

Grove Baptist Church

Stewardship Campaign

FROM VISION TO DESTINY
Behold A Miracle



Visions of Truth Newsletter

April-May 2009 Volume 17 Issue 3

The mission of this church is to spread the Word of God, to aid in the redemption of all who are lost, to holistically develop us to Christ-like maturity (everything about us that is damaged, broken, lost or lacking) and equip us for our ministry in the church and in world mission.

Grove Celebrates 169 Years of Kingdom Building

We are much more than brick and mortar." Pastor Marriner often makes this statement as a reminder that Grove is more than a church. Grove is about a genuine passion and concern for God's people and the community. It's about practical application of Biblical truth. It's about hearing the phrase, "I am a walking, talking, living, breathing miracle" and truly believing it, by faith. It's the powerful vision of our Senior Pastor and the leaders before him that brings Ephesians 4:12-13 to life within our ministry. The scripture reads: *to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Through commitment and servitude, the foundation of Grove Baptist Church stands 169 years strong and continues to grow. Each year, we print the history of Grove as a tribute to where we've come from and where we are going. As we honor the sacrifices of our ancestors and the existence of our ministry, may we ask ourselves, "Am I truly being all that God has called me to be in ministry? What can I prayerfully do to leave a trailblazing mark on our ministry? Is God pleased with the impact made in ministry to others?" We all have a God-given role to play in making our ministry all that it can be! What's yours? Make this the year!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, GROVE CHURCH!

GOD'S PRESENCE - GOD'S PURPOSE - GOD'S PEOPLE

The first seed of Grove Church was planted in this community by Reverend M. Woodson on November 4, 1825 in the community known as Craney Island. The first public service was held in the Craney Island School Building located on the former site of the old Churchland Academy School, now the Academy Crossing Shopping Center. This seed grew and produced great spiritual fruit to the extent that a new church edifice, completed in the summer of 1829 as Sycamore Hill Baptist Church, was built on the present site of the Churchland Baptist Church.

The membership increased so rapidly that the matter of the "Negro" membership created new challenges. In 1840 the Negro members were given the privilege to have separate places of worship. Mrs. Elizabeth Wright, a member of the mother church Sycamore Hill,

donated the site on which the present Grove Church stands.

The members met regularly in their new house of worship as a separate congregation, but were still considered members of Sycamore Hill. Because of the laws at that time, the Caucasian members of Sycamore Hill appointed a committee each year to attend all meetings held by the new congregation. Grove has on record original minutes of church meetings dating back to the 1840's and original headstones in the church cemetery dating back to the 1800's.

One headstone reads, "Stephen, Servant of A. J. Wise, died Oct 12, 1852" without even giving the benefit of a last name. From 1840 to 1866, the pastor of the mother church preached to the new congregation at the close of their service. (Cont'd on page 3)

PASSION WEEK & HOLY WEEK

The Week of the Betrayal, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ



PALM SUNDAY

April 5th

The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem

Maunder Thursday

April 9th

The Institution of Communion and the betrayal of Judas

GOOD FRIDAY

April 10th

The arrest, trial, crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus Christ

Church Offices are Closed

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

(EASTER)

APRIL 12TH

HE'S ALIVE!

THE HISTORY OF GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH~ A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

*We Lay Tribute To
The Pastorate of
Grove Baptist Church*

Rev. Thomas Washington
January 1870-June 1873

Rev. Lewis Tucker
January 1874- August 1875

Rev. John A. Godwin
April 1877-April 1881

Rev. H. Lowell
June 1881-March 1887

Rev. Dr. Harry L. Barco
March 1887-December 1916

Dr. A. D. Moore
July 1918-1922

Rev. B. B. Williams
January 1924-December 1924

Dr. D. B. Madonia
May 1925-June 1927

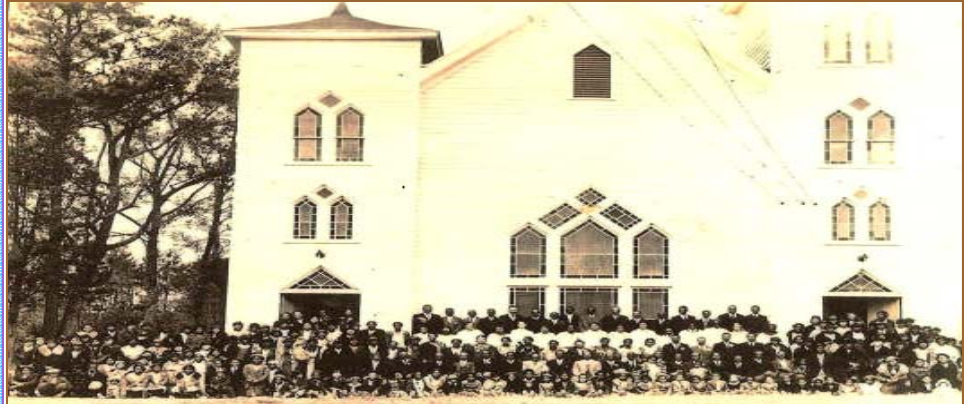
Rev. James Douglas
November 1929-1947

Rev. Gilbert G. Campbell
1948-1964

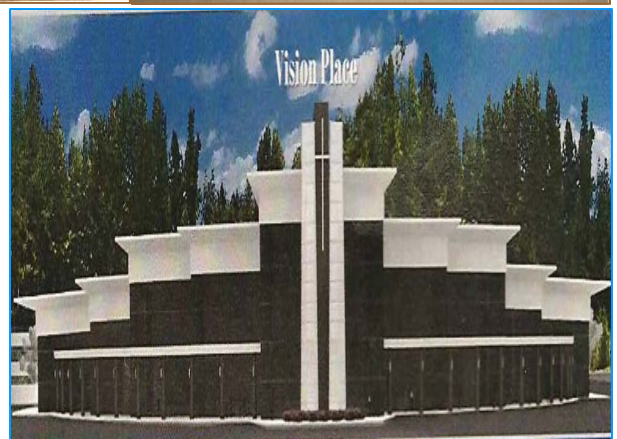
Rev. Ralph Reavis
1966-June 1974

Dr. Freeman Rhoades
1975-July 1987

Dr. Melvin O. Marriner
September 1989-Present



**GROVE'S
FUTURE
SITE-
VISION
PLACE**



GOD'S PRESCENCE—GOD'S PURPOSE—GOD'S PEOPLE

Grove remained under the supervision of Sycamore Hill until the year after the Civil War.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, Grove called its first Negro minister, Reverend Thomas Washington, a native of Matthews County, VA. Eleven others have been pastor this great church and are listed in this edition.

Out of this great church, the following churches have been birthed: *Mount Hermon Temple, First Baptist Church West Norfolk, and Little Grove Baptist Church, Huntersville.*

In September of 1989, Grove extended the call to our thirteenth and current pastor, Dr. Melvin O. Marriner of Chesapeake, VA. Under the leadership of Dr. Marriner, Vision of Truth Ministries (VOTM), a variety of holistic ministries was birthed with "You Can't Rise To Low Expectations" was the theme. Recognizing the need for ministry to be supported by staff, Dr. Marriner hired Shirley Jackson as his first full-time Administrative Assistant and Office Manager in 1994.

He established Christian Education and appointed Erma Curtis-Evans as Director in 1990 and hired Alexander G. Bell as the first Assistant Pastor in 1994. Dr. Marriner combined all adult choirs to form the Grove Mass Choir and the format for Wednesday Night Study and Grow was revised to include Wondrous Wednesday Worship, New Members Class and Bible Study.

Dr. Marriner's focus on education is further evident in Grove's discipleship and leadership training. In 2000, the Harambe Leadership Academy was created which includes "Steps to Leadership", New Members (Discipleship) Class (8 weeks), and Servants In Training (12 months). Additionally, more than 160 leaders attend the annual VOTM Leaders By Design Retreat. "Leaders Built To Last," became the motto of the Pillars of Power Leadership Institute, established in 2004, in partnership with Leadership Training International led by Rev. Kevin Hinman with Dr. Patricia Coker-Bell as director.

The doors of Grove Academy (pre-school) opened on September 4, 2001 with Dr. Marriner as the Chief Administrator and Min. Curtis-Evans as Executive Director. It was named the Dr. M.O. Marriner Christian Academy in September of 2003 in recognition of Dr. Marriner's commitment to education and service to the church and community. The Academy is currently under the leadership of Sis. Runita James.

To accommodate active church membership increases from 300 in 1989 to more than 2700 by 2000, Grove completed a \$1.7 million expansion of facilities with a 1000 seat sanctuary and educational space. The first service was held on Resurrection Day and two worship services were overflowing. To further accommodate the increasing number of worshippers, Grove began offering three Sunday morning worship experiences at 7 am, 9 am and 11 am on September 21, 2003 and holds Watch Night services at the T.A. Willett Hall.

Tuesday noon Bible Study was also initiated and the Tribal Ministry was established with the theme of "Let's Stay Connected," to more closely connect members to the church. Adult and youth ministries have also blossomed. Community service programs including Portsmouth Public Schools Adult Literacy are housed in the Community Alternative Resources and Education (CARE) Center established in 2003. Dr. Marriner also established the office and consecrated Dr. Margaret (Maggi) Curry-Williams as the first Minister of Administration, in June 2003.

With a desire to provide a strong financial underpinning for ministry and to serve the community, Grove has purchased properties on its left side between the church and Tyre Neck Road. Grove presently owns six houses. In 2004, Grove purchased three office condominium units on West Norfolk Road for ministry expansion. Presently, Christian Education, Multi-Media and Technology, Security and Administration are housed there. With church membership exceeding 5000 and ministries numbering nearly 50, God blessed us in December 2004 to acquire nearly 33 acres of land at 4745 W. Norfolk Rd. (Vision Place) to build a 3,400 seat sanctuary and educational/recreational facilities to bless more people and the surrounding community. Three additional acres nearby were purchased in 2006.

With holistic empowerment as the focus, the Homeownership Program was birthed using houses near Grove to support the ability of families to own a home after two years of rental savings for a down-payment. To demonstrate God's love in the community, since February 5, 2005 Grove has awarded \$150,000 in grants to Portsmouth Public Schools through "Education First: A Vision for Excellence. God was glorified as Grove was named Church of the Week by CBN for the Homeownership program and was featured on the front page of The Virginian Pilot and in various other national media for outreach programs. In 2009, the STRIVE alternative suspension program came into existence to assist our community's youth under the Visions of Truth Community Development Corporation.

To respond to Grove's increase in membership, the "*From Vision to Destiny: Behold A Miracle*" faith raiser was birthed. To date, From Vision To Destiny contributions are over \$2.6 million dollars since 2005. The land will be cleared in April/May of 2009 as God continues to prepare us to possess the land.

We are truly grateful to God who has been our guide and comfort in orchestrating one hundred and sixty-nine years of rich, deeply-rooted history. We are also grateful to our members and many friends, whose faith, prayers and commitment are the essence of our ministry. As we continue to reach high expectations, we thank God for our past and present; and we will work diligently towards a miraculous future.

Resurrection (Easter) Sunday—He Has Risen! Sis. Kathy Gaillard

Have you ever wondered how Easter and pagan symbols became intertwined with the Christian celebration of Christ's resurrection? The history of Easter dates back to ancient times when Romans and Greeks used eggs as symbols of rebirth and fertility. Eggs were also solar symbols that were prominently displayed in festivals of resurrected gods. Moreover, the word Easter comes from "Eastre" (Eostre), the Teutonic Goddess of Spring.

The merging of Christianity's celebration of Easter with that of pagan

celebrations began when the Christian church attempted to convert pagans to Christianity. It was difficult for pagans to give up both their festivals and their gods, so Christians incorporated some of the pagan festivities into the celebration to make Christianity more appealing to pagans.

The practice of incorporating Easter egg-laying rabbits into the celebration is attributed to the German culture. According to German legend a rabbit named Oschter Haws layed colored eggs in nests, delighting children who "found" the eggs. German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania brought this tradition to America.

No matter what secular

contributions tradition and culture contributed to the celebration of Easter, as Christians we know and appreciate its true meaning. The Bible tells of Jesus' death, burial, and recounts the empty tomb (Matthew 28, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 19). The Bible also tells of Jesus' resurrection and His appearance to Mary Magdalene and the disciples (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20).

We know that **Resurrection Sunday, or Easter, commemorates our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who died for our sins, was buried and rose again.** And, through Him, we are reborn and have everlasting life. We are thankful that He has risen!

CONGRATULATIONS TO GROVE'S BUDDING YOUNG WRITERS

Dr. Melvin O. Marriner

Youth in grades 6-12 were encouraged to participate in writing an original poem or essay on the topic of "Encouraging Youth to Endure." In our next issue, we will publish the writings from our first place winners. There were 21 entries and cash awards were presented for 1st 2nd and 3rd place category. The following youth placed accordingly:

| <u>POETRY</u> | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1st Place | Iman Williams |
| 2nd Place | Jasmine Young |
| 3rd Place | Jessica Young |

| <u>ESSAY</u> | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1st Place | Keenen Ash |
| 2nd Place | Brittany Webb |
| 3rd Place | Johnny R. Williams, Jr. |

Awards were presented during the Heritage Celebration. All entries received certificates. Cash awards were 1st Place—\$150, 2nd Place \$100, & 3rd Place \$75.00. Congratulations to the winners and all those who participated in this essay contest!

KEEP HOPE ALIVE

Bro. Tom Taylor

Hope is the belief that your desires will be attained. It is a trust in someone or something in which a confidence is placed. Ephesians 1:18...speaks of the HOPE of God's calling and the RICHES of his glory. As believers, we trust in God.



"When we live in daily harmony with God, we have more than a vague hope that the future will be positive. Rather our hope is complete assurance that God has our back. He can and will bring good from any situation that comes into our lives. Even suffering takes on a new meaning when we realize that the God who counted every hair on our heads is intimately acquainted with the pain we are experiencing. He is with us in it and He plans to use it for our benefit and for His Glory (John 11:4 story of Lazarus). When we truly understand that, our attitude changes from resistance to acceptance and we begin to cooperate with the process."

(Excerpt from "Becoming a People of Grace" by Chuck Swindoll)

The riches of His Glory speaks to all that God has given us. Some of our blessings (earthly) we know. Most we don't (heavenly). We will know of the others when we meet God face to face, when all is revealed to us.

It's good to be a "Saint" versus an "Ain't", because the Lord always has our back. We have HOPE and what a shame to live without it. HOPE is the universal language used by our President, and it is one of the believer's best words. Regardless of our situation, I always remember the title of a sermon that I heard when I was about 10 years old. The title was..."BEHIND EVERY DARK CLOUD THE SUN STILL SHINES." We live with the HOPE of a great day and a better tomorrow,

CONGRATULATIONS



Minister Garlena Hines
Employee of the Quarter
COMOPTEVFOR

SIS. GAELLE SOP
(Churchland High School)

Nominated for 6th Annual City
of Portsmouth Outstanding
Youth Citizen of the Year
Award!

Sis. LYDIE SOP

Invited to membership in the
ODU Chapter of the Honor
Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the
nation's oldest, most selective,
and prestigious all discipline
honor society for outstanding
academic achievements.



Bro. & Sis. Lindsey & Renee
Graves!

welcomed Lyndsi L' Maya-Olean Graves
on March 2nd at Maryview Hospital.
Baby Girl Lyndsi weighed in at 7lbs. 14
ounces and 20 inches long. Renee
Graves is the Assistant to the Minister of
Administration and the Assistant Editor
for the newsletter.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT: *The Evangelism Ministry*

Sis. Tekeema Foster

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. (Matthew 28:5-6).

In April, we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What better way to honor Him than to utilize your gift to fulfill The Great Commission that He shared with the disciples in Matthew 28: 18-20? Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

We have not all been called to the position of evangelist but God will use us all to witness to someone who crosses our path at some point in our lives.

The Evangelism Ministry at Grove seeks to exemplify Jesus Christ by meeting people where they are, helping the church proclaim the Gospel, and



assisting new converts and new members grow in their Christian journey. Servants of the ministry strive to be and to produce 'intentional disciples' who aren't merely 'Sunday morning Christians' but victorious Christians who are connected to the body and living their purpose. When and if God leads you to the Evangelism Ministry, you will be equipped to share the Gospel with anyone, anywhere, at any time.



Left to Right
Sister Diana Bonds,
Minister Charles Fuller,
Minister Gwendolyn Beale

For More Information,
contact
Christian Education at
484-8944
Be an example for
Christ each today!



Grove Meets the \$100,000 Challenge!

On Sunday, March 8th, God moved on the heart of Stephen Ballard of S.B. Ballard Construction Company to make a matching contribution of \$100,000 to the FVTD campaign. That means we raise \$100,000 between March 8th and March 22, 2009, and he will match our contribution dollar for dollar.

"Is there anything too hard for God." - Genesis 18:14. The answer is a resounding **NO!** Grove rose to the challenge and raised over \$129,000. "Our God Is A Great God!" We thank God for moving on the heart of Bro. Ballard for this challenge and also for his very generous seed contribution of \$30,000.00 for our Youth Pastor position.

STRESS/MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

Sis. Angela C. Johnson

These are stressful times for many of us as we age and try to manage different mental health and stressful issues in our lives. It is difficult to be a woman and try to meet everyone's individual needs. Rather, it is nearly impossible to do. Listed below are tips to aid in reducing our individual stress levels and encourage good mental health.

TIPS for relieving Stress:

1. Put our needs first sometimes and remember it is impossible to meet everyone's needs!
2. Listen to relaxing music, whatever you consider relaxing!
3. Learn to say **NO**. It helps to remind us we're in control of our individual lives, as well as God, of course!
4. Enjoy good positive hobbies that outweigh the negative ones which we are attempting to reduce.
5. Turn the computer and TV off sometimes and enjoy some quiet time alone.
6. Walk, if you can! It's the best exercise there is!
7. Pray! God will listen to your prayers if you diligently seek him.

Remember that we all want to be around to see Vision Place completed. Reducing our individual stress level is one step that will aid that!

HAPPY EASTER!



A poem to capture the spiritual essence of the Easter Lily.

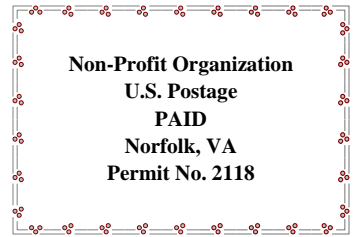
Easter morn with lilies fair
 Fills the church with perfumes
 rare,
 As their clouds of incense
 rise,
 Sweetest offerings to the
 skies.
 Stately lilies pure and white
 Flooding darkness with their
 light,
 Bloom and sorrow drifts away,
 On this holy hallow'd day.

Easter Lilies bending low
 In the golden afterglow,
 Bear a message from the sod
 To the heavenly towers of
 God.

- Louise Lewis Matthews



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CHRIST CARE GIVERS

The **Stephen Ministry logo**, with the broken person behind the cross and the whole person in front of the cross, symbolizes that we are all broken people and that it is only through the cross of Jesus that we are made whole.

Christ Care Givers will help guide you in your journey from brokenness to wholeness.

To learn more about our Christ Care Ministry and how you—or your friend— can be matched with a Christ Care Giver, contact... **Minister Shirley M. Jackson**, Minister of Pastoral Care, 757-4874-4149.



GROVE CARES ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

To help us minimize paper use and save on postage, we ask that you visit www.grovebaptistchurch.com to view a “paperless” version of the newsletter or pick up a copy in the vestibules. If you do not have computer access and need a copy mailed to you, please call the church office at 484-4149.

VISIONS OF TRUTH NEWSLETTER

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Sis. Costella Williams, Layout Designer

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We thank God for you and your willingness to serve!