

## **EASTWOOD'S HISTORY**

Every church begins as a dream in the hearts and minds of people. Out of such hearts and minds, Eastwood church of Christ became a reality in March of 1988. Two months earlier, three Haughton families (the Jerry Coker, Don Lowman, and Dwain Sadler families) met in their homes as a prelude to establishing a congregation in the area. Interested Christians were invited to explore that possibility. Approximately 20 met on March 1, 1988 and all voiced support for a congregation in Haughton. They decided to hold worship services in a rented building built by Boone Funeral Home. March 6, 1988 they had some 52 people in attendance that first Sunday morning in the rented building. They would later become known as the Eastwood church of Christ.

Two worship services and a Bible study were conducted on each Sunday with mid-week services on Wednesday evening. A building fund was established with the goal of locating a permanent location and erecting a building. Soon thereafter, the Eastwood congregation met at Platt gymnasium for two weeks (with no air conditioning) and then at T.L. Rhodes Elementary School (using the cafeteria and dining room area.) Very talented men of the congregation shared pulpit duties with other men and women teaching Bible classes. In September 1988, Mike Walton was hired as Eastwood's first full-time evangelist. Steve Williams was the primary song leader. Don Lowman started a personal evangelism class. Jake Bloom initiated a visitation program. Jerry and Pam Coker, along with Bruce and Glenda Nichols, worked with the first group of young people, eighteen in all, between the ages of 12 to 18 years.

Eastwood's membership grew to about 100 members during the first year. The members were aggressive in door knocking, home Bible studies, and efforts to solicit help in funding our building program.

In July 1989, 7.22 acres of prime real estate was available at 4100 Highway 80 in Haughton. The property was purchased and plans for the building were developed. The site required extensive clearing and filling before construction could begin on the permanent building. The foundation for the building was laid on October 1990. Most of the congregation was present on the Saturday when the concrete was poured to either help or watch. Over the next months the Eastwood congregation worked long hours together to construct the building. It was an all-hands effort with back-breaking tasks. Many from outside the congregation also assisted in our efforts. There were ladies working side-by-side with the men hanging sheetrock, painting, on the roof, or doing whatever was required.

Finally, on February 16, 1992, the Eastwood church of Christ conducted its first worship service in the new building. Eastwood's first baptism occurred after that first Sunday evening service when Mike Walton baptized Tony Aikens. But ironically, the first person baptized in the building happened two weeks earlier on February 2nd, when Karen Richards was baptized by her husband Todd.

Eastwood achieved a major milestone on May 2, 1998, when the mortgage on the building was paid off. Most of the Eastwood members attended a special mortgage burning ceremony on the grounds.

Eastwood was not about bricks and mortar, but people and their needs, and the image of Christ ever increasing in the hearts and lives of the people who have come to the place.

On April 3, 1994, Eastwood enrolled its first elders: Denver Huckabee, Norman Moore, and Hilton Robert.

On June 25, 1995 Roger Barnebey, Ike House, Bruce Nichols, Carlos Phillips, and Warren Williams were appointed as deacons. A year later, on June 16, 1996, three additional deacons were enrolled: Steve Batie, Tim Bice, and Todd Richards.

The eldership was dissolved on November 15, 2002, when Denver Huckabee and Norman Moore resigned.

However, in December 2005, Roger Barnebey, Bruce Nichols, and Dwain Sadler were selected and enrolled as elders. Bill Bourn, Brian Sadler, and Don Smolik serve as deacons. In 2009, Don Smolik moved out of state.

After Mike Walton left Eastwood to pursue his medical career, John Billingsly (considered part-time) served as our preacher. Barry Buckner filled in on occasions. In April 2003, Sherad Cloud served as our full-time evangelist until August 2004, when his family moved to Texas. Gordon Cole and Dan Coffel rotated pulpit-preaching duties until October 2005, when Dan became the full-time minister. After Dan resigned in June 2007, Gordon Cole served as the interim pulpit preacher until hired as the full-time evangelist in November 2007 until December 2008.

Eastwood has supported foreign missions in Pitesti, Craiova, and Romania, as well as India, South Africa, Panama and other foreign fields. Eastwood has an aggressive youth ministry and benevolence program, and financially supports a local church of Christ television program.

Currently, Eastwood consists of about 47 families with over 95 baptisms since our beginning, two of those have occurred in the last five months of 2010. In 2008, due to family health problems, Bruce Nichols resigned as elder. Dwain Sadler and Roger Barnebey served until August 2010 when due to the illness of Roger Barnebey's wife, he had to resign. This caused Dwain to resign, as there were no other men to serve with him. Brian Sadler serves as deacon.

July 15, 2009 we hired a new minister, Allen Tillman. His wife Tammy and his son Oliver are a great asset to the Lord's work at Eastwood. We look forward to continuing with our commitment to respect and build upon the great heritage we have received from those original builders among us.