

## Our History

The written church history currently available was compiled by the late Church Historian Audry S. Davis. It was prepared many years ago based upon the recollections of one of our oldest members, Mr. Alexander McCoy, now deceased.

As related by Mr. McCoy, Sandy Ridge Baptist Church was constructed during slavery time. Its founder, "Uncle Joe Ratliff" as he was called, pastored here from the time he constructed this church until his death in 1920. It is our belief that Uncle Joe pastored at this church for forty-five years. To the best of our knowledge, this church is approximately 168 years old.

At the time Rev. Ratliff built this church, he also built Mt. Level, Madison Grove, and Timmons ville Churches. Rev. Ratliff was also the first Moderator of the Black Zion Association. He was appointed to this position by his white slave master, who was at that time the Moderator of the only Zion Association that existed.

The ministers who have served this church since its beginning on the register are:

- Rev. Joe Ratliff: founder
- Rev. Bullard
- Rev. Jim Little
- Rev. Alsbrook: He did not complete his term of office. It was completed by his successor.
- Rev. Jim Ellerbe: Completed the term of Rev. Alsbrook, serving until the association met, at which point a new pastor was appointed.
- Rev. Nelson: He did not complete his term.
- Rev. Jim Horn: Replaced Rev. Nelson and served until the association again met and made a new appointment.
- Rev. Johnson
- Rev. Burl Sturdivant: Was released at the end of his term.
- Rev. W.M. Allen
- Rev. McManus
- Rev. Joshau Diggs
- Rev. Malloy: Died while in office, and his term was completed by a successor.

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- Rev. J.H. Ferguson: Was appointed by the association to complete Rev. Malloy's term.
- Rev. Worth
- Rev. Fairley: He did not complete his term. Various ministers filled in until a new pastor was appointed.
- Rev. J.E. Chambers: He asked to be released before his term expired.
- Rev. Amos Chandler: Pastor until November 1974, when a new pastor was appointed.
- Rev. W.H. Sturdivant: Served as pastor until July 2014. Was bestowed the title of Honorary Pastor until his death on June 20, 2018.
- Rev. Vashon Ingram: Appointed October 4, 2015, as pastor.

Church Clerks of this church, in order of service rendered are:

- Tom McCoy: Served as the first church clerk.
- Joe Waring
- Michael Waring
- Katie Bennett
- Elijah McCoy
- Charlie Davis, Jr. (until approximately April 2018)
- Vera S. Cash (beginning approximately April 2018)

When Rev. J.H. Ferguson was pastor, it was decided a new church was needed. This church was completed in 1958. In 1975, the church was furnished with new pews and carpet. At a later date, new windows, as well as air conditioning were added. On October 21, 1984, at 2:30 p.m., the Sandy Ridge Missionary Baptist Church Fellowship Hall was dedicated on our church anniversary, with Rev. Wade Gatewood, during the service. Through cooperation and continuing our work with God's guidance, we will always feel proud of the past and present history of Sandy Ridge Missionary Baptist Church and its community. May our future, under God's guidance, be even more fruitful than our past.