

WESTWOOD HISTORY BY EVENTS COMPILED 2018

1961 -- Westwood Baptist Chapel holds its first service, September 24, 1961, at the Washington Irving Intermediate School with thirty-seven people in attendance. Rev. William J. Cumbie, Superintendent of Missions for the Mt. Vernon Baptist Association, leads services and twenty-four persons become member congregants. Army Chaplain Clayton E. Day is selected as Interim Pastor in October

1964 -- Dr. Robert D. Whitten is called as first permanent pastor on February 9 and begins his ministry on April 1. The Chapel constitutes itself as an autonomous and cooperative church on June 7 with ninety-five charter members. Westwood buys 4.9265 acres facing on Old Keene Mill Road in October. In December Westwood employs the architectural Firm of Kohler, Misner and Daniels to create a masterplan and design our first building unit of that plan.

1965 – Westwood observes its first Mission Day with Dr. Keith Parks as speaker. Mission days continue semi-annually throughout Dr. Whitten’s pastorate. A church library is established in February, and April 4 sees the approval of plans for the first building. Construction begins October 25.

1966 – Westwood dedicates first building of 8800 square feet at a cost of \$144,000 on October 2.

1967 – Carl Sapp, a layman from the Mt. Vernon Baptist Association, joins the staff as a volunteer Educational Consultant. Music Ministry presents a month-long “Arts on Witness” for church and community. Growth in attendance results in adding an 8:30 AM worship on September 15.

1968 – Resolves to support the Rev. M. Neil Breland family, missionaries to Thailand, as personalized involvement in world missions. In October participates with other local churches in organizing ECHO (Ecumenical Community for Helping Others) expressing our emphasis on local missions.

1969 – Westwood amicably resolved a controversy over appropriateness of youth dancing in church facilities. A building committee is established in July. Two trailers are sited and remodeled for added educational space.

1970 – Employs Edgar C. Beery as architect to revise the master plan and design plans for the second building in January and approves his plans in June. On December 9, a contract of \$137,088 is let for construction of a second building.

1971 – Celebrates completion of the building in October 17 with worship attendance of 336.

1972 – On March 26, a self-directed musical, “Life” is presented by a large contingent of our youth.

1973 – Westwood conducts a “Mission Fair” which leads to several new initiatives such as “Mother’s Day Out”, “Prayer Chain”, bus ministry and a “Missions Commission”. New Dawning, a group of 70

Westwood youth, debuts the Christian musical “Natural High” in February as the first of multiple presentations. The music ministry presents the intergenerational pulpit musical, “Celebrate Life.”

1974 – Establishes position of Summer Pastoral Intern and welcomes Brad Castleberry for three months. Celebrates 10th year anniversary. Creates a ‘dual’ Sunday school and worship schedule to solve space problems.

1975 – Ordains Annette Pressley as the first female deacon in Westwood’s history. Begins support of the Paul Benedict, Jr family, missionaries in Japan. Establishes a staff position of “Associate Minister for Education and Youth.”

1976 – Calls Robert Jones as Assistant Minister to begin July 1, and on October 17 ordains him to the Gospel Ministry. In October we approve sponsoring the Tran family from Vietnam and aid them in resettling in Virginia. Begins Sunday evening Workshops for Advent.

1977 – Establishes “Church Family Night” as a unified Wednesday service of dinner, choirs, seminars, youth and children’s mission programs.

1978 – Westwood calls Pamela Jean Williams as Minister of Education and Youth to begin May 1 and ordains her to the Gospel Ministry on September 24. Westwood thus becomes the first church in Virginia to ordain a female staff minister. We secure space in the neighboring Cary building for adult Sunday School classes in that our membership now exceeds 800. We form a Building Committee. Ordains as a deacon Winston Macon who becomes the first African-American elected deacon in Westwood.

1979 – In April Westwood approves a two-phase building program with the first being sanctuary and the second designed for education and administration. Lawrence Cook is selected to redesign the building master plan and to design and oversee construction of a sanctuary and remodeled educational space. We successfully complete a “Together We Build” funding program. We resolve to sponsor the Ly family from Laos in their Virginia resettlement.

1980 – A bond issue is completed, and construction begins in September on the Sanctuary.

1981 – Working with the Home Mission Board and the Mt. Vernon Baptist Association we lay the groundwork for starting a mission church. We dedicate the new Sanctuary on November 24.

1982 – Westwood initiates establishing another church southwest of us. A core group of members commit to begin the South Run Mission and meet each Sunday as the South Run Sunday School Class.

1983 -- Rev. Williams lead us to partner with Resurrection Baptist Church in Montpelier, Vermont and begins an annual intergenerational mission team serving ten days each summer until 1992 leading a children’s camp and serving in other hands-on fashion. In July the South Run congregation calls Rev.

Thomas McMillan as pastor and on September 18 begins services at the Newington Forest Elementary School.

1985 – South Run organizes from a mission congregation into an autonomous church on April 28. Westwood initiates the Westwood tradition of Mama Mia’s Dinner Theater to raise funds for youth missions.

1986 – Rev Terry Maples joins the church staff as Minister of Education on April 1. Easter brings a high worship attendance of 740. Rev. Steven E. Beck begins as Minister of Music and Youth on July 16. We establish the Educational Space Planning Committee (ESP).

1987 – In March Westwood receives the ESP Committee recommendations and approves construction of an educational building, establishment of a long-range planning committee, and a capital funds drive.

1988 – In September Westwood votes to erect the forth unit or “second-phase” of the former building plan. Mr. Cook again is selected to design and supervise construction of a creative educational, administrative, and music space encompassing a lovely courtyard. In November we begin a new Sunday schedule with worship at 9:45 AM and two Sunday schools at 8:30 and 11:00 AM.

1989 – Westwood approves the design for educational space and applies for a building permit. Westwood also celebrates its 25th anniversary.

1990 – Cathy Caviness joins the staff as Ministries Coordinator in November. In December we receive bids from contractors.

1991 – Rev. Beck moves to Minister of Music as a half time position. We vote to become an affiliated member of the Alliance of Baptists. Construction on building begins April 7 with a ground-breaking ceremony. We begin an association with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Westwood calls David Roderick to fill a new position of Minister to Students on July 24.

1992 – Westwood calls Dr. Jack Schmidt as Minister of Music as of January 1. In March we begin a Habitat for Humanity Ministry in Westwood and become a “Covenant Church”. Mr. Roderick is ordained to the Gospel Ministry on June 28. In October we resolve to begin a mission to the Chinese-speaking population of Northern Virginia and welcome them into our building. The fourth building unit is occupied and dedicated on October 18.

1993 – In July Rev Pete Ma is called as pastor for the Northern Virginia Chinese Baptist Mission which continues to meet in our facilities. Rev. Mark Price is called as Minister for Education beginning October 17. An ESL ministry is started in September. Westwood resolves to adopt Dr. and Mrs. Kent (Debbie) Blevins, missionaries serving at the International Baptist Seminary in Switzerland. Westwood formally resolved to associate with the mission effort of the CBF.

1995 – Dr. Whitten is elected as the Virginia Baptist member on the Coordinating Counsel of CBF. Westwood conducts a summer-long “Arts Fest” for church and community.

1996 – During summer we celebrate the second “Arts Fest”. In worship we experiment with “Counterpoint”, an 8:30 AM contemporary service. Westwood hosts a third concert by concert pianist, Armen Babakhanian.

1997 – Westwood offers “Fourth Sunday” contemporary services over the summer. In June the Chinese mission with Westwood’s concurrence called Chung-Tien (Fred) Lee as pastor; Westwood ordains him on October 5. Pat Close, who had previously served as Director of Music Ministries 1972-1976 rejoins the staff. Westwood creates the position of Minister for Student and Community Ministries and called Beth Toler to that role in October. Dr. Whitten is elected chair of the CBF Coordinating Council’s Church Resources Ministry Division.

1998 – In May we vote to co-sponsor with St Andrew’s Episcopal Church construction of a Habitat for Humanity house. In July we vote to identify and affiliate with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In a sermon on September 20 Dr. Whitten announces his retirement. Ground breaking service on December 13 begins construction of our Habitat house.

1999 – In February Dr. Whitten retires after thirty-five years as founding pastor and is named Pastor Emeritus. Westwood begins an Intentional Interim pastoral program with Rev. Wade Tucker.

2000 – Rev. Gary Long joins the staff in March as Pastor for Congregational Ministries.

2001 – Rev. James A. Abernathy begins his ministry as Senior Pastor on June 10.

2003 – Westwood reconfigures its staff and calls Rev, Mark Brasler as Minister for Spiritual Development and Rev. Nancy Hollomon-Peede as Minister for Community Involvement. Church installs a new Rodgers organ for worship.

2004 -- Stephen Gray joins the staff on May 1 as Associate Pastor with Youth and Children. Lora Johnson became Director of Preschool Ministries. Westwood begins an “Adopt-A-People” partnership with Persian World Speakers through the CBF.

2006 – To enhance facilities Westwood forms the “Bold Challenge Team” which began a three year refurbishing of buildings and grounds. Westwood establishes a Child Protection Policy to include training for all who work with children.

2007 – We ordain Stephen Gray to the Gospel ministry April 2. Dr. Abernathy completes his doctor of Ministry degree from Drew University.

2008 – Brandi McKenzie replaces Lora Johnson on staff as Director of Preschool Ministries.

2009 – We celebrate our 45th anniversary.

2010 – We commission Dr. Whitten on January 3 for a teaching mission to pastors in the ServeTrust Ministries of Leena Lavanya in India. Also we begin a Hypothermia Prevention ministry to the homeless. Westwood provides regular transportation from Greenspring for Sunday services. We begin an annual Service of Remembrance for loved ones who have died.

2011 – We designate ServeTrust ministries as a Ministry Partner. We also covenant with Iglesia Bautista Remanente De Dios to use our facilities for a stipulated fee. Rev. Gray is assigned a new role as Associate Pastor for Spiritual Development and Administration. August Sunday worship is moved to 9:00 AM and Sunday School to 10:15 AM. Westwood begins a Handbell Choir. Holly Bryant joins the staff as director of Preschool and Children's Ministries.

2012 – Westwood adopts a report to incorporate the church. We call Andre Towner as Director of Youth Ministries and he becomes the first African-American on Westwood's ministry staff.

2013 – Bylaws are revised. We establish an Endowment Trust Fund. The Don Forester Scholarship Fund is created. Westwood resolves to celebrate its Fiftieth Anniversary in 2014 and begins the process on November 24 with the first of "50 Sundays" by a conversation in worship between Jim Abernathy and Bob Whitten on Westwood's heritage.

2014 – Jeri Sager, a recording artist who grew up in Westwood, presents a concert as part of the "50th". Westwood celebrates its 50th Anniversary and reunion on November 8-9.

2015 -- Westwood initiates an environmental ministry in September entitled "Green Team" which highlights Westwood's view that taking care of God's creation is important. The Green Team's mission statement is *"At Westwood we value our connection to God's creation and strive to care for that creation in everything we do. Both at Westwood and in our person lives, being conscientious stewards of earth's resources is a privilege we embrace."*

2016 – Dr. Abernathy travels to India as part of a mission team in support of Leena Lavanya's ServeTrust ministries. We conduct a Ministry Fair on June 5. Dr. Abernathy announces his retirement on October 20 for next April.

2017 – Dr. Abernathy retires at the end of April and the church honors him with a three day celebration of appreciation. On July 30 Westwood calls Rev. Michael Poole as Intentional Interim Minister. September sees the creation of a Transition Team as part of a process to call our next Senior Pastor.

2018 – Rev. Jessie Kearns begins in February as Minister with Youth. Pastor Search Committee is elected in August.