

Salem Baptist Church to mark 130 years 5/25/98

By **JASON CARSON WILSON**
News-Gazette Staff Writer

CHAMPAIGN — Salem Baptist Church will celebrate its 130th anniversary on Sunday.

Salem's pastor, the Rev. Claude Shelby Sr., will speak at the 11 a.m. Sunday service.

The Rev. Courtney Jones, pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in St. Louis, will speak at the 4 p.m. service.

Church clerk Veola Tinsley

said Salem's founders, including Susan Franklin Johnson, Kitty Lee, T.J. Shore, J.W. Randolph, Anna Randolph, Martin Dandridge and Sarah Bromwell, began holding services in an old coffeehouse at 406 E. Park St., C, in 1866.

At that time, the church, then known as Second Baptist Church, had only 29 members.

Tinsley said the congregation met there until it burned down

during the late 1860s.

After the fire, they met in each other's homes until the church moved to its present location, 500 E. Park Ave., C, in 1908.

Upon coming to the new building, members decided the church needed a new name. From then on, it became known as Salem Baptist Church, the church clerk said.

Tinsley said the building was

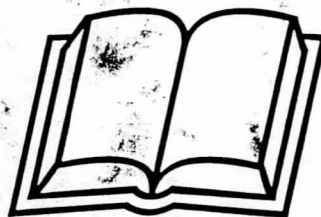
designated as a local historical landmark by the Champaign County Bicentennial Commission in 1976.

Although the church started out with fewer than 30 members, its congregation now numbers about 300. Several building changes have been made to accommodate the growth. In 1956, an addition to the 1908 structure was erected. In 1993, a new sanctuary was built.

Salem Baptist Church
130th Church Anniversary

Sunday, May 26, 1996

"A Victorious Church"



1 Corinthians 15:57

General Chairperson: Sister Nettie Scott

Co-Chairperson: Sister Alvena Monroe

Pastor: Rev. Claude E. Shelby, Sr.

The Church of Love, Friendship and Inspiration

BRIEF HISTORY OF SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH

In the latter part of 1866 and early 1867, a group of dedicated servants met at the Old Coffee House at 406 East Park Street, Champaign, Illinois, and organized a Missionary Baptist Church. The church was named Second Baptist. They held many fund raising projects and also solicited money and erected a church on East Park Street. Rev. William Washington was the first pastor to serve Second Baptist. The church later burned and a group met in homes until they could build another facility on West Clark Street. This church was also destroyed by fire.

Second Baptist joined the Wood River District in 1893, when the association met in Champaign.

The name was changed to Salem Baptist Church in 1908, under the pastorate of Rev. S. L. Edwards, and a church was erected at 500 East Park Street, Champaign.

Our first parsonage at 304 North Third Street was purchased in 1948, under the leadership of Rev. Robert L. Lillard. Our present parsonage at 1712 South Prospect was purchased under the leadership of Rev. William Howe Donaldson.

Rev. Eugene Williams was called to Salem in April 1956, and in August 1957, a new addition was started. It was completed in February 1958.

Rev. Albert T. Rowan was called to Pastor Salem on August 29, 1961. Minister Morris Clark accepted the call to the ministry during Rev. Rowan's administration, and was ordained in October 1965. Rev. Rowan organized the Webb Circle, the Board of Christian Education and the Red Circle Girls.

On June 20, 1949, Rev. William Howe Donaldson was called to Pastor Salem. His accomplishments were many. On July 1, 1953, Rev. Donaldson offered his resignation to accept the pastorate of Zion Baptist Church, Peoria, Illinois. Salem did not accept his resignation and granted him a leave of absence. He returned to Salem in 1968. He was named Pastor Emeritus by unanimous vote of the Board and membership in February 1981. Rev. Donaldson retired as Pastor in April 1981, after serving 50 years in the Lord's service.

In August 1981, Salem extended a call to Rev. Claude E. Shelby, Sr., to serve as Pastor. He accepted the call on September 11, 1981.

In December 1983, the church adopted a 3-5 year building plan beginning in 1984, for building a new sanctuary. Salem had to acquire more land in order to build a new structure.

Pastor Shelby, along with many members and friends worked tirelessly to complete the facility. Pastor Shelby volunteered to serve as Construction Site Superintendent at no cost to the church. We were able to march into our beautiful Church on August 22, 1993.

A Corner Stone Service was held August 28, 1994. A Masonic Ceremony was conducted for depositing of several mementos.

Pastor Shelby has initiated many workshops and programs at Salem. He is an outstanding Leader and Teacher. Some of the workshops conducted were

- How to Read and Study the Bible.
- How to Become an Effective Witness for Christ.
- Deacons and Trustees Training.
- Leadership Workshop.
- Evangelism.

He also teaches the New Members Class.

Salem hosted the 154th Wood River Baptist District Association, Inc., July 1993, which was 100 years after joining and hosting the meeting in 1893.

Ministers Wendell Bonner, Michael Carter and Michael Wilson were given licenses to preach under Pastor Shelby's leadership and were ordained September 25, 1994.

Brother Eldridge Walker was elevated to deaconship December 1986, Brother William Hoff was ordained as a Deacon January 10, 1993; Brother George Peoples was ordained as a Deacon January 8, 1995 and Brother Robert January was put on trial as a Deacon in December 1995.

Brother Reginald Buckley preached his trial sermon and was granted a license to preach January 28, 1996.

Minister Buckley also conducted a six week workshop on Evangelism from March 30, 1996 through May 4, 1996. The theme of the workshop was Witnessing To the World and Developing a Witness Life Style. Participants in the workshop were: Minister Reginald Buckley, Bro. Eddie Adair, Sis. Patricia Adair, Rev. Morris Clark, Sis. Betty Hassell, Deacon William Hoff, Sis. Marian Jones, Sis. Faith Shelby, Bro. Anthony Turner and Rev. Robert West.

A door to door campaign was conducted April 13, 1996 by Minister Reginald Buckley, Eddie Adair, Patricia Adair, Betty Hassell, Deacon William Hoff, Marian Jones and Edie Purdy. At the morning service on May 12, 1996, participants were presented

with certificates by Minister Buckley and those who attended at least five of the six week sessions were given fish hook pins and were admonished to go out and hook men and women for Christ.

A Membership Committee was formed in February 1993. The name was changed to Membership and Outreach Ministry February 19, 1994. Deacon William Hoff is the Chairperson, Sister Carolyn Dixon 1st Vice Chairperson and Minister Reginald Buckley 2nd Vice Chairperson.

Salem held its First Family and Friends Day March 13, 1994. Sis. Melissa Bolden served as Chairperson and Sis. McClendon Pollard Co-Chairperson. Rev. Chester Fontenot, Pastor of Union Baptist Church of Danville, IL, choir and congregation were our special guests. Our second annual Family and Friends Day Observance was held August 27, 1995. Sis. Viola Chatmon served as Chairperson and Sis. Betty J. Hassell Co-Chairperson. Rev. Edward Clark of Atlanta, Georgia, and Rev. T. D. Robinson, Pastor, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church of Springfield, choir and congregation were our special guests. Our third annual Family and Friends Day was held April 21, 1996. Sis. McClendon Pollard was the General Chairperson and Sis. Geraldine Peoples Co-Chairperson. Our own Pastor Shelby delivered the morning message. A fellowship dinner was served immediately after the morning worship service. The church was filled to capacity.

On July 8, 1995, at Salem Baptist Church, the Grand Opening of the Soup Kitchen by the Grandma's Community Prayer Outreach became a reality. The vision given by the President, Sis. Alvena Monroe had come to pass. The primary mission of the Soup Kitchen is to feed the hungry and homeless and to share the love of Jesus.

National observance of Children's Sabbath was held at Salem October 22, 1995.

The Mass Choir dedicated their new robes January 21, 1996. Pastor Shelby was presented a matching robe.

African Heritage Sunday was held February 11, 1996.

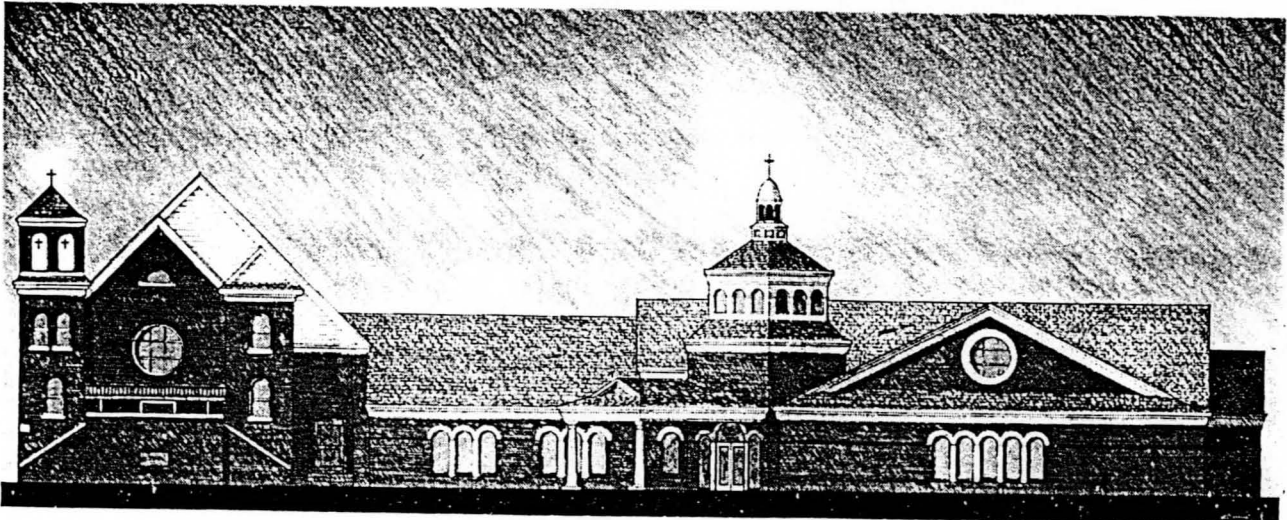
Salem's Ushers hosted an Annual Spring Workshop of the Baptist General State Ushers Auxiliary on March 23, 1996.

A spring revival was held May 6-9, 1996. Rev. Danny Hubbard, Pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church, East St. Louis, Illinois conducted a workshop on Evangelism each evening and preached on Evangelism after the workshop concluded. Rev. Hubbard is an outstanding preacher and teacher.

Not only does Salem try to offer a beautiful place of worship, many organizations have requested space for their meetings. Because of Salem's close proximity to many organizations, their requests have been granted.

On April 3, 1996, Pastor Shelby introduced the "Journey of a Lifetime," a journey through the Bible whereby one will obtain a working knowledge of every book in the Bible and will be able closely study many of the significant chapters in the Bible. Journey of a Lifetime is a fifty-two lesson study of the entire Bible. Mid-term and finals will be given to those who attend the study sessions each Wednesday. Rev. Morris Clark oftentimes assists the Pastor.

God has richly blessed Salem for 130 years, and we count it a special blessing to have Pastor Shelby as our leader. He encourages us to serve our membership, our community, and to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves.



SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH
500 EAST PARK AVENUE
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, AND INSPIRATION

*Excerpt from
History*

SALEM CHURCH HISTORY

In the latter part of 1866 and early 1867, a group of spiritually inclined people met to organize a church. In 1867, Susan Franklin Johnson, Kitty Lee, T. J. Shore, J. W. Randolph, and Martin Dandrage met with the council of Recognition at the Old Coffee House at 406 E. Park St. Champaign, IL. The Council was composed of selected members of first Baptist Church of Champaign, IL., First Baptist Church of Urbana, IL., and Bethel Church of Mahomet, IL. The purpose of the Council was to consider the newly organized Church; its Articles of Faith, its Covenant, the Circumstances of its organization, and to recognize it as a Baptist Church. The Church was to be called Second Baptist.

The official witnesses of the Church were Sarah Bromwell, Anna Randolph and David Johnson. The original membership, in addition to the organizers were Sister Hopkins, Phoebe Rivers, Anna Randolph and David Johnson, all candidates for Baptism.

The first Pastor to serve Second Baptist was Rev. William Washington. A lot was purchased on East Park Street and their first Church was built in 1869. The building burned and the members had to rent a place to worship.

Second Baptist joined the Woodriver District in 1893, when the association met in Champaign. Second Baptist was

too small to accommodate the large gathering, and space was rented at a hall above Swanell Drug store at the corner of Main and Hickory streets.

Second Baptist upgraded the physical structure, and many souls were won to Christ.

Each minister has left his mark during his tenure at Second Baptist. The Church burned to the ground twice, and the membership were forced to re-locate. They were always fortunate to find a place to worship in the same neighborhood.

In 1908, the Corner stone was laid and ^{a new} our present structure was erected. Rev. S. L. Edwards was pastor. The name was changed to Salem Baptist.

Our first Parsonage was purchased in 1948, under Rev. Robert L. Lillard. Rev. Lillard was a very spiritual leader and worked diligently to complete the work God had ordained him to do at Salem. He resigned in 1949, and returned to his home Church in Kansas City, Missouri. He told the congregation that he left unfinished work at his home Church and it was his duty to complete it. Before he left he recommended Rev. Donaldson from Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Rev. Donaldson came to Salem on June 20, 1949. Under his leadership, the parsonage debt a 304 North Third Street was liquidated and Rev. Lillard was invited to preach for the special mortgage burning Ceremony in 9/50.

Rev. Donaldson accomplishments at Salem were many and many people united with Salem. He was especially proud of the Boy Scout Troop #11 organized in 1951.

Rev. Donaldson resigned July, 1953 and accepted the Pastorate at Zion Baptist Church in Peoria, IL.

In April 1956 Rev. Eugene Williams was called to Salem. In May, 1957 the church officially voted to build an education annex at a cost of \$52,000. A ground breaking ceremony was held in July, 1957 and the new addition was started in August, 1957 and completed in February 1958.

Rev. Williams resigned in June 1961 to accept the pastorate of Antioch Baptist in Waterloo, Iowa.

Rev. Albert T. Rowan was called to Pastor Salem on August 29, 1961. Rev. Rowan organized the Webb Circle, the Board of Christian Education and the Red Circle Girls. Minister Morris Clark accepted the call to the gospel ministry during Rev. Rowan's administration and was ordained in 10/65. Rev. Rowan resigned from Salem in 1964 to accept the pastorate at Bethany Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1968, Rev. Donaldson returned to Salem. Upon his return he ordained 15 Deacons, issued licenses to preach to 8 ministers, and many individuals united with Salem. The present parsonage was purchased under his administration.

He was named Pastor Emeritus of Salem by a unanimous vote of the Board and the membership in February, 1981.

Rev. Donaldson retired as a Pastor in April 1981, after serving 50 years for the Lord. Pastor Donaldson continued to serve at Salem until he and Sis. Donaldson relocated to California.

In August 1981, Salem extended a call to Rev. Claude E. Shelby, Sr. to serve as Pastor. He accepted the call on September 11, 1981.

In Dec. 1983, the church adopted a 3-5 year building plan beginning in 1984 for building a new sanctuary. The plan was unanimously adapted by the Board and the membership. Salem had to acquire more land in order to build a new structure and the Board began to seek properties to buy. Salem purchased properties at 501, 504, ~~505~~, and 506 East Park Street in Champaign, IL.

Pastor Shelby, along with many members and friends worked tirelessly to complete our new facility and did not let construction delays deter them from completing the job. God gave Pastor Shelby the vision, and he was able to get members and groups to volunteer as well. Empty Tomb gave many hours of service to help with the construction. No one was more faithful than the Chairman of our Deacon Board, the late Bro. ^{Sherman} Oldham, and Bro. Willie Dozier. Bro Theotto Bowles was at the site giving moral support. Pastor volunteered to serve as construction site superintendent at no cost to the

church (and his many skills were beneficial). We were able to march into our beautiful church on August 22, 1993 and ~~our~~ owe a big thank you to our own Pastor.

Pastor Shelby is not only a builder, but he is an outstanding Leader and Teacher. He has initiated many workshops and Programs at Salem to help the members grow spiritually. Such as:

- How to Read and Study the Bible
- How to Become an Effective Witness for Christ
- Deacons and Trustees Training
- Leadership Workshop

Salem hosted the 154th Woodriver Baptist District Association Inc. July 1993, which was both inspirational and successful.

Minister Michael Wilson and Minister Wendell Bonner were licensed to preach under Pastor Shelby's leadership; *they were ordained, along with Minister Michael Carter Sept. 25, 1994*
Bro. Eldridge Walker was elevated to Deaconship Dec. 1986;
Bro. William Hoff was ordained as a Deacon Jan, 1993; Bro. Freddie Gordon has served as a Junior Deacon from January 1987, until he was put on trial as a Deacon in Jan. 1994. Bro. George Peeples was a trial Deacon at Zion Missionary Bapt. Church in Saginaw, MI and was ready to be ordained when he united with Salem October, 1993. His faithfulness did not go unnoticed and he was put on trial as a Deacon in April, 1994. *He was ordained January 8, 1995*

A membership Committee was formed February, 1993. The purpose of the committee was to assure the members that the

Church is able to meet their spiritual needs and desires their continued fellowship. Group leaders volunteered to help make the committee function. Bro William Hoff was elected Chairman. The committee's name was changed to membership and Outreach Ministry. The purpose of the name change was to expand the group into the area of evangelism, which is th total purpose of the Church. Because of the magnitude of the work, it was decided to involve some of the younger members of Salem. Bro Stephen Dixon, Sisters Maria McManus, Jean Rowan and Pamela Wilson volunteered to serve on the committee, and have brought new ideas enthusiasm and energy to the group.

In December, 1993, Sis. Deborah Morgan was elected to serve as Chair-person of a Task Force, ~~that will serve as a liaison between Church leadership and congregation.~~ The Task Force seeks to ascertain if the membership needs are met; what improvements can be made during 1994, and what suggestions members have to enhance the growth of our Church.

The various Committees, workshops and programs have all been initiated to help Salem grow both Spiritually and numerically.

We thank God for our 128 years of continued existence and today we give special thanks to our Pastor for his Christian leadership, and his ability to encourage us to do the will of God.