

# Friendship Baptist Church

## Our History

The Church has always been the hub of the black community. More than just a structure, it represented that feeling of security, family and belonging that the community could find nowhere else. It was here at Friendship that those in the black community could reaffirm their faith without restraint.

In 1908, Corning's small black community decided to establish its first church. That first church, the Beulah Baptist Church, was located at 263 E. Market St. and its pastor was Rev. H.T. Hogan, father of Mrs. Willie B. Sweats.

The first church only survived for about one year. For about 10 years, members met and prayed in each other's homes. However, as the church grew, members needed to temporarily use the facilities of established churches such as Trinity AME Zion Church and St. James Chapel on Market Street.

Members soon focused their efforts on organizing a Baptist church of their own. Genesis T. McGrady, one of Friendship's founding members, said that he knew a young minister in Troy, Alabama who had the expertise to reorganize the church.

On Aug. 7, 1919, Rev. Morgan M. Days and his wife Ruby Mae came to Corning and headed the church for the next two years. The new house of worship was called "Friendship Baptist Church," in memory of the church in Troy, from which most of the Corning members had originated.

As the church's membership grew, so did its prominence within the community. Friendship became a recognized and accepted component of the Corning community.

When Rev. Days left in 1921, he was replaced by Rev. Horn, who in turn was followed by Rev. Williams, and then by Rev. Warfield of Rochester. Between 1936 and 1972, Friendship had three successive Philadelphia ministers: Rev. Quentin Jackson, Rev. J. H. Beatty, and Rev. David N. Jones.

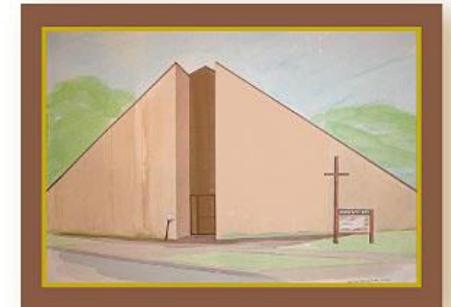
In 1977, Rev. Templeton Taylor of Binghamton and Rev. Arthur Todd of Syracuse each presided at Friendship. The following year, Rev. Willie Wright became pastor of the church and spearheaded the drive for a new church building. However, his sudden death occurred shortly after the foundation of the new church was laid.

An abundance of dedication, commitment and pride has been invested in Friendship Baptist Church, from the original structures on 85 East Market Street to 165 East Market Street, the St. Mark Church Building on Tuxill Avenue, and the building in downtown Corning.

Through disappointments, hardships, and internal strife, the call to build a new church building was heard loud and clear.



*Early Friendship Baptist Church*



*Friendship Baptist Church 2005*



*Friendship Baptist Church Today*

# Friendship Baptist Church

Continued...

The task began, and after much persistence and hard work, the Friendship Baptist Church building was erected at the corner of Denison Parkway and Pearl Street.

Now that the church had a permanent building, we knew that there was a need for permanent leadership.

Our interim pastor chose to decline so we began a search for new leadership. Our prayers led us to ask a young minister, David T. P. Perrin, who had been our guest speaker in February of 1979.

Rev. Perrin and his family came to Corning in June of 1981. Our spiritual growth continued, and Bible study was again a weekly part of our services.

There was use of more lay members in the Sunday worship. Sunday school and morning service were revitalized. Through Rev. Perrin, we began our association with the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1984, the Perrins moved back to Washington, D.C. Immediately a Colgate seminarian came to serve us, Rev. Lorenzo Flemmings. Rev. Flemmings continued to come and serve our spiritual needs until 1985, when Rev. John L. Hill of Rochester presided as our pastor. However, Rev. Hill stayed at Friendship for only a year. Through our friends at Calvary Baptist Church, we met Rev. Gary A. Holland. Under the leadership of Rev. Holland, pews for our sanctuary were purchased. The Deacons' ministry plan, Trustees' membership plan and tithing programs were established.

Rev. Holland's untimely death in April of 1992 was a deep blow for the Friendship family. We re again comforted with the reassurance that God never leaves us – we are His people called by His name.

Leadership was already in place in the form of Rev. Donald W. Stevenson, who had joined Friendship shortly after relocating to our community. He served as an interim pastor until he accepted the pastorate in 1999.

Under his leadership, our mission statement was developed. The church continued to grow spiritually and numerically. We discussed whether to move from our present location or expand our building.

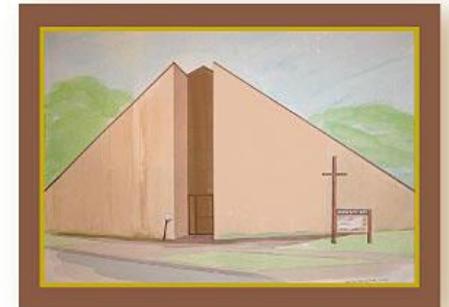
In 2002, a building fund was established. The church asked all adult members to contribute \$500. Rev. Stevenson also suggested a children's fund so our younger members could contribute as well.

In December 2003, the Stevensons transitioned to Hickory, NC. As always, God is faithful – leadership was in place in the form of Rev. Taswell Henderson. He was there to guide us as we searched for new leadership. Rev. Henderson had leadership training sessions, ordained Deacons that had been set apart, and revisited the church constitution.

*Friendship  
Baptist Church  
Past & Present*



*Early Friendship Baptist Church*



*Friendship Baptist Church 2005*



*Friendship Baptist Church Today*

# Friendship Baptist Church

Continued...

In July 2005, the church called Rev. Joseph B. Covington as pastor of Friendship. In the seven years that Rev. Covington served as pastor he worked with the ministries on the vision the Lord gave him "Living Our Mission Being a Connected Church."

He increased fellowship with Sister Churches in the community and within the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.; renewed link between Baptist Convention of New York; expanded Wednesday mid-week Bible study along with establishing Wednesday Noonday Prayer Service; oversaw the completion of the 2002 Campaign Building Expansion in 2006; expanded the Youth and Music Ministry; Ordained three Deacons and established the FBC Bible Institute.

Thus we are reminded of the remarks made by Rev. Reginald McClain's , the speaker at the June 21, 1981 new church building dedication as he charged the membership:

"Not to allow this building to become a social club, but this building built for the glory of God to be used by its People as a place of worship and as a place to save souls for Christ."



*Early Friendship Baptist Church*



*Friendship Baptist Church 2005*



*Friendship Baptist Church Today*