Bolivar Pentecostal Church History

In 1933, God placed it on the hearts of the early Pentecostals in Jefferson County to form this church. From the humble beginnings of the “cottage prayer meetings” in the Smallwood home on the north side of Route 340 to the “church on the hill” to our present accommodations, Jesus has established His church & the gates of Hell have not prevailed against it.

From 1960-1976, the pastor was M.C. Scott from Ohio. He, his wife & 2 children moved here where they immediately set about working to improve the church facilities & building the congregation. The church began growing steadily under the leadership of Pastor & Sister Scott. Attendance rose quickly from an average of 80 in 1960 to 131 in 1964. Also, during this time, major projects were done to the “church on the hill” to improve the church with much of the work donated by various individuals in the congregation. In early summer of 1969, a week-long revival lasted 7 weeks during which time 45 souls were saved, 23 were baptized in the Holy Spirit, many miracles of healing were reported, & the church was packed to capacity every night. The revival of 1969 not only revitalized the Bolivar Church but left a lasting impact on the congregation for years afterwards. The expansion of Route 340 had an impact on the church. This expansion would force the demolition of the building the congregation had worshipped in for nearly 40 years. Land was purchased just down the hill from the original location from John & June Newcomer. The land was located adjacent to the church parsonage. Land was also purchased across the road from the church for parking & a possible future parsonage. Construction began on the new church in 1971 with much of the labor donated by various members of the congregation & people in the community. After 2 years of sacrificial giving & volunteer labor the new church was dedicated in April 1973. In August 1976, Pastor & Sister Scott, feeling the leading of the Lord in a different direction, relinquished the pastorate of the Bolivar Church.

From 1976-1985, the pastor was Pastor Samuel B. Miller from Ohio. He, his wife & infant son moved here where they focus on the challenge of reaching out in the community. After the purchase of a 40-passenger bus, a bus ministry was launched in June of 1977. On the first Sunday, a total of 23 were on board the bus giving a big boost to the Sunday School & the Thursday evening youth service. The bus ministry became an integral part of the church outreach ministry bringing in dozens of children to Sunday School & youth services. In September 1979, a transition was made from the bus to the purchase of a Dodge passenger van. In June of 1977, a 10-mile walk-a-thon was initiated to help raise funds to send children to the annual youth camp in August at Roanoke, VA. The walk-a-thon was a success sending 17 young people to camp & became an annual event. On June 11, 1978, Pastor M.C. Scott returned as an invited guest for the burning of the mortgage note. It was a wonderful time of rejoicing that the church was now completely debt free. April 2-6, 1979, Bolivar church played an active part in the 1st Jefferson County Crusade for Christ held at Wright Denny School auditorium. The crusade was a success &, for Bolivar, it caught a missionary vision for the world at large that has continued to thrive & grow to the present day. On June 29, 1980, Mrs. Cathy Lee, a sister to Pastor’s Miller’s wife, was visiting with other family members at the church. Mrs. Lee had been stricken with multiple sclerosis resulting in blindness in both eyes for over a year. Ms. Lee went forward for prayer for healing at the end of the morning worship service. As she was anointed with oil & prayed for, she began to see the amplifiers sitting on the platform. The following week, her eyesight continued to improve & she was able to drive a car by the following Wednesday – a miraculous healing!! In August 1980, a translucent spire & gold cross mounted on a cupola measuring 27 feet 7 inches in height was erected on the church roof. For 7 years, Pastor Miller wrote & directed an annual Christmas play. The young adults & teenagers were the actors/actresses. The plays became an annual highlight for the church. In 1984, Bolivar church undertook the building of an outdoor pavilion. The pavilion was dedicated in the spring of 1985. In the summer of 1985, Pastor & Sister Miller, feeling the leading of the Lord, relinquished the pastorate of the Bolivar Church.

From 1985 – 1993, B. Guilford Turner became the new pastor in August 1985. Bolivar was the home church for him & his wife, Sue, & their 2 sons. In the spring of 1986, the carport & ramp were added to the church & the parking lot was expanded due to the need for additional parking. At the annual business meeting on May 14, 1987, a committee was formed to explore the possibility of expanding the church facility due to a need for a larger fellowship area, more Sunday School rooms & increased sanctuary space. On November 29, 1987, the proposal was accepted unanimously by the whole church. On November 12, 1989, the church celebrated the completion of their 400-seat complex by dedicating it to the Lord completely debt free. Other improvements include a donated white grand piano, the adding of the baptistry, a lighted outdoor sign, a carillon chime system, & adding a sound booth. The Lord was faithfully enabling the church to maintain & increase its ministries. Pastor Turner believed that the visible success of the church was directly attributable to & commensurate with sacrificial giving to missions. On October 8, 1986, a Wednesday morning (now Tuesdays) prayer meeting was started. The “prayer box” had become a sacred fixture through these intercessions. The video & audio tape ministry had provided encouragement for many “shut-ins” & preserved revival & special services for those who had been blessed by them. The choir sacrificed hours each year to provide beautiful cantatas at Christmas & Easter. VBS was produced each year. In addition to Sunday School each week, a Jr. Church was offered during the Morning Worship service. Two annual events that were established were “singspiration” in May during a Sunday evening service & the youth presented a “Harvest Fair” in the Fall which drew people from the community. The Lord provided a youth pastor to oversee the youth program under Pastor Turner. The church pavilion received a facelift & upgrade to become the youth center.