-person voting. This year's primary will only include the Democratic candidates.

June 8, 2021 is the primary election date. All citizens are encouraged to participate/vote in this election.

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

NEWSLETTER DEDICATION

This issue of The Informer Newsletter is dedicated in loving memory of our oldest lifetime member and supporter - **Deacon Benjamin Fletcher**. Deacon Fletcher was a dedicated and lifetime supporter of the Union. He was a gracious donor as well. His last donation to the Union was the SSSU Flag and flag pole which is standing in the SSSU Union Parksite now. May he Rest in Peace! We pray that God will continue to bless and comfort his wife and family!



HISTORY OF TWO UNION CHURCHES

Beulah Baptist Church

Rev. Dr. W David Lee, Pastor

The Beulah Baptist church family began in the summer of 1872 when thirty former slaves who were members of the Bethany Baptist church asked for and received permission to form their own congregation. They purchased one acre of land and constructed a brush arbor on the site of our present building.

In July of 1872, Rev. James S. Minor, who was one of the original thirty members, preached the sermon and was acclaimed leader of the congregation. During his years of service, the brush arbor was replaced by two frame structures; the first a primitive one room church and the second in the early 1900's – a more refined sanctuary. By 1880 the new congregation was doing so well that a Bethany member, Mrs. Standard, gifted Beulah with a silver communion set for Christmas. During Pastor Minor's years, members were ruled with a firm hand with no card playing, dancing, loose talk, or loose dressing tolerated. Sunday worship took place one Sunday a month with Sunday School being held every Sunday. This beloved servant of God passed in 1915 after serving 43 years.

Two churches, St. Luke's in Spotsylvania, and St. Matthew in Caroline, were birthed by Beulah during the 1890's.

Rev. C. A. Lindsey was elected in 1916 to become Beulah's second pastor. A born organizer and first rank teacher and preacher, Pastor Lindsey soon had the church providing two Sunday worship services each month as well as weekly Sunday School classes. Three acres of land were purchased in 1932 and a brick edifice containing a baptismal pool was erected in 1933. Foreign missions were emphasized during the thirty-four years of Rev. Lindsey's service. The name of Mrs. Edmonia Jerome was widely recognized across the county as Beulah's one room school next door to the church and regularly sent boxes of clothing, books, and supplies to Africa. Her husband was a professional photographer of note, and the existing photograph of Rev. Minor which graces the Beulah Church Museum was taken by him. He passed in 1950 after serving 34 years.

The name of another Beulah member was widely heralded during Rev. Lindsey's tenure that of church clerk, John J. Wright. Professor Wright was a noted educator, farmer, and landowner who served as church clerk from 1901 until he died in 1931. In the late forties and early fifties, an additional four acres of land was purchased, the church mortgage burned, and worship services were celebrated on four Sundays each month.

Rev. Parrish Freeman was elected as Beulah's third under shepherd in 1951. Pastor Freeman had served as assistant to Rev. Lindsey beginning in 1946 as Youth Minister, so his family was known and loved by the flock. A religious annex building was planned for and begun during Pastor Freeman's brief fruitful years as our leader. His untimely death in a car accident in 1959 was deeply felt by the congregation.

Rev. Charles Franklin was Beulah's fourth pastor in 1961. Rev. Franklin saw to the completion in 1966 of the religious educational complex begun under Rev. Freeman. Rev. Franklin resigned in 1969.

Rev. Robert Bowles our fifth pastor was called to Beulah in 1970. His ministry emphasized stewardship, foreign missions, and godly worship services. He gave nine years of service to Beulah before resigning.

Rev. Preston Jordan sixth pastor served from 1980 – 1982 a native of Queens, NY he accepted the helm as the sixth pastor. Under his pastorate two choirs were organized.

Rev. Ronald Thomas seventh pastor served from 1985-1988 was a native from Houston, Texas. He too was gifted with a talent for inspired gospel preaching and singing. After several years, Rev. Thomas resigned to become the pastor of a church in his hometown of Houston, TX.

Rev. Ralph Ladmirault eighth pastor served from 1990 – 1993 a native of New York by way of Richmond, VA. Rev. Ladmirault led the church in meeting the needs of the church in a very spiritual way. The church continued to move onward and upward spiritually, physically, and financially.

Rev. James E. Preast, Jr. ninth pastor served from 1995 – 2000. During his five years, many souls were brought to Christ. Nine nurses were certified by the Red Cross. A Christian Education Director was named. The church museum was organized. Two ministers were licensed to preach, five deacons were ordained, three deaconesses were consecrated, and five women were named trustees.

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Young was called in 2002 as the tenth pastor of Beulah. He served faithful until his death in 2012. Rev. Young made sure that the church was heavily involved with the NAACP where he connected the church and the community. He was a pillar in the community for social justice and was supportive of Mattaponi Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of VA, and the Spotsylvania Sunday School Union

Beulah elected Rev. Dr. W. David Lee as Beulah's eleventh pastor in 2016 to present date. He is a native of Ansonia CT., by way of New Jersey. Under his leadership and vision, Beulah renovated the sanctuary in an unprecedented record of thirty days including a state of art media addition. Pastor Lee ordained the first female Ministers in its entire history. He has ordained four ministers and licensed two. A Beulah Academy has been birthed that conducts classes twice a year. Beulah has been growing spiritually and by membership. Pastor Lee has brought the church into the technological era to better serve the members of this great church. The Food Pantry excelled and gained recognition from the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank as being one of the leading partners in the community. He has often been quoted as saying "We may not be the best church, but you won't find any better".

We are so thankful to God for the services these eleven men of God have provided to the Beulah church family.

Branch Fork Baptist Church

Elder Donnell Comfort, Pastor

The history of Branch Fork Baptist Church is rich and colorful. It began with the love and amazing grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's organizing members were former slaves who met in 1866 with Rev. William Hoe in a bush arbor near Holiday Mills, Spotsylvania County, Virginia. The brush arbor is three miles west of the present location of Branch Fork on Stubbs Bridge Road. Rev. Hoe was a traveling minister who aided the spiritual needs of local communities. Rev. Hoe served as pastor of Branch Fork for seven years.

In 1873, Rev. Patrick H. Graves was called as pastor. Rev. Graves served for forty years. During his pastorate, the congregation erected two buildings, one of which is the present church building. Brother Lucian Comfort was the head carpenter who directed the building of each church building. During the time Branch Fork worshipped in the first church building more than 400 members were baptized, 160 couples were united in matrimony (by 1899), and Rev. Shelton T. Willis was licensed to preach. During these beginning years the deacons of the church were Brother Lewis Alexander, Barnet Willis, Fountain Coleman, Zack Brock, Charles Poindexter, William Lewis, and George Barber. Branch Fork continued to grow, and the members erected a new church building in which it continues to worship today. More than 1600 additional members were baptized (now a historical landmark) before he passed from labor to reward in 1913.

Rev. China Coleman picked up the Branch Fork mantle in 1913 and served for the next twenty years. During his pastorate, the Branch Fork saints added the vestibule, new pews, lamps, and a communion set. Rev. Coleman was called to Sparrows Point, Maryland, and Rev. C. T. Mayo and Rev. R. P. Gainey served the church for short periods of time.

In 1937 Rev. O. S. Robinson of Louisa County was called as pastor and served until his death in February 1955. Under his leadership, Branch Fork added two rooms, enlarged the pulpit, installed electric lights, painted the building, and purchased a new pulpit Bible and new hymnals. In 1948 Brother Joseph Despot donated an acre of land to the church for its first cemetery. Following Rev. Robinson's death, Dr. Robert F. Bowles served as pastor until 1958 and Rev. C. C. Dickerson served for six years until 1964.

In January of 1965, Rev. Herman A. Ellis was called to pastor Branch Fork. Rev. Ellis served for thirty years until his death in 1995. Branch Fork prospered and grew. The church mortgage was repaid in full, and the mortgage note was burned in May 1978. The Deaconess ministry was organized, five acres of land were purchased to expand the cemetery, and a new well was dug. The church building was bricked and enlarged by the addition of a baptismal pool, basement, and multipurpose room. New pews, central air conditioning, stained glass windows, sidewalks, handicap accessible entrance were installed.

Rev. James E. White was the pastor the Lord sent to Branch Fork in 1995. Branch Fork continued its growth, both spiritually and physically. Intensive weekly Bible studies, Children's Church, community outreach through Food Bank

membership. Youth Crusades, and Community Witnessing, addition of third Sunday worship service, and annual summer outdoor church services and picnics are each indicative of Branch Fork's service for the Lord. The time, talents, and treasures of the members were put to use on the organ, computers, newsletter production (the Branch Fork Good News) and publications of the Church constitution and bylaws, cemetery mapping, Battle of the Brains. Rev. White resigned in September 2003.

On November 7, 2004, Elder Donnell Comfort accepted his call from God to pastor Branch Fork. Continuing the church's rich history of God's ministry, he inspires and encourages congregational involvement; preaches and teaches thru not only God's word, but through his actions. The church continues to grow and thrive under his anointed leadership as he continues to aid Branch Fork in reinforcing its structural and spiritual foundation.

Sons and associate ministers of Branch Fork include Rev. Shelton Willis, Dr. Joseph R. Despot, Rev. Fennell F. Terrell, Rev. Emmit R. Crump, Rev. Jessie Woolfolk, Rev. Cary Johnson, Rev. John E. Crump, Rev. James E. White, and Rev. Wilson Comfort.

The Branch Fork Historical Preservation Committee was established to preserve and collect the history and living testimony of this church's service for the Lord. The Branch Fork is a historical landmark, and its history is also recorded in the pamphlet **African American History of Spotsylvania, Virginia**, and the book **A Different Story** by Roth Coder Fitzgerald.

Always an active, vital presence in Spotsylvania County, Branch Fork was the site of the first meeting of the Spotsylvania Sunday School Union in 1905. The Branch Fork church motto is "Branching Out in the Ministry". Branch Fork serves as a powerful religious mainstay dedicated to serving the many needs of a growing community.

"The past is our heritage; the present is our responsibility, and the future is our challenge."

LET US REMEMBER OUR PAST UNION LEADERS AND MEMBERS



"The memory of the righteous is blessed..."

Proverbs 10:7a