

NASH GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL

Putnam Co., TN

By Gary West, pastor of Nash Grove Baptist Church
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COOKEVILLE – Nash Grove Baptist Church is pleased to announce the celebration of its 100th birthday.

On Sept. 8, the church will host a centennial celebration at 6 p.m. They will be burying a



time capsule and placing an Ebenezer stone to commemorate God's leadership over this church throughout its first 100 years and to serve as a reminder to future generations of the need to depend upon His leadership in the future.

The history of Nash Grove Baptist Church begins in a time much different than our own. The year was 1912. The Qing

Dynasty of China came to an end after ruling for 268 years, and the Republic of China came into being. A secret eight-year alliance was signed between Bulgaria and Serbia, each agreeing to come to the other's defense in the event of war. It was this alliance that would lead to the First World War in just a few years. A man named Albert Berry made the first successful parachute jump from an airplane. The Girl Guides (later named the Girl Scouts) was founded in the United States.

In September of that year, two months before Woodrow Wilson would defeat incumbent President William Howard Taft to become the nation's 28th president, in a little community nestled above the Caney Fork River, the Nash Grove Baptist Church was founded. The people of that community were mostly farmers. Some were also loggers or carpenters, but all, like most rural Americans of that generation, were self-sufficient people who did whatever life required. No one in that neck of the "flatwoods" owned an automobile. Most had never seen a "movin' picture." But a new church in the community meant a place to go and worship with your neighbors and friends; a place to turn when troubles came; a place to gather to console the bereaved when someone died; and a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ could be proclaimed.

Newton Henderson Nash and his wife, the former America Lefever, who were known in the region for the gray-colored, salt-glazed crockery ware they made, built the church on their own property. For the first few years he was listed as the pastor of the church in the minutes of the New Salem Association, although he was not actually its minister. Preaching services in those days were held only about once a month as he was able to find ministers able to come preach there on a given Sunday.

The New Salem Association minutes recorded in the year of 1913 that the Nash Grove Church contributed \$12.50 to the association and also paid \$.50 towards the printing of minutes. That may seem like a small amount, but three years later the entire church property was given an estimated value of only \$200. By that year, 1916, the membership of the church had grown to 52.

In April of 1917, in response to Germany's U-boat attacks on American ships, the United States declared war on Germany. That same year Nash Grove Baptist Church would call its first true pastor, Sam Howell. From that time until the present, the church has never gone long without a pastor or interim pastor to lead the congregation. Pastors since that time have been J. F. Neville, J. L. Myers, Jimmie Trobaugh, Oscar Nash, C. D. Tabor, E. H. McCaleb, R. R. Compton, J. H. Goodwin, Raymond Patterson, Douglas Sowards, R. Porter Hudlow, J. D. Land, Paul Dinkins, Sam McCord, Lester Flatt, Ray Cavness, Milford Cox, Bob Pharris, James Eddie Haynes, Wayne Tate, Robert E. Lee, Russell Flatt, Elmore Judd and Gary West.

By 1925 the church was beginning to thrive. On Aug. 12 of that year, James Riley and Cordelia Nash donated the land upon which the current church is built, as well as the land for the Nash's Chapel School. A new wooden church building was constructed for \$1,000 that would seat up to 350 people. The church reported no indebtedness. From that time forward the church would often be thought of in the community as being connected to the Nash's Chapel School, though in reality they were always separate entities.

The ministry of Nash Grove continued to expand in the years between WWI and WWII. Significantly, Sunday evening worship services and Baptist Training Union programs were begun. The church continued to be an active part of the New Salem Association, and in 1940 hosted the annual meeting of the association.

During WWII, while the nation was engaged in war half a world away, the people of Nash Grove Church were becoming more concerned about missions to tell the world about Jesus Christ. The women of the church were influential in this, establishing a chapter of the Women's Missionary Society (later the Women's Missionary Union) in the church. By 1944, the church reported that 11 women were members of the W. M. S.

In keeping with this mission-minded attitude, the church voted to send five percent of all offering through the Cooperative Program for Mission in 1954-55. God continued to bless the church, and in that same year the foundation for a new auditorium was laid that would measure 36x60 feet. At the same time they reported that the brick had been added to the church parsonage completed that structure.

In July of 1962 the church voted to associate with the Stone Association rather than the New Salem Association because of its closer proximity to the church. The church has remained a part of this association until the present time. As the missionary spirit of the

church continued to grow, the church voted in 1971 to begin tithing its receipts to the association and the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Of course, the real history of Nash Grove Church is written in the many lives touched by its ministries through the years; the souls saved, the hungry fed, missionaries sent, lives changed by the power of the Gospel. Even today God continues to bless this church. In recent years the church has added a new fellowship and educational building, a steeple, beautiful stained glass windows, and a playground and pavilion (built on the old Nash's Chapel school grounds) to benefit both the church and the community.

In First Samuel 7:12, it is recorded that the great prophet and priest set up a stone monument which he called Ebenezer of "Stone of Help," saying "Hitherto the Lord has helped us." In that same spirit the Nash Grove Church plans to set up an Ebenezer stone this Saturday, Sept. 8, to acknowledge that it is only by the help of the Lord that they have reached this great mile stone in the Church's history.

The very next day they will begin a four-day revival lead by Bro. Thurman Seber of Liberty to testify that their future is likewise in the hands of the Lord. All the community is invited to join them in this celebration of their past and future.

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*Read more about the churches of Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>