

R. G. "Bob" DICKERSON, JR.
ACCOUNTING AND INCOME TAX SERVICE

ENROLLED TO PRACTICE BEFORE
THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

MEMBER, NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS: GEORGIA
ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC
ACCOUNTANTS

301 E. Central Ave.
P.O. Box 2262
Valdosta, Ga. 31601

PHONES: OFFICE 244-6680
HOME 242-8742

June 10, 1992

Dear Brother Pastor,

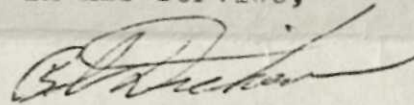
Would you please make the following announcement at the churches you pastor and wherever you may visit? Thank you.

The Lord willing, services will be held at Bethel Primitive Baptist Church near Fargo, Ga. on the 3rd Sunday in July at 10:30 AM and each 3rd Sunday thereafter. This church was constituted in 1843 and disbanded in January of this year. At the request of some of the former members, we hope to hold services there each 3rd Sunday beginning in July. Please join us then if you can and bring a covered dish (as there is no membership to provide a meal) and pray that the Lord will bless us to worship again at this historic spot. Bethel was the home church of the late Elder O.J. Rives and he is buried in the cemetery there. The church is located on the Suwanee River near the Georgia-Florida line.

To reach Bethel: going east toward Fargo on Ga. 94, between Statenville and Fargo; turn right at fire tower on paved road; go to dead end; turn left off paved road and church will be on your right after 3 or 4 miles. From Fargo, come west on Ga. 94 toward Valdosta; after crossing Suwanoochee Creek at edge of Fargo, take first paved road to left; church will be on your left about 5 miles.

No Saturday services are planned- Sunday morning only. Meet us there if you can- and if you can't, pray for these services.

Yours in His service,



The Gospel Appeal

P. O. Box 2262

Valdosta, GA 31604



Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church
% Elder Lamar Sheppard
219 Pinson Rd.
Albany, GA 31705

THE GOSPEL APPEAL

P. O. Box 2262
Valdosta, GA 31604

Elder Bob Dickerson,
Editor and Publisher

June 10, 1992

To the Pastors and Clerks of the deep South Georgia area churches:

Dear Brethren,

I have heard from all of our churches except for two; and all that responded are in favor of republishing the church directory booklets.

Enclosed find the page listing your church from the former directory. Please do two things for us:

(1) Examine carefully the information listed thereon; and make note of any changes to be made in this listing.

(2) Examine the picture of your church building and decide if you want us to reuse that same picture or if you would prefer to take another photograph for a better, clearer picture.

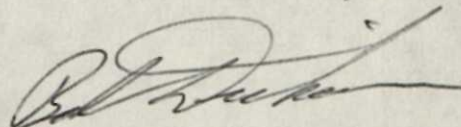
After you have done this, you can let us know the changes to be made and your decision on the picture. If possible, I would like to have this information by August 24, 1992. This will provide you plenty of time to have new snapshots made, and will be a time when I can work with the printer on this project. While we are set up on the printer's calendar for September, this time could be changed. If you anticipate making any changes in your church officers or times of services in September, please indicate this and we will delay publication until those changes can be included. It is my desire to have as accurate and up-to-date directory as possible, as it probably will not be changed for another five years.

Any suggestion you might have would be most welcome.

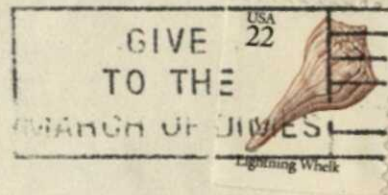
Do not send any money when you send me the listing for your church. Payment will be requested when the books are published and delivered.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in His Service,



Massy Jr.
Ret. 2 - Bar 581
Darien, Ga.
31744



Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church
c Mrs. Mary Shuppard
219 Pinson Rd.
Albany, Georgia 31705

Calhoun Co. Georgia
Darien, Ga.

Jan. 4 - 1986

To: Bethelham Primitive Baptist Church
From: Live Oak Primitive Baptist Church

In conference, at Live Oak Primitive Baptist Church Jan. 4, 1986, Brother J. M. Massay made Acknowledgements to Live Oak Church. For asking for a home at Bethelham Church Dec. 14, 1985. Then stated it was wrong on my part, I am sorry.

Then I asked the Church if they would permit me to continue on as was. The request was received and granted. In turn the letter from Bethelham Church was received, But not executed.

I would like to state to Bethelham Church that if what I have done has offended anyone of you I am sorry for that and any inconveniences I may have caused to the Church. It was not my desire to hurt any one, or the Church.

Authorization for writing of this letter was granted, while in conference on Sat Jan. 4, 1986

Please remember us in your prayers, and come to see us.

Moderator - E. L. Wood

Church Clerk - Br J. M. Massay.

Sister Mary Sheppard

Worth Co. Ga.

Sept. 19. 1986

To: Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church
From: Rocky Creek Primitive Baptist Church

This letter is to certify that
Bro. Jay Pate is in good standing
and ^{ordained deacon} in full fellowship with Rocky
Creek Church

We hate to lose Bro Pate
he is a good faithful member.

This being done while in
Conference Friday Sept. 19. 1986 -
Pray for us and come see us.

Moderator: Elder Sammy Harris
Church Clerk Protem: Jeanette Young

Sister Maxine Pate

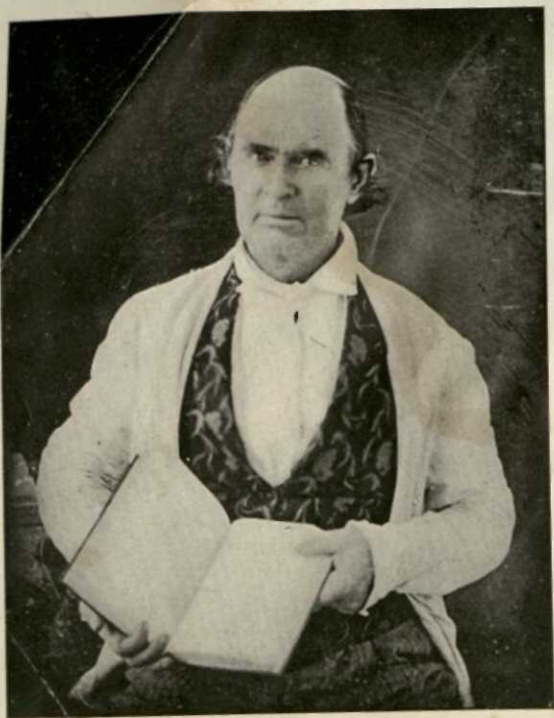
Worth Co. Ga.
Sept. 19. 1986

To whom it may concern this
is to certify that Sister Maxine
Pate is being granted a letter of
dismissal in good standing and in
full fellowship with Rocky Creek
Church.

~~the~~ ^{our} prayer is that God will
bless her in her new home. she
has been a good and faithful
member of this church for several
years. Our loss will be your gain.

This ~~letter~~ being done while
in conference Friday Sept 19. 1986 and
carries a ninety day limit.

Elder Sammy Harris - Moderator
Jeanette Young - Church Clerk. Protem



BENJAMIN LLOYD

Sam Rowan
R.F.D #2
Nashville, Ga.
31634



Mrs. Mary Sheppard
219 Pinson Rd.
Albany, Ga
31705

July 28, 1985 -

To - Bethlehem Primitive Baptist church
From - Oakley Grove Primitive Baptist church

On July 27, your letter about
Sister Marsh Snow was read in
conference. The church instructed
me to write a letter of approval
of Sister Marsh Snow request.
Pray for us and come to see
us whenever you desire.

Elder Lomas Yorkins
Moderator

Sam Rowan
church clerk.



Bro. Lankford Mathis
326 E. McPherson Ave.
Nashville TN 31639

BERRIEN COUNTY

NASHVILLE, GA.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1997

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST:

LONG BRIDGE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERS VOTED
TO LETTER OUT EACH MEMBER AND TO GRANT EACH A LETTER
OF DISMISSION.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT Brs. Larkford Mather
IS A MEMBER OF LONG BRIDGE CHURCH AND IS IN GOOD
STANDING AND FULL FELLOWSHIP.

WE HERE-BY GRANT Brs. Larkford Mather
A LETTER OF DISMISSION TO JOIN ANOTHER CHURCH OF SAME
FAITH AND ORDER.

MODERATOR: Elder Larnan Hysaund.

CHURCH CLERK: Sis. Maxine Pate

Sis Evie Connel
326 E. McPherson Ave.
Nashville TN 31639

BERRIEN COUNTY

NASHVILLE, GA.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1997

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST:

LONG BRIDGE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERS VOTED
TO LETTER OUT EACH MEMBER AND TO GRANT EACH A LETTER
OF DISMISSION.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT Sis. Evie Connell
IS A MEMBER OF LONG BRIDGE CHURCH AND IS IN GOOD
STANDING AND FULL FELLOWSHIP.

WE HERE-BY GRANT Sis. Evie Connell
A LETTER OF DISMISSION TO JOIN ANOTHER CHURCH OF SAME
FAITH AND ORDER.

MODERATOR: Elber Laman Hoggard

CHURCH CLERK: Sis. Maxine Pate

Sis. Frances Mathis
326 E McPherson Ave.
Nashville TN 31639

BERRIEN COUNTY

NASHVILLE, GA.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1997

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST:

LONG BRIDGE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERS VOTED
TO LETTER OUT EACH MEMBER AND TO GRANT EACH A LETTER
OF DISMISSION.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT Sis. Frances Mathis
IS A MEMBER OF LONG BRIDGE CHURCH AND IS IN GOOD
STANDING AND FULL FELLOWSHIP.

WE HERE-BY GRANT Sis. Frances Mathis
A LETTER OF DISMISSION TO JOIN ANOTHER CHURCH OF SAME
FAITH AND ORDER.

MODERATOR: Elder Lamar Shyrum

CHURCH CLERK: Sis. Maxine Pate

Cook Co.
Lenox, GA
May 30, 1993

Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church would like to express our love, affection and thanks to all of you who have come to help us celebrate our 100th anniversary. Some have told us they believe Bethlehem to be older than 100 years. We do have a land deed dated 1887 but there is no indication that the church was constituted at that time.

We are using a Union Association minute as the basis for the year which shows Bethlehem's constitution to be 1893. There is a possibility it could be over 100 years.

We have three (3) land deeds. The first one is dated November 9, 1887 and was between O. K. Jones and Bethlehem Church for one (1) acre for \$15.00. The second deed, dated June 26, 1895 and was entered in between Allen Hesters and the deacons, D. W. Kinard and J. B. Cannington for one (1) acre in consideration of natural love and affection. The third deed dated May 12, 1897 between J. W. Nelson and deacons D. W. Kinard and J. B. Cannington for one and one-half (1½) acres for the amount of \$14.00. We believe the church to have a total of three and one-half (3½) acres of land.

We do not have any minutes dated earlier than 1928. The earlier minutes are unaccounted for. This is the way the first recorded minute of Bethlehem was penned down: Sept. conference Sept. 21, 1928. Bethlehem Church met, services was opened and closed by Bro. N. L. Sutton. Then went in to conference in our usual manner. On motion and carried that Bro. Sutton act as moderator. 1st We invite visiting brothers and sisters to seats with us. 2nd We make known that there is an opportunity offered for members. 3rd Call for reference: Sent messengers to Springhill-messengers: D. W. Kinard and James Collier, then elected delegates to the association: messengers: James Collier and J. J. Kinard. Contribution of \$5.00 to the association.

This is the same basic format we use today for our conference except we are no longer in an association. We are considered an independent church.

The next minute indicates the pastor of Bethlehem was Eld. O. J. Hortman and the church clerk was Bro. James Collier. In November of 1928 Springhill Church sent a committee requesting the ordination of Bro. N. L. Sutton. This was approved and set for the December meeting.

The church asked for the ministerial support from Valley Grove, Pleasant and Bridge Creek. The elders comprising the registry were: Duncan McCranie, B. L. Key and J. W. McMillan. as thirton was ordained in December and was called to pastor the may not seebruary of 1929. He served faithfully until 1934. (12). We may. Register was called as pastor. enjoy the vis
Sutton
not kr

Some of the ministers who visited Bethlehem in the early years were: J. W. McMillan, Duncan McCranie, B. L. Key, B. C. Lewis, W. R. Aken, G. B. Burrows, J. B. Luke, L. Johnson of the Flint River Association, W. L. Simmons and Bro. H. A. Byington. Some of these names may be familiar to a lot of you.

In August of 1931 Bethlehem voted to take up correspondence with Rocky Creek Church. For sixty-two (62) years we have enjoyed a close and caring relationship with the dear members of this church. Even though our meeting week-end is the same we always give way both days of our regular meeting to be able to visit each other on annual meetings. Ours in August and theirs in September. We have kept up this practice. Not many churches today give way both days of regular meetings. Some will give way Saturday's meeting. We are thankful our membership still want to do this. Another interesting fact I found was that at the annual meeting of August 1932, a letter from Pleasant Grove (better known to us today as Long Bridge) was received and the bearer of that letter was Bro. B. E. Connell. This faithful member is still carrying correspondence to annual meetings at the age of 88. Going through the minutes Bethlehem has held annual meetings in July, August and November. But the majority of the time her annual meeting is the third (3rd) week-end in August.

In March of 1935 the church, as recorded in the minutes, was "blown down". From February to June no minutes were recorded. No information concerning the rebuilding of the church. Harmon Lewis would come visit us on annual meetings and he related that he had been one of the ones to help in the rebuilding. We have not ever heard of anyone else assisting. I am sure there were many. Mr. Lewis died at the age of 100.

Here is a list of the pastors of Bethlehem: 1928 - Elder O. J. Hortman, 1929-34 Elder N. L. Sutton, 1934-36 Elder L. L. Register, 1936-37 and 38-42 Elder Ashley Griffin, 1937 and 44-52 Elder M. D. Tucker, 1942 Elder E. R. Willis, 1952-62 Elder W. L. Vinson, 1962-65 Elder Charlie Cox, 1965-72 Elder A. T. Rowell, 1972-74 Elder H. T. Hester and 1974-present, Elder Lamar Sheppard. During the earlier days on conference day a 10-20 minute "respite" would be called after preaching and before conference. Another term in those days was "to wait" on a member. This meant that a male member had been absent from two conferences and a committee would be appointed to wait on him, that is to find out what was wrong.

Some times the pastor nor a visiting elder would be present at conference and a male member would be appointed as moderator and the business of the church would be carried out.

The minutes of the 40's were not well kept and some are missing, but they continued to have meetings whenever possible.

Bethlehem used to have a fairly large membership. As high as thirty-seven (37), at one time. Now, to some here today that may not seem very large but our present membership is twelve (12). We may be small in number but our hearts are big and we enjoy the visitation of our brethren and sisters and friends.

surely
not kn

The Lord has truly blessed us at Bethlehem. We have been able to continue to improve over the years. From having the eating tables set up in the front of the church to having a shelter built in back, then a concrete slab poured under the shelter, bathrooms built on the front of the church, ceiling fans, the shelter enclosed, benches padded, the church air-conditioned, a new roof and resingled, the lunch room air-conditioned, and now our latest project has been completed, vinyl siding has been installed on the church, an awning from the church to the lunch room and a wheel-chair ramp has been built.

Not only have members from our sister churches helped us out financially and by offering physical labor but also many in the community have come and helped with whatever they could. It would take too long to list everyone who has helped us at Bethlehem and I would be scared I would overlook someone so I'll just say, "You know who you are and what you have done". Please know we are very grateful and appreciate your support what ever it may have been: prayers, finances, labor or supplies. Thanks to each and everyone.

My husband and I started coming to this church in mid 1972. My husband joined by letter in May of 1973 and was called as pastor in July of 1974. We have many fond memories of the members who were here when we started coming. Bro. John Yarbrough, Bro. Charlie Hill, Bro. Grady Pearce were deacons. Bro Hill had a very firm handshake and you knew when he had shaken your hand. It had a way of lasting, especially if you were wearing a ring. Bro. Pearce and Bro. Yarbrough were always humble and willing to do whatever had to be done. Each member had a favorite place to sit. Sis. Hill, Sis. Hattie Bell Pearce, Sis. Nannie Brown, Bro. Frank and Sis. Annie Lynch, Bro. and Sis. Beard, Sis. Ann Pippin.

Sis. Brown would invite us to go eat lunch with her after Saturday meetings. Our daughters who were 7 and 4 at the time would say Sis. Brown fixes the best roast beef. Sis. Brown's son Aaron never put his name on the church books but he was a faithful supporter of the church. He helped build the shelter and also this table. I do not know the year he built it but I know it has been here for at least 20 years.

We ate many a good meal at Bro. and Sis. Lynch's home. Our daughters remembered she had chickens and Sis Lynch would always take them out to see the chickens. I remember one time for dessert Sis. Lynch had prepared a grape pie - wild grape pie, the first time I had ever seen one much less eaten one but it was delicious. Their son Grady and his sons: Roy and Frankie, were always ready to come help whenever we undertook a project at Bethlehem.

We ate a lot of good meals at Bro. and Sis. Pearce's. She was an excellent cook and could put the best biscuits on the table.

Bro. John Beard, who passed away in November of 1992, had suffered a stroke a few months before our annual meeting and did not know if he would be able to come to church that week-end.

The Lord looked down on him kindly and blest him with strength to come to the annual meeting and to take part in the communion services as well as the feet washing, although, he was confined to a wheel chair. That was a very special annual meeting for us all. He was only able to go to church one more time before he died.

Sis. Ida Renfroe was a sweet sweet person. She was only able to come to Bethlehem a couple of times after we became members. She was a resident of the nursing home in Adel. Every time we would visit her she would recall the good old days when she was able to go to Bethlehem and also visit the sister churches. She said each time "If I could only go one more time", she lived to be 100. There are a lot of sweet memories.

In July of 1984 a committee was appointed to go to Mt. Paron Church and request the deacon and deaconess services of Bro. Ralph and Sis. Vera Wetherington. Mt. Paron granted this request. Bro. Grady Pearce was our only deacon and felt he needed some help to carry out the duties of a deacon since he had become disabled. Bro. and Sis. Wetherington have been faithful in this responsibility. We are thankful to them. Our current members at Bethlehem would like to once again Thank You all for your prayers, love and support for all these years. Our members are: Sis. Ann Pippin, Sis. Pauline Beard, Bro. Lamar Sheppard, Sis. Irene McFarland, Sis. Mary Sheppard, Sis. Marsha Sheppard, Bro. Jay Pate, Sis. Maxine Pate, Bro. J. M. Massey, Sis. Berta Massey, Bro. Ralph Wetherington, and Sis. Vera Wetherington.

We thank the Lord for not only blessing us but also for his blessings on our brethren and sisters, and friends. Thank you all for sharing this day with us.

Bethlehem would like to thank the Lynch Family for having the sign put up in front of the church with the name of the church and the date of establishment.

Families represented at the fifth Sunday were: Sis. Nannie Brown, Bro. and Sis. John Yarbrough, Elder O. J. Hortman, Bro. and Sis. Frank Lynch, Lindsay Family Reunion.

Visting Elders in attendance were: James Hortman, grandson of pastor O. J. Hortman, Cleston Brooks, Roger McDonald, Bob Dickerson, Dwight Marshall, Wendell Horten and Licentiate Jim Smith.

**PASTORS OF BETHLEHEM
BEGINNING 1928**

ELDERS

O. J. Hortman
N. L. Sutton
L. L. Register
Ashley Griffin
M. D. Tucker
E. R. Willis
W. L. Vinson
Charlie Cox
A. T. Rowell
H. T. Hester
Lamar Sheppard (From 1974 to Present)

CLERKS

James Collier
Henry Vickers
N. W. Eason
B. H. Baldree
Mattie Mae Goff
Julia Robinson
T. C. Carter
Margie Daughtrey
Virgil Rowan
Julia B. Sumner
Charlie Hill
Hattie B. Pearce
Mary Sheppard

DEACONS

Daniel Kinard
J. B. Cannington
B. H. Baldree
Charlie Hill
Grady Pearce
John Yarbrough
Jay Pate
J. M. Massey
Ralph Wetherington

MEMBERS WITH NO DATES

Nancy Walker
 Sallie Baker
 Emmer Walker
 Patsy Handcock
 Lizzie Baldree
 Sussanah Watson
 Louannnie Walker
 Christiann Bennett
 Mary Kinard
 Sherily Fowler
 P. E. Fowler
 Addy Crumb
 Mary Hesters
 Mary Ann Arnold
 W. J. Arnold
 Pollie Collier
 James Collier (Clerk)
 Sarah Watson
 Edna Kinard
 Nancy Hayes
 Catherine Hobby
 Isabell Jolley
 Nancy Hires
 Girdie Sutton
 N. L. Sutton (Paster)
 G. T. Sutton
 Bettie Fender
 Della Price
 Susie Eason

Lucille Sutton
 T. E. Baldree
 E. S. Watson
 D. W. Kinard
 J. J. Kinard
 John Handcock
 Martha Handcock
 Savilla Cromwell
 J. L. Kinard
 Isac Pritchard
 Matt Musselwhite
 Andrew Walker
 Caleb Arnold
 W. C. Watson
 W. J. Arnold
 W. H. Young
 Nick Baker
 William Combass
 W. W. West
 W. S. Adams
 S. C. Flowers
 R. B. Roberts
 W. W. Webb
 Ommie Stallion
 Eliza Sutton
 Bellie Baker
 Sarah Baker
 J. D. Price
 Norman Eason (Clerk)

SCALE OF BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH

MEMBERS WITH DATES

Pollie Easters	1893	Ike Tucker	1956
Maggie Elexander	1897	Margie Daughtrey	1956
Dossie Hancock	1911	Lois Harrell	1958
Nannie Brown	1912	Ida Renfroe	1959
Henry Baldree	1912 (Clerk)	Ann Pearce Pippin	1960
Rosa Vickers	1914	Norma Hill	1961
Henry Vickers	1914 (Clerk)	Virgil Rowan	1961 (Clerk)
Dovie Rhoden	1918	Frank Lynch	1961
Pearl Goff	1951	Annie Lynch	1961
Willie Goff	1951	Mrs. Virgil Rowan	1961
Ida Littleton	1951	B. H. Baldree	1961 (Clerk-Deacon)
Mattie Mae Goff	1951 (Clerk)	Julia B. Sumner	1961 (Clerk)
Jeanette Sweat	1951	John Beard	1965
Julia Robinson	1952 (Clerk)	Pauline Beard	1965
Matilda Dees	1953	Sarah Dixon	1970
Marcus Bennett	1953 (Clerk)	Eld. Tilman Hester	1973 (Pastor)
Eld. J. M. Young	1954	Christine Hester	1973
T. C. Carter	1954 (Clerk)	Eld. Lamar Sheppard	1973 (Pastor)
Ethel Carter	1954	Gale Beard Turner	1973
Frank Cox	1954	Irene McFarland	1979
Eld. Dan Tucker	1953	Mary Sheppard	1979 (Clerk)
Hattie Bell Pearce	1955 (Clerk)	Marsha Sheppard	1985
Grady Pearce	1955 (Deacon)	Patricia Cone	1985
C. M. Hill	1955 (Clerk-Deacon)	James Cone	1985
Barbara Hill	1956	Jay Pate	1986 (Deacon)
John Yarbrough	1956 (Deacon)	Maxine Pate	1986
Willie Yarbrough	1956	J. M. Massey	1992 (Deacon)
Savilla Rutland	1956	Alberta Massey	1992
Effie Drawdy	1956		