

Murfreesboro Baptist Church

a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship congregation



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HISTORY

Murfreesboro Baptist Church was formally constituted on November 21, 1848, with thirty-one charter members, twenty-nine of whom petitioned for letters of dismissal from nearby Meherrin Baptist Church for the purposes of being constituted as an “independent branch of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The congregation which was then worshiping in Murfreesboro had previously existed as a branch of Meherrin Baptist Church since the summer of 1842, enjoying the occasional ministerial services of the Reverend George Matthias Thompson, pastor of Meherrin Church, 1838-1850.



The Reverend Martin Rudolph Forey, principal of the recently established Chowan Female Institute, was called as the newly constituted church’s initial pastor in May 1849, inaugurating a close relationship between church and school which has been maintained until the present. Not only has the congregation included numerous students since 1848, but at least sixteen of the church’s pastors have also held administrative and/or teaching assignments at Chowan. The congregation has been served by twenty-six pastors.



HISTORY



A white framed house of worship of the Murfreesboro congregation was erected in 1843 on the site of the present sanctuary, which was constructed in 1922-1923, and was first utilized for worship services on the last Sunday in April 1923. Completed in 1923, our sanctuary is Murfreesboro's oldest standing house of worship. It has undergone two major renovations since then, one in 1960 and, most recently, in 2011. The annex at the north end of the sanctuary was constructed in 1951-1952 to provide additional space for the church's educational auxiliaries. Additional properties adjacent to the original church lots were acquired in 1962, 1965, 1994 and 1998. In 2001 an extensive construction project included the present church offices, media center, and fellowship hall with renovations to the educational annex and the ground floor of the sanctuary.

The congregation voted to be part of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in the early 2000's under the leadership of Dr. Lee Canipe.

WHO ARE WE?

Our members and attendees come from diverse faith backgrounds. Some are Baptist, some come from other denominations or from different religious traditions, and some have no specific faith background at all. We come together to worship and learn, to share life and pray for one another. We hope that ALL will feel welcome no matter their past experiences.

Our history and polity (how the church is organized and makes decisions) are rooted in the Baptist tradition. But what does that mean? Unlike many Christian denominations, Baptists are not unified through a central governing authority. Baptists do not have an equivalent to the Pope. We have four freedoms that we piece together to create our distinctively Baptist identity.

- **Bible Freedom:** The Bible is foundational to us as individuals and as a congregation. Every Christian has the freedom and right to interpret and apply Scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The wisdom and counsel of the larger congregation should nurture individual believers as they seek to interpret and apply Scripture.
- **Soul Freedom:** We are each accountable to God individually without the imposition of creed or the control of clergy or government. This personal experience with God is indispensable to the Christian life and necessary for a vital church. This is sometimes described as the "priesthood of all believers."
- **Church Freedom:** Baptist churches are free to determine their membership, leadership, doctrine, and practice under the Lordship of Christ. This is sometimes known as "autonomy of the local church." Individual churches should work together to achieve goals that one church by itself could not reach.
- **Religious Freedom:** Everyone should be able to worship (or not) as they feel led without unnecessary interference by the government. Just as religious freedom involves the freedom to practice religion, it also includes the freedom not to practice religion. If you can't say "no," your "yes" is meaningless. The separation of church and state affords important constitutional protection of religious freedom for all.



WHO ARE WE?

Over the last three months (October 23, 2022 – December 4, 2022), the pastor search committee of Murfreesboro Baptist Church completed a robust self-study that included two church-wide listening sessions and a paper survey. The search team wanted to hear from the congregation, and the congregation obliged their requests. Throughout this phase of the pastor search process, clear patterns emerged regarding the church's values, the community's needs and assets, the priorities for the church's future, and the requisite skills needed in their next pastoral leader.

The thirteen-question survey revealed the longstanding commitment of the members of the church. Most surveyed have attended Murfreesboro Baptist for over 35 years (56%) and currently attend services at least 4 times a month (60%)! These cradle-to-grave Baptists (67%) love their church, are thoroughly engaged and are well-acquainted with its strengths and growing edges. As expected, this survey reinforced the need for the congregation to grow and retain members. The survey also clarified the immediate priorities for the church to address beyond church growth: building community through pastoral care and counseling, worship planning, and preaching.

The next Pastor of Murfreesboro Baptist Church will be expected to get involved in the community, develop and maintain the bonds of friendship and fellowship with regular visitation, consistently invite others to the church, and prepare sermons that resonate biblical truths to everyday life.



WHAT DO WE DO?

At Murfreesboro Baptist Church, we share God's love with others, serve our community, study God's Word, worship together, and minister to all ages.



WHAT DO WE DO?

Share

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
John 20:21

We believe that every Christian has the potential to be a missionary because Jesus sends every Christian out into the world to share God's love. As individual believers building relationships with friends, neighbors, and coworkers in our everyday lives, and as a fellowship of believers working together to be the presence of Christ in our community and beyond, we take this mission seriously.



Here's just a glimpse of what Murfreesboro Baptist Church on mission looks like:

- Bringing the Murfreesboro community together in worship and fellowship
- Responding to needs in our county with warm smiles and nutritious food
- Welcoming new Chowan students and their families to Murfreesboro
- Supporting our Cooperative Baptist missionaries and their ministries around the world



WHAT DO WE DO?

Study

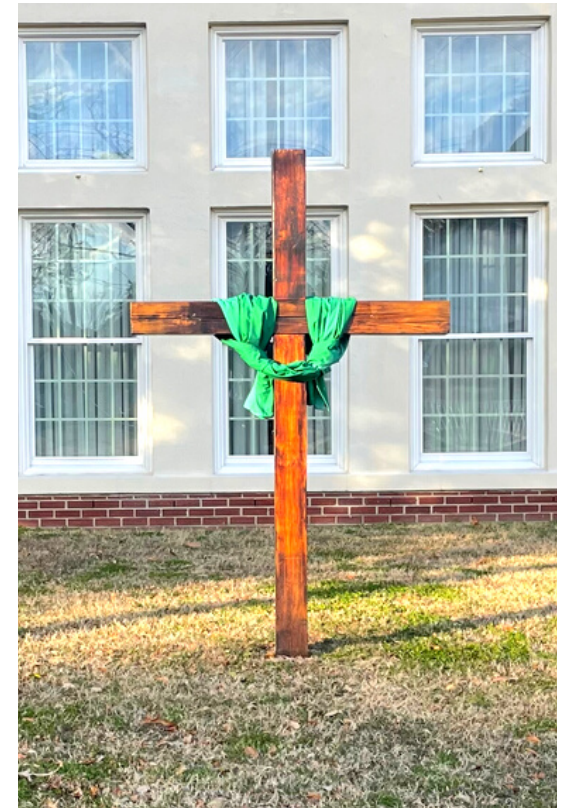
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

We believe that God has given us the gift of Scripture to reveal His will for creation, His desire for a loving relationship with us, and His expectations for how He wants us to live as His people in this world. Becoming familiar with the Bible, learning its stories, and applying God's truth to our lives are all priorities for us as Christians.

Here are a few ways that we encourage one another to grow in keeping with these priorities:

- Sunday school for all ages, beginning at 10 AM each week
- Weekly Bible Study for adults, beginning at 7 PM each Wednesday (September through May)
- Kids' Club for children age 2 through 5th grade, beginning at 6:30 PM each Wednesday (September through May)
- Youth group for students in grades 6-12, beginning at 6:30 PM each Wednesday (September through May)
- Other special times of Bible reading and reflection throughout the year.



WHAT DO WE DO?

Worship

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
Psalm 95:6

We believe that the regular, faithful worship of God provides a foundation for our lives as Christians. When we worship, we offer God the praise and adoration He deserves. We're also reminded that we are God's creatures, dependent on His love and mercy in our everyday lives. We gather for worship every Sunday morning at 11 AM, as well as for special services throughout the year.



WHAT DO WE DO?

Worship

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
Psalm 95:6

What's worship like at Murfreesboro Baptist Church?

- In keeping with New Testament practices, our worship services are intended to involve every member of the congregation and not just the few people in leadership roles. We encourage active participation in worship through responsive readings, corporate prayer, giving our tithes and offerings, and singing songs of worship together.
- As Baptists, we emphasize the reading and preaching of the Bible, God's written word. We also practice believers' baptism and, at the end of each service, we invite those who are not already believers to make a public profession of faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. On the first Sunday of the month, we share the Lord's Supper, which is open to all baptized Christians.
- As members of the larger body of Christ, meanwhile, we affirm our kinship with our fellow believers in other traditions and around the world by following the seasons of the church year.
- Most people come to worship at our church dressed more formally than they do during the week. Nursery care is available during all services for children up to age 6.



WHAT DO WE DO?

Serve

Murfreesboro Baptist Church participates in many local and global outreach programs. The congregation has a heart of service to others and loves each person who enters the doors. From scheduled and impromptu visits to seeing someone at the grocery store or around town who needs encouragement, the congregation has received support from and supports those around them.



WHAT DO WE DO?

Serve

Murfreesboro Baptist Church serves as the host of the local community's Food Bank. The church also runs a Food Pantry ministry that addresses food insecurity in the area. God is clearly at work in multiplying the congregation's efforts to feed the hungry with dignity and diligence. The congregation acknowledges that God is at work among their neighbors throughout the community and the church family. People in Murfreesboro and Hertford County care for one another; it's the blessing of a small community. The church participates in a clothing drive in October to support Union Mission in Roanoke Rapids. The congregation adopts an Angel Tree each November for children in need, providing Christmas gifts for 15-20 children in the local area.



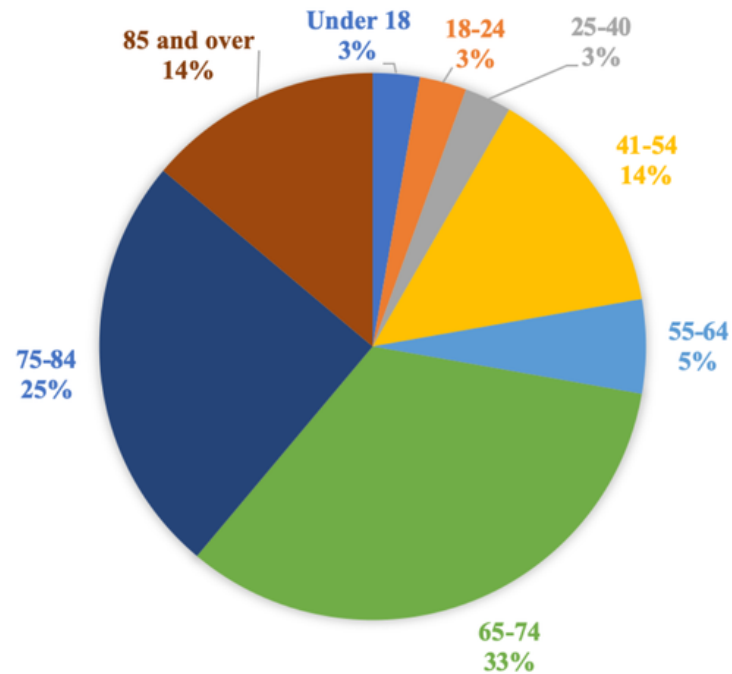
Globally the church participates in Operation Christmas Child in conjunction with Samaritan's Purse. The people have supported members who have traveled abroad for mission trips. We collect an annual offering for the North Carolina Baptist Children's Home and provide meals for Chowan University international students during breaks.



ATTENDANCE

Year:	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Attendance:	75-100	60-75	35-40	35-40	45-60

Current Age of Congregation



FINANCIAL GIVING

Murfreesboro Baptist Church

Five Year Summary

	9-30-2018	9-30-2019	9-30-2020	9-30-2021	9-30-2022
Annual Budget	\$240,000.00	\$210,000.00	\$210,000.00	\$205,000.00	\$205,000.00
Tithes and Offerings +	\$221,333.04	\$212,843.53	\$198,369.13	\$185,870.98	\$197,145.89
Operating Expense -	\$185,762.29	\$184,320.06	\$170,160.01	\$170,590.21	\$185,382.81
Excess Receipts	\$35,570.75	\$ 28,514.47	\$28,209.12	\$15,280.77	\$11,763.00



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Throughout its history, Murfreesboro Baptist Church has experienced periods of lower attendance followed by periods of growth. The congregation is poised to grow again with a clear response during this interim. Community and mission outreach, leadership development, spiritual growth, and sustaining a spirit of welcome for everyone are all aspects of what God is calling the church to do and be. What are the markers of growth for Murfreesboro Baptist? Consistent pastoral and congregational care, a thriving youth ministry, children's ministry, and music ministry. A wise pastoral leader will need to lean on congregational leaders to provide the necessary structures (committees, volunteers, etc.) to prepare the church for growth.



CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Mrs. Paula Pressnell, Organist, Pianist, & Choir Director

Paula, who has served MBC since November 2006, is from Sunbury, NC in neighboring Gates County. She attended Salem College in Winston-Salem, NC, where she graduated cum laude with an earned Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Performance.

In 1999, Paula began working at Chowan University as a part-time staff accompanist. During her time at Chowan, she played piano for all choirs, voice lessons, and instrumental students. She also went on many choir tours and stayed extremely busy at the university. In 2005 she became a full time faculty member. Paula served the Chowan community until 2018, when she retired and received faculty emeritus status in 2018.

Music has been a lifelong passion as Paula would listen to her mother teach piano at home and began playing by ear at age 3. Past career ambitions have been ventriloquism (age 8), and paleontology before dinosaurs were cool, (age 11). Thankfully for any hope of success, a piano teacher encouraged her to become a music major in college. Currently she enjoys spending time with her husband Larry, two stepchildren, seven grandchildren, reading, and teaching piano to people of all ages.



CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF



Mrs. Teresa Martin, Administrative Assistant (office@murfbc.org)

Teresa, who is originally from Currituck County, NC, but now lives in Murfreesboro with Clay, her husband and best friend, has been with MBC since the summer of 2016. She graduated from Chowan University with an Associate's Degree in Communications Art. Before her time with MBC, Teresa worked for over 31 years as a marketing representative for a local newspaper.

Being from a large family, Teresa enjoys any opportunity to spend time with them. The beaches of the Carolinas and Florida are special vacation spots. When at home she likes to spend her time working her yard and flower gardens. Her time spent at MBC and serving its' members has been especially rewarding.

Rev. Tom Caulkins, Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Caulkins served as the pastor of Murfreesboro Baptist Church for 25 years from 1968-1993. Following his retirement, he held several interim positions in the Hertford County area and served as pulpit supply for many churches in need of a good word. In November of 2016, MBC awarded Rev. Caulkins the honorable title of Pastor Emeritus. Tom continues to live in Murfreesboro with his wife, Ann, and they continue to embrace the work and fellowship of Murfreesboro Baptist Church.

