

The History of New Union Baptist Church

In 1901, the First Baptist Church of Vienna, Virginia petitioned to move its location from Lawyers Road; and build a new edifice in another part of the city (Vienna). A committee, composed of Deacon Andrew W. Minor, Brother James Harper, Brother Lyfus Jackson Sr., Brother Yancey Thompson, Sister Fannie Harper and Sister Grace Thompson, was appointed for locating and recommending a new site to build the church.

The committee proceeded with its mission; by the time the committee presented its first report there were differences of opinions with members of the congregation whether the church needed to relocate. After the discussion, the committee and twelve other members separated themselves and continued with the movement. The result of their decision birthed a new organization with the name Union Baptist Church. This small congregation under the leadership of Andrew W. Minor donated land and built the new edifice on its present site, which is 205 Pleasant Street, SW in Vienna, Virginia in 1902.

The recognition of Union Baptist Church by fellow churches is an established fact to the public and Christian world. Some of the earliest public recognition given by newspapers was a report presented by the Home News of Alexandria, Virginia; commentary was also given by other local newspapers. An article in the Home News of Alexandria dated October 12, 1908, stated:

“The Union Baptist Church of Vienna, Virginia, Reverend C. Williams, Pastor, called a recognizing council to convene on the above date for the purpose of being duly recognized as an independent Baptist Church. Eleven churches responded and adopted a motion that the Union Baptist Church be recognized as an independent Church of Christ.”

Thus, the standing of the Union Baptist Church as a regular Orthodox Christian Organization was settled. From its inception, the Union Baptist Church has progressed in her efforts for success in God’s Kingdom under the leadership of such capable men as: Reverend P. J. Mitchell, Reverend N. J. Beaman, Reverend E. M. Burrell, Reverend Woodson, Reverend A. A. Taliaferro, Reverend B. E. Madison, Reverend Lenwood Graham, Reverend Harold S. Stinger, Reverend Edward Smith, Reverend Joseph L. Smith Jr., Reverend William P. Smith who is a son of the church and ordained under the Pastorate of Reverend Alexander Taliaferro, and Reverend Sandy Whitehorn, a daughter of the church who was ordained under the Pastorate of Reverend Edward Smith.

Reverend Alexander A. Taliaferro served for thirty-two years; his tenure is longer than any of the pastors called to the Union Baptist Church to date. After his death in December 1962, Reverend Bertram E. Madison was called to serve as pastor until April 1972. Reverend Madison’s interest and commitment to the church was a source of inspiration for spiritual growth, because of his gentle nature and willingness to help others whenever needed.

Reverend Lenwood Graham was called to serve as pastor from June 1973 until June 1980. During his tenure, there was noticeable growth in membership. Greater interest and emphasis were also placed on the youth and their involvement in church activities.

Reverend Harold S. Stinger served Union Baptist Church from March 1981 to August 1990. Under his

leadership the interest in the youth continued, the church experienced many new things that reinforced the fact that God was with us. Within the first year of his pastorate the church embarked on and completed a massive remodeling program on the original building. After a brief rest, the church began to build again in 1985; the following spaces were added and completed: a choir room, kitchen, multipurpose room, and pastor's study. Reverend Stinger was not only a great builder of the physical plant at Union Baptist Church, he was a great Spiritual leader and teacher, one who abounds in enthusiasm and energy in proclaiming the Word of God by teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Reverend Edward Smith was called to pastor in December 1990 and served until 1996. Under his leadership, members willingly accepted challenges to work in the church for the glory of God.

Reverend Joseph L. Smith Jr. was called in to pastor in January 1998 and served until July 2000. During his pastorate, he established the "Lamb's Hour" in which he sat with the children and discussed the bible and taught them at their levels of understanding. On October 27, 2001, the Union Baptist Church of Vienna, Virginia and the congregation of the New Hope Baptist Church, Falls Church, Virginia united during a meeting of both memberships. These two fellowships bonded into one by emerging together becoming one church. The two churches used part of their perspective names to change the name of this great congregation led by the declaration of Deacon Leroy Belford, "As of this day, we shall be called the New Union Baptist Church."

In 2001, serving as Interim Pastor, Reverend Carl Bennett, Son of Shiloh Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, was called to lead and continue the re-organization of New Union Baptist Church (NUBC). He labored faithfully with both congregations prior to their unification, by bringing both churches together in meetings and rotating church services at each church to prepare and decided the church's permanent location. Reverend Bennett served from April 2001 until February 2002.

A Pastoral Search Committee was elected in March 2002 under the Leadership of Deacon Leroy Belford, and on January 25, 2003, New Union voted and called Reverend Raymond C. Bland of the New Samaritan Baptist Church located in Washington DC., to serve as pastor until 2005.

Subsequently, after a two-year search starting in 2007, on October 25, 2008, New Union voted unanimously and called Reverend Louis J. Hutchinson III, as the new pastor. After the resignation of Reverend Hutchinson in June 2011, the church was directed under the leadership of Deacon Leroy Belford. God blessed the church to continue serving by inviting various preachers to lead worship. After a few years of the pulpit being vacant, New Union called Elder Eddie N. Sampson of the St. Stephen Baptist Church, Temple Hills, Maryland to serve as pastor on September 1, 2013. Elder Sampson was installed on April 6, 2014.

New Union is rooted in decades of rich Christian experiences in Christ, out of which God has allowed this congregation to thrive in and become more knowledgeable of the abundant and unspeakable joy in serving the True and Living God.

The New Union Baptist Church possesses a great wealth of history among its membership. This church family is made up of great pioneers such as, Brother Preston Blackwell, first black to graduate from a predominately white school in Fairfax County; Brother Henry Minor, was the first black Councilman of a Northern Virginia Jurisdiction. There were many members who were active in the fight for equal rights and black recognition. We must remember, yesterday's accomplishments are today's history.