

Culpeper Baptist Church rests on the foundation of many courageous and committed men and women throughout its 250-year history. Culpeper Baptist was originally founded in 1774 as Mount Poney Baptist Church by David Thomas and Nathaniel Saunders. Prior to establishing Mount Poney Baptist Church, Nathaniel Saunders was threatened with imprisonment in 1770 if he preached in Culpeper. He eventually was arrested in 1773 and imprisoned in the Culpeper jail. At least 10 other men were arrested along with Saunders for preaching the gospel without a license. These passionate, God-fearing men believed they did not need a license to preach because they were called by God himself.

Leland was baptized in 1774 and joined a Baptist Church in Bellingham, Massachusetts in 1775. He left for Virginia in 1775 and joined the Mount Poney Baptist Church becoming their minister from 1777-1779. Leland admitted, "My stay in Culpeper was not a blessing to the people. I was too young and roving to be looked up to as a pastor! Difficulties arose, the church split, and I just obtained a dismissal and recommendation". Leland moved to Orange County and continued to preach throughout Virginia through 1791, when he returned to his hometown in Massachusetts. We have the First Amendments of the Constitution in large part, due to the efforts of American Baptists such as John Leland. Leland had petitioned his Virginia legislator, James Madison, directly regarding his concern for the need to ensure religious liberty in the new country. Since Baptists represented a significant portion of the vote in Madison's district, and Leland being a prominent Baptist preacher of the 18th century. Leland threatened to take Madison's seat in the House of Representatives. This threat by Leland resulted in a personal visit from Madison. The two came to an agreement that Leland would not run for Madison's seat and Madison agreed to campaign for Leland and his fellow Baptist's concerns for religious freedom. Madison kept his word and pushed for the Bill of Rights. Without Leland and Baptist involvement, it is possible we would not have the religious liberty that we experience today.

Mount Poney Baptist Church was named after it's location to the mountain two miles southeast of town. The site of the church was not far from the base of the hill. The land was deeded by Reuben Long to Anthony Foster and James Jett and is the place where the Baptist meeting house was already erected and known by the name of "Mount Poney Meeting House." In 1822, Dr. Marcus Buck offered the church a piece of land near Bell's Ford on Mountain Run for The Baptist Meeting House. On November 10, 1832, the following action took place: "ordered by the church that is expedient that the Baptist denomination should have a meeting house at the Culpeper Court House on the land lately given by Dr. Buck for that purpose." Almost a year later a resolution was passed to constitute two churches out of Mount Poney Church: one at Stevensburg and one at Culpeper Court House to still be known as Mount Poney Church.

In February 1856 the congregation decided to build a new church for Mount Poney and to sell the church at Bell's Ford. Sale of the old property was approved in July 1856. About five weeks later, it was reported that the Culpeper County court had agreed to sell to the church 70 feet of the public square for \$100 located beside the existing jail. This third location of the Mount Poney Church on the corner of Davis and East Streets was erected in 1859. The church was used as a hospital during the Civil War. After the dark days of the Civil War the church struggled to survive. The church voted in 1873 to change its name to Culpeper Baptist Church. While hosting the 1876 convention of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Virginia Baptist

Historical Society was organized. In 1892 the church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in the same location. The bell tower was relocated from the front of the church to the side.

As the church continued to grow in membership beyond the building's capacity, Alice Booton, Dr. Winfrey's daughter, sold CBC the current location on South West Street.

In 1958, John Farrar became Pastor and led the church until his retirement in 1984. There were many improvements made to the organization of the church through the Farrar years and the Sanctuary that stand today was completed. In 1976 a "Spiritual Lay Renewal" took place that brought many people to the saving knowledge of Jesus. John Farrar was not only an integral leader in the history of Culpeper Baptist Church but was also known as the "Pastor of Culpeper." Farrar was well known for his commanding preaching style. "When he conducted a funeral or a wedding, you could hear him without a hearing aide in any part of the church, and he had the memory of an elephant. He could remember everything about you and your family." Farrar was an active member of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society and is remembered as a great man and great Pastor.

Read more about the life of John Farrar [here](#).

Herbert O. Browning served ten years at CBC from 1985-1995. During his time the church buildings were renovated, and new offices were constructed through the participation of the congregation in the "Together We Build" campaign. In March of 1996, Dr. Ted W. Fuson came to pastor Culpeper Baptist and immediately began to listen to the congregation's desire to experience renewed growth and spiritual power. During Dr. Fuson's leadership the church voted in 2005 to proceed with plans to expand facilities and to begin a Capital Fund Raising Campaign. This campaign resulted in a new Worship Center, Courtyard, and Child Development Center and Daycare classrooms.

After the retirement of Dr. Fuson, Reverend Bruce Queen and Robert Lewis served as interim pastors until the arrival of Dan Carlton in August 2014.

Culpeper Baptist Church remains an active part of our community. We currently host five churches, a Child Development Center, Generations Central Adult Day, Piedmont Regional Adult Education Program, Culpeper Farmers Market and Playdate – A Children's Museum. In addition we hosts numerous community groups and regular concerts and special events. We are active in our world – supporting relief work in Ukraine and Pakistan in recent years. We are grateful for the legacy of the church and look forward to many more years to come!