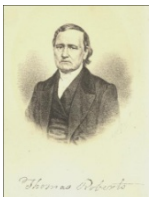


NEW MONMOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH



HISTORY 1855-Present

On March 30, 1854, members of the First Baptist Church of Middletown met to plan a new church in Port Monmouth (subsequently subdivided into Belford, Port Monmouth and Chanceville).



They were led and encouraged by the Rev. Thomas Roberts, Sr., a previous pastor of First Middletown who planted churches to stand for abstinence in communities plagued with alcoholic abuse. The group observed that Port Monmouth was growing and many were "without any other means of going to the sanctuary than the locomotive powers given them by their Creator." Letters of dismission were granted. On April 28, six Baptist churches convened to recognize the Port Monmouth Baptist Church in Chanceville (now New Monmouth) with sixty-three charter members.



Dominie William V. Wilson, age forty-two, was already serving another pioneer temperance outgrowth of First Middletown, the Second Baptist Church of Middletown (later called Navesink Baptist Church) in Riceville (now Navesink). He agreed to serve in Chanceville and pastored both congregations until his resignation from Second Middletown that October. He and his wife Martha made their home a mile to the north in the historic Whitlock/Seabrook/Wilson House.

The new congregation upheld the orthodox faith, believing that the Bible "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter" and that it is "the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried." These believers declared that "the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace" because the Son of God "by his death made a full atonement for our sins." They taught that justification is "solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God."

Sunday morning services, Sunday School and Wednesday prayer meetings apparently began right away in the nearby schoolhouse (now 8 Cherry Tree Farm Road). The first communion service was held on June 25. (Communion was not held regularly on the first Sunday of each month until 1867. Individual cups were provided beginning in 1910). Psalmody was adopted as the worship hymnal. The congregation voted on May 31 to join the East New Jersey Baptist Association in the New Jersey Baptist State Convention. Granville Croydon was elected church clerk. Elias Morford and Thomas Roberts, Jr. became deacons, the latter serving for forty years. Jacob Conover, Cornelius Hendrickson, Charles Lee, Walter Parsons, Aaron Seabrook, James Seely and William Griggs were the first trustees, the latter serving for twenty-five years.

In September 1854 a committee was appointed to select a building site. It considered a location in Port Monmouth (now Belford) west of Plank Road (now Church Street) but chose the Chanceville Lumberyard, which was donated in 1855 by William Morford, who lived across the street (now I Cherry Tree Farm Road). The sanctuary was completed that year and opened for worship the next January. A committee was also appointed to secure a site and build a mission nearer the shore. A one-story building was erected about 1855 on the east side of Plank Road about one-quarter mile north of the present site of the Belford United Methodist Church. This mission chapel was sold about 1890.

In 1856 Elizabeth Lee, Lydia Morford and Charles Lane became the first members received by baptism. The ceremony was probably conducted in the pond at Jacob Conover's sawmill a short distance southwest of the

church on a branch of Compton's Creek. In 1860 William Griggs was elected the first church treasurer. By 1864 an organist and choir assisted in worship. In 1865 the church incorporated (reincorporating in 1917 and 1995). A lot was procured and horse sheds were erected in 1866 (remaining until 1949). The pulpit area was enlarged by twelve feet in 1867. A wooden baptistery was completed in time for a baptismal service held on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1876. The Women's Missionary Society began in 1877 (merging with the Mary Elizabeth Sutphin Guild in 1944). Sunday evening services may have begun in 1854; they were taking place at least as early as 1885. In 1891 a weekly prayer meeting began near the shore. On about December 13 the Rev. Dr. Wilson retired. During his thirty-eight years as pastor the membership had doubled.



Our second pastor was Rev. B. Calvin Weeks who came in March 6, 1892. He lived at first in rented quarters almost a mile west of the church. That year the Christian Endeavor Society for young people began (later called the Young People's Christian Association, then the Youth Group or Fellowship or Ministry). A lot was purchased from Orlando Lewis and the present parsonage was constructed. Pastor Weeks concluded his ministry after one year on April 30, 1893.



Rev. Paul A. H. Kline came at the age of forty-seven with his wife Fanny on October 1, 1893. The Poor Fund (called the Fellowship Fund beginning in 1918) existed by 1894. The sanctuary was redecorated in 1895. Pastor Kline conducted an effective evangelistic ministry for two years, ending with his decease on July 9, 1895.



The fourth pastor was Rev. George C. Williams, who came from Bradford, England with his wife Fanny, beginning his pastorate on March 1, 1896. He was a courageous leader and preacher. Our first Roll Call was held under his leadership on March 4, 1897. On May 31, 1897 after one year of service he took a charge in Allentown, Pennsylvania.



Rev. Matthew M. Finch, our next pastor, came from Camden, New Jersey on December 15, 1897. He performed the first wedding in the sanctuary on December 14, 1898, marrying his daughter Stella Bertha Finch to Clarence Groff. By that year there was a paid custodian. The corporate name was changed to the New Monmouth Baptist Church on March 31, 1899. In the same year we withdrew from the East New Jersey Baptist Association to join the newly organized Monmouth Baptist Association (which in 1909 joined what is now called the American Baptist Churches). Pastor Finch concluded his five years of revitalizing service in our church on February 28, 1903, leaving for West Creek Baptist Church (New Jersey) where he pastored for over forty years.



Rev. Archibald H. Sutphin came with his wife Elizabeth on May 1, 1903 from Holmdel, New Jersey. Our sixth pastor, he was forty-three years old. On April 28, 1904 he reinstated the Roll Call as an annual event on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the church. Addresses were given by former pastors Wilson, Williams and Finch. Henry J. Frost was elected the first Financial Secretary in 1905. New organizations formed: in 1903 the Home Department (visitors to shut-ins) and the Nearer and Farther Lights Mission Society (later called the World Wide Guild, then the Mary Elizabeth Sutphin Missionary Guild, then merging into New Monmouth Baptist Women), in 1906 the Cradle Roll, in 1910 the Ushers Union (ushers who raised funds and did maintenance projects, continuing until about 1937); and in 1915 the Ladies Aid (later merging into New Monmouth Baptist Women). Our first Sunday School picnic was held in 1910. The current pulpit furniture was purchased in 1911. and Mrs. William Morford was elected as our first manager for the Baptist Home Society in Newark. Giving for missions and benevolent causes, long a part of church life, was systematized and expanded in 1912. The first current expense budget was adopted in 1917 and a Father-Son Banquet (attended by 150) took place in the same year.

Stoves were installed to heat the sanctuary in 1906. A fifteen-foot strip of land was purchased from the Lewis family, adding to the parsonage lot in 1907. Electricity was installed in the church in 1910. William Morford donated the deed for the strip of land between the church lot and Keyport Road (now Cherry Tree Farm Road) in 1915. The next year brought the construction of the Sunday School Room (now called Sutphin Chapel), the kitchen (now the library) and its basement (now the prayer room). Major renovations were made in the church and the entire building was rededicated. In 1921 the Luyster lot west of the church building was acquired (now a section of our parking lot). The church was growing in size and sophistication; in 1922 it was selected as one of the fifty-two finest rural churches in the denomination. On April 21 of the same year the building caught fire

but was rescued by neighbors and the fire department. (The steeple caught fire from lightning in 1888 and 1948) In 1923 a Morey pipe organ replaced the existing instrument, and a small addition to the church building was constructed to accommodate it. During the twenty-two years of Rev. Sutphin's ministry, attendance doubled to about 180. This beloved pastor retired on September 1, 1925.



On June 20, 1926 Rev. H. Pierce Simpson accepted our call, coming with his wife Elizabeth from Townshend, Vermont. That year he started a weekly bulletin which was mailed to 200 homes in the community, organized a Children's Choir, Young People's Choir (teens who sang in evening services), Sunday School Orchestra, two Vacation Bible Schools (one in Port Monmouth and one in East Keansburg) and Sunday services at Cedar Beach and in the auditorium on the Keansburg boardwalk. Revival came to the crossroads. Average Sunday evening service attendance rose from a handful to 150. The largest number of members received in any year of our church were inducted in 1927, when seventy-four joined the rolls. Fifty-nine of these were received by baptism. On December 20, 1930, Rev. Simpson accepted a call to the Mount Cannel Baptist Church in New York where he served for almost thirty years.



Rev. Samuel Johnston came with his wife Isabel from Fitchburg, Massachusetts at the age of forty-five to assume the duties of pastor on May 10, 1931. Running water replaced the well in 1933 and a new baptistry was built in 1934. The "Fishermen's Chapel" or "Little White Mission" (now the Port Monmouth Community Church) was utilized as an outreach to residents nearer the shore. A Union Thanksgiving Service with Leonardo Baptist Church began in 1937 (continuing through 1990) Modern facilities were built to replace the outhouses in 1939. The first Mother-Daughter Dinner took place by 1942. The pastor conducted a radio ministry over WJBJ in Red Bank. A mid-week men's Bible class and Bible conferences with other churches supported a strong pulpit ministry. Eight members dedicated their lives to full-time Christian service. After thirteen years of dedicated preaching Rev. Johnston resigned on September 20, 1944 for a charge in Clinton, Massachusetts.



Rev. William D. Powell was called on February 4, 1945 to be our ninth pastor He came from Camden, New Jersey, with his wife Mae. Missions giving grew and many members were re-added by letter and baptism. He was a twenty-eight year old man with special appeal to young people. In the first year he reinstated Vacation Bible School in Port Monmouth and started the Pastor's Choir, children's Christmas plays, the Bykota (Be Ye Kind One to Another) Society (children and young teens who sang in morning services) and Troop School (offering summer activities for children in Port Monmouth). In the same year the Amico (All Members in Cooperation) Bible Class began (later merging into New Monmouth Baptist Women). In 1947 the Men's Club was formed (later called the Men's Fellowship, continuing until 1973) and extensive repairs and modernization of the organ were completed, leading to the formation of the Music Committee in 1948. By 1948 we were participating regularly in the United Easter Sunrise Service. After four years of service, Rev. Powell accepted a call on October 31, 1948 to Caribou, Maine.



Rev. William B. Bisgrove came on September 15, 1949 with his wife Martha from Camden, New Jersey at the age of fifty-six. During his years as pastor the area underwent transition from a rural to a suburban community. The church and Sunday School grew steadily, reaching peak average attendance of 275 (in 1964) and 304 (in 1963) respectively. Participation in community Holy Week services began in 1947 and became annual in 1952. (Annual hosting of Maundy Thursday evening services began in 1960.) The annual Vesper Service of Christmas music began in 1949, and a New Year's Eve Service in 1950. In 1953 the sanctuary and chapel were redecorated, and the Couples Club was organized (continuing through 1979). In 1954 the church celebrated its one hundredth anniversary with addresses by former pastors Simpson, Johnston and Powell. Excavation under the church created Wilson and Fellowship Halls and the present kitchen. In 1955 the Salmon property adjacent to the church was purchased, enlarged and dedicated as the Education Building in 1957. Monthly Sunday evening song services with area churches began in 1956 (continuing until 1969). A Missionary Committee was organized in 1951, annual missionary conferences began in 1959 and in the same year the church current expense fund began tithing to the mission fund. Missions expenses equaled current expenses in the years 1959-1962. The Ministerial Education Fund for aspiring Christian workers was established in 1958. 1962 saw the hiring of the first assistant pastor (Rev. Donald L. Tshudy, who served through 1964), Young Adults for Christ (now the College-Career Group), Sky Pilots for boys (later Christian Cadets, which continued through 1970), the donation of the parking lot across the street from the Education Building by the family of James B. Griggs, and the founding of

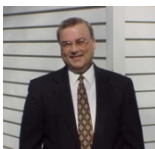
the East Dover Baptist Church in Toms River with the help of other churches. Pastor Bisgrove retired on May 2, 1965, after sixteen years of teaching ministry.




On December 19, 1965 Rev. Donald N. Scofield came with his wife Ruth from Oxford, Pennsylvania to become our eleventh pastor. In 1968 the Board of Christian Education was established and our first church secretary, Claire Rauch, was hired. The Current Expense budget was reinstated (1969). The choir loft was expanded and major improvements were made to the pipe organ (1970). The church was air conditioned (1971). The Leach property (next to the Griggs parking lot) was purchased in 1967 and called the Guest House; in 1971 it was sold and the Eckert property (next to the Education Building) was purchased and given the name Bethany House. In 1970 the Mary Elizabeth Sutphin Guild, Ladies Aid Society and Amico Class were merged and expanded to form New Monmouth Baptist Women. The Handbell choir was formed (1973), the Heartline newsletter began publication (1974), the sanctuary and chapel were renovated (1976), and foreign missions outreach was significantly expanded (1977-1979). In 1979 a weekly morning men's prayer group formed (becoming the Men's Fellowship in 1992). Pioneer Clubs for children were introduced (1979), home Bible and prayer groups were instituted (1981), the paved parking lot was expanded and the Leadership Training Series started (1984), major dramatic presentations commenced (until 1991), the Joint Heirs couples ministry first met (continuing until 1996) and the Mothers of Preschoolers outreach began (1986) Students preparing for the ministry were hired as summer youth directors during the years 1973-1981. Kyle T. Blair and David G Hutchinson were called as pastoral interns in the period 1982-1984. Rev. Dwight C. Singer served as Assistant Pastor in the years 1984-1989. On June 27, 1988, after twenty-three years of faithful ministry, Rev. Scofield took a charge in Rahway, New Jersey.



Rev. Jonathan H. Bosse began his ministry at the age of thirty-six on September 5, 1989. He came with his wife Connie Lee from Ewing, New Jersey to be our twelfth pastor. Our Vision was adopted in 1989. a prayer sheet began, the church office was computerized and the steeple was renovated. Rev. Barry R. Mulligan served as youth pastor during the years 1990- 1996. In 1990 an access ramp for the physically challenged was constructed, the "What We Teach" doctrinal statement was approved, the first annual Christmas Musical was held (continuing through 1998) and a discipleship program began. 1991 saw the establishing of a second Sunday morning worship service, and the Pastor's Book of Remembrance signed by those who memorized extended Scripture portions Numerous programs were initiated to enfold newcomers, such as the Membership Classes, Friendship Ministry, Sponsor Program. Welcome Team and Discipleship Program. In 1992 a Worship Team began leading contemporary singing (continuing into 1999) In 1993 Overcomers Outreach started (continuing into 1998) The next year the Planning Commission was formed. The Griggs property south of the church was purchased and use of Mater Dei's parking lot began. A Budget Committee was inaugurated. On October 16, 1994, the membership voted to withdraw from the American Baptist Churches and the church became non-affiliated. The Social Outreach Committee was chartered in that year (continuing through 1998). In 1995 the Wind Ensemble began playing for 8:30 AM worship services. The John Roberts property at 146 New Monmouth Road was purchased in 1996. In 1997 the church ladies restroom was reconstructed, the pipe organ was replaced with a digital Ahlborn-Galanti organ, and Rev. Terrence W. Kennedy began his service as Associate Pastor. Charters and position descriptions were adopted for the church, and for its staff committees and ministry positions. Worship attendance and real giving doubled, and six of our members entered full-time Christian service. On March 14, 1999, after ten years of highly effective preaching, Dr. Bosse concluded his ministry among us.



Rev. D. Bruce Seymour was called to be our Senior Pastor, and began his service at NMBC in April of 2001. He brought his wife, Connie and daughters, Heidi and Meagan. Their son David and his family lived in St. Louis. Pastor Seymour earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from LeTourneau College in 1974 and a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1984. He had served churches in Wisconsin and Missouri before accepting the call to the New Monmouth Baptist Church in April of 2001. During his stay with us he earned his Doctorate from Talbot Seminary in La Mirada Seminary in California. During Pastor Bruce's ministry, we were able to design and build the Family Ministry Center pictured here.  An incredible part of that ministry was the fact that on one fellowship gave an offering of over \$600,000 to fund the offering and more sacrificial giving the FMC was built with was truly an act of God during his ministry among us. Sunday Morning the church project. As a result of that no debt for the church. This Pastor Bruce served with us until August 2008 when he accepted an invitation to join the staff at Biola University's Talbot School of Theology in California. His assignment was to be the Assistant Director of the

Doctor of Ministry program and assist in the Christian Leadership Department.



Pastor Tom Crenshaw was called to be our interim Pastor in December 2008. He attended college at Washington and Lee College and graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton NJ. He has pastored churches in Philadelphia, Western Pa. and Tower Hill Presbyterian Church in Red Bank NJ. More recently he was involved in Christian Education at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church pastored by Rev. James Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale Florida and was later on the Pastoral Staff of Calvary Chapel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. As interim pastor for nearly two years, he has been a true pastor with Christ-centered messages from the pulpit and the amazing ability to write scores of letters each week to members of the fellowship. These are letters of congratulations and encouragement, as well as letting the recipient know that he was praying for them in their hour of need. In addition, he makes many house and hospital calls for the infirmed and the elderly. He initiated the Fellowship Coffee Hour after the late service, Upward Basketball and the summer Campfire Services.

***Before us lies the future.
Let us honor what God has done in the past
by seeking the mind of Christ together for the future.***