

*One Hundred Sixty – Four Years of History  
Consolidated*



*Gilford Arrington; First Pastor: 1860*



*Hayward L. Dock, Jr.; Fifteenth Pastor: 2024*

## **First Providence History Over 164 Years**

In 1899, a group of members asked if they could establish a new church to serve those who lived further in the county. They named this church New Providence, and the Church in Hamburg was known as Old Providence. At some later date, the two churches agreed to change their names from Old Providence and New Providence to First Providence and Second Providence. In 1925, Carpentersville Baptist Church was organized out of the First Providence Baptist Church.

We know that some of the members left the church in fear of future flooding and with reluctance to move the church to the high ground. It is believed by many that some of these members are founding fathers of some of the other Black churches in the area, but we have no written proof of this as a fact.

Because of the depression, progress toward constructing a sanctuary was slow. Depression made life difficult for all people in America. It was hard for the members of First Providence because their church and members' homes were flooded in Hamburg. When the water receded, members of the church and members of other churches in the area went down in Hamburg and helped to move the people out. They dismantled the church, with mules and wagons, they moved the church to the Barton Road location. When construction was almost halted, Deacon Andrew Jay gave the deed for all the land that he owned, so that lumber could be purchased to complete the sanctuary. Many gave as much as they had during these tough times. They gave with their hearts to a church family that served all the community and to a God who brought them through the floods. With the help of Almighty God, the support and cooperative spirit of the other officers, members, and friends, the sanctuary was completed in 1931.

From 1931 to 1979 a couple pastors moved FP forward until 1948, Rev. W. B. Coleman, Jr., one of the sons of the church, was called to be the pastor. Rev. Coleman worked untiringly for thirty-one years until he was called to rest from his mighty labor at Providence in 1979.

Once again, a couple of pastors served until 1983. God touched the heart of our reigning chair of the deacon board, Deacon Grover Kirk Cofer, to hold First Providence Baptist Church, on the pathway to heaven until God should send another pastor. Many stood in the old preaching spot, for they were all trying to become the new pastor, but they were missing something that made them the right component to take First Providence Baptist Church to the next level.

Then came Min. Pope! Min. Alexander Pope, Jr., came to First Providence Baptist Church as a visiting preacher upon the request of Deacon Glover Kirk Cofer, this initial sermon at First Providence, took place on the 3rd Sunday in May of 1984. He was called to pastor in August of 1984 and accepted the call in September 1984. Rev. Pope was officially installed on Sunday, October 7, 1984. Since coming to us as pastor, Rev. Pope, who is a man of foresight and vision, a pious man, and a counselor; has served faithfully to promote spiritual growth to achieve unity among the disciples, to keep us on track by walking in victory. The increase to the church is evident

with the many accomplishments made under Rev. Pope’s able leadership. The Almighty God has shown Providence nothing but grace and mercy over her one hundred sixty-fours (164) years.

She has been so blessed since 1994 to undertake on the campus the following two (2) entities:

1. First Providence Learning & Development Center (FPL & DC)
2. First Providence Foundation (FPF)

They have both been blessing upon blessing to the church and to the surrounding communities.

To God be the glory!

**First Providence Baptist Church’s Pastors are as follows:**

DATES SERVED

- |                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Gilford Arrington    | 1860-       |
| 2. Henry Johnson        |             |
| 3. Jack Mims            |             |
| 4. James Talbert        |             |
| 5. John Gardner         |             |
| 6. Covington Scott      | -1909       |
| 7. P. R. Turner         | 1910 -1929  |
| 8. E. W. Williams       | 1930        |
| 9. W.W. Weaver          | 1931- 1932  |
| 10. D. E. Jennings      | 1933 - 1947 |
| 11. W. B. Coleman, Jr.  | 1948 - 1979 |
| 12. J. E. Freman        | 1980        |
| 13. Tyrone P. Jones     | 1981-1983   |
| 14. Alexander Pope, Jr. | 1984 - 2022 |
| 15. Hayward L. Dock, Jr | 2024 –      |

“To God be the glory!”

In 2022, we were still experiencing a new normal after being locked down and in isolation from the coronavirus-19 (Covid-19) pandemic Spring 2020 until June 2021. It was a worldwide health

shut down of wearing facial masks and observing six feet social distancing when gathering in small groups.

May 2022, the bricks that had been ordered for placement in a Memorial Garden arrived at the church. Rev. Wyatt Brown led this initiative along with Sis. Juanetter Moore and others assisted in placing the orders. He worked along with a couple of deacons to unpack the bricks and verify for accuracy upon their arrival on the campus. It was a few weeks later when Rev. Brown was admitted into the hospital, and it was discovered that he had a terminal illness and was not expected to survive.

At that time Dr. Alexander Pope stepped in and had the bricks installed on the designated spot on the yard. Benches were located, purchased, and placed in the garden for a sitting area to sit and meditate whenever you desire. A brick was purchased for all fourteen pastors of FPBC and installed in the garden.

Deacon Hunter, the new Lead for the Memorial Garden, plans to move forward to solicit disciples to purchase more bricks. The church will also purchase a brick for Pastor Hayward L. Dock, Jr. as the fifteenth under shepherd of First Providence as she did for the other fourteen Pastors.

September 12, 2022, FPBC, at the quarterly Family meeting, received the news that she did not want to hear, but knew that one day it would come. Dr. Pope, announced to the body, that he would retire on the fourth Sunday in December 2022. With heavy hearts, the Pastor's Support Team, planned a Retirement Celebration for Dr. & Mrs. Alexander & Linda Pope.

On Friday, December 30, 2022, FPBC celebrated Pastor Reverend Dr. Alexander Pope, Jr.'s retirement after thirty-eight years as pastor. The theme was "Oh What a Night!" It was a very elegant night of celebration. Many current and former disciples and Ministers from the CSRA and State Level came to celebrate this grand occasion.

2023 January, one hundred sixty-three years from Providence in Hamburg, SC to First Providence Baptist Church (FPBC) @ 315 Barton Road, North Augusta, SC, FPBC found herself in a place where she had been fourteen times before. A group of believers waiting for the next under shepherd from God our Father. FPBC has once again fallen under the leadership of Chairperson Grover Kirk Cofer and the Deacon's Ministry. They are utilizing the leadership of the Associate Ministers to have sermons formulated for the congregation on each Lord's Day and other events were taking place as outlined on the 2023 fiscal calendar. This will continue until the discipleship votes in the fifteenth Pastor.

The Pastor Search Committee (PSC) was formed according to the Constitution and Bylaws of FPBC. This team consisted of Dea. Timothy Bussey, selected as the Chairperson, Dea. Thomas Drayton, Dea. Kirk Cofer selected as Assistant Chairperson, Dea, Thoms Norris, Deaconess Linda Pope, Deaconess Debbie, Pope, selected as Assistant Clerk, and Sister Juanetter A. Moore, selected as Clerk. This team started working on Jan. 7, 2023, they continued the process until the fifteenth pastor was elected by the discipleship.

April 23, 2023, Deacon Robert Morgan, Sr., was selected as “Man of the Year 2023.” Sister Carol Murphy was selected as “Woman of the Year 2023.” Trustee, Niles Philpot was selected as “Honorable Mention Man of 2023.” Trustee, Doris Pearson, was selected as “Honorable Mention Woman of 2023.” This team collaborated within the financial aspects of the church to keep the church on track as the PSC were continuing to seek out a new under shepherd! Sister Eiress Searight was honored as the youth of 2023. To God be the Glory!

The 163rd Church Anniversary Theme, August 27, 2023, was, “God Has Been with Us from the Beginning... We’ve Got a Testimony!” This theme was very meaningful to the Providence Family because FPBC knew that Father God has been with them through all those years of floods and fires, God brought the church up to higher grounds. This church family continues climbing up the King’s Highway!

The Planning team selected Dr. Alexander Pope to bring the Spoken Word this year because illness prevented his appearance in August 2022 his last year of his pastorate. There was a special atmosphere (aroma) in the sanctuary on that day, the pews were filled. The current Honorable Mayor Britton Williams and his family were present, he gave words of greetings to the congregation on this Dr. Pope’s thirty eighth and final year of pastorate at FPBC.

The former Mayor Bob Pettit was in attendance also and gave greetings in honor of Rev. Dr. Pope as well! It was he who had given Dr. Pope, Pastor Emeritus the Key to the City of North Augusta, SC, in 2019. They gave highlights of their working relationship with Rev. Pope over the years. Praise Almighty God!

September 2023, PSC continued to work untiringly to wade through the one hundred plus applications for the opening of the Senior Pastor Position (Under Shepherd) for the church. They selected twenty-three (23) candidates from the nearby states, South FL, GA, SC, and NC. After reviewing these applications, they then selected nine (9) to move forward. It was time now to decrease even more, they selected six (6) candidates, and these six pastors were interviewed by the PSC. From those six (6) candidates they prayed, prayed, and prayed and selected the top three (3) candidates to present to the Church Family for consideration for the new Fiftieth Under Shepherd!

The pastoral candidates came on September 17, 24, 2023 and October 1, 2023, to present for the congregation a sermon and a teaching session. Between the sessions the congregation enjoyed a meet & greeting time with the pastoral candidate and his family as they enjoyed refreshments together.

October 15, 2023, was the long-awaited voting date for ALL FPBC DISCIPLES, they voted by secret ballot and placed them in a box for later confirmation by the PSC. After the last ballot was collected the seven (7) PSC team went into an area away from the congregants to count the ballots. It was a very tight race for Pastor Hayward L. Dock won by five (5) votes. The Church Clerk was assigned the task to call the winner on the next day. Sister Juanetter Moore, called our Pastor - Elect Rev. Hayward L. Dock and confirmed that he was indeed the highest vote getter on Monday,

October 16, 2023. He was beyond elated and stated that he was on cloud nine and would stay there for a long time. He praised and thanked God for answering his prayer to relocate back to GA/SC near his family. He had been away from them for 20 years and was indeed ready to come back home. He was raised and attended school in Richmond County, Augusta, GA.

He agreed to meet with the PSC on November 15, 2023, to proceed with the offer to accept the pastorate as the fifteenth pastor of FP. When the team met with Pastor- Elect Dock, Deacon Bussey, the Chairperson, presented him with the offer that the deacons & finance team had agreed upon. He was hesitant and did not accept that initial offer. The team had been given the authority to increase the offer to a stated amount. At that time, Rev. Dock asked the team if he could have a week to pray and count the cost before moving forward. The team granted the week for him to make his decision.

On November 17, 2023 @ 8:00 A M the Clerk, Sis. Juanetter Moore heard the arrival of an email on the PC. She opened the email and immediately shared it with the entire team about his acceptance of the second offer. On that date we had our new fifteenth Under Shepard in the person of Rev. Hayward Lamar Dock, Jr., Pastor-Elect. The winner's name was withheld from the church body until we could have Rev. Dock sign the agreement. Because of his schedule of trying to tie up loose ends in NC, we had a delay in his coming, so he instructed the team to move forward in releasing the GOOD NEWS to FP Disciples. Around the first of December Deacon Bussey made the awaited announcement to the church body, they were elated as Rev. Dock had been. To God be the Glory!!!

Rev. Hayward Dock, Pastor – Elect agreed that he would come and start his pastorate on January 7, 2024, first Sunday of the new year! He also agreed that he would come on December 31, 2023, to bring the Watch Night Message to FPBC Disciples, Family & Friends. A Great worship experience was enjoyed on that NewYear Eve Night by all in attendance.

First Sunday of the new year, January 7, 2024, was Pastor Dock's initial start to this new relationship of this connection between the Pastor & FPBC. The congregation was excited as they were preparing for the arrival of the next Under Shephard of FPBC. The ladies of the church planned a full course breakfast to welcome Pastor-Elect Dock to his new church pastorate. We had a glorious time during breakfast as we welcomed our Fifteenth Under Sheperd, Rev. Hayward L. Dock, Jr., Pastor-Elect.

On February 11, 2024, one young disciple came forward to join fellowship with FPBC by baptism. He was the first disciples to join fellowship with FP under the pastorate of Pastor Dock.

April 28, 2024, Yearly Men & Women Day Celebration was observed. The Theme was "Men & Women, Embracing Change 2024". Deacon Grover Kirk Cofer was selected as Man of the Year 2024 for standing up and leading FP during 2023 as the PSC were seeking a new Under Shepherd. Sister Maggie Brown was selected as Woman of the Year 2024, for her bold move to stand tall to serve in the position of Director of FP Learning & Development Center. This was bold because

she had suffered from a serious health challenge the year before when she had to learn to walk and talk all over, after losing those functions in her health challenge. Brother Carlos McKie was selected as Honorable Mention Man for 2024 as he stood along beside Deacon Cofer as his right hand as he recovered from two surgical procedures. Deaconess Sara Cofer was selected as Honorable Mention Woman for 2024 because she stood beside her husband, Deacon Cofer as he was leading the church body while the PSC continued to search for the next pastor. She was also at the FPL & DC to assist Sister Maggie to keep the center moving forward.

On June 2, 2024, Rev. Hayward Lamar Dock, Jr., Pastor – Elect was installed as the fifteenth Pastor of FPBC. He requested that Dr. Sam Davis, (Pastor Emeritus, Beulah Grove, Augusta, GA) preach the sermon for his special ceremony. He also requested that Rev. Dr. Alexander Pope, (Pastor Emeritus, FPBC) would preach during the morning service on that installation special day for him. He also requested that Dr. Pope do the Prayer during the Installation Ceremony, and it was granted.

June 3 – 7, 2024 Vacation Bible School (VBS) returned inside the walls of FP after four years. The Theme was, “GOD’S SUPERHEROES,” all disciples enjoyed each lesson day by day. All had an enjoyable time, each night as it ended with a delicious snack to carry home. Saturday, June 8, 2024, a 56- passenger bus was secured to take the church on a VBS Trip to African American Museum in Charleston, SC. Each disciple was asked to contribute \$20.00 for a light breakfast and bring funds for a dinner stop on the way home Saturday evening. The participants all expressed joy upon their return to the city.

From February 11, 2024, to July 14, 2024, seven disciples stepped forward to join fellowship with FP. Three came by water baptism and three came by way of Christian experience and one restored his discipleship with FP. We all say, “To God be the Glory!”

One hundred sixty-fourth Church Anniversary will be celebrated on August 25, 2024, the theme for this occasion will be “Reflecting on Our Spiritual Journey!” The scripture will be Proverbs 16:9, AMP – A man’s mind plans his way {as he journeys through life}, But the Lord directs his steps and establishes them. The Fifteenth Pastor, Rev. Hayward Dock, Jr. agreed to bring this first anniversary message since Dr. Pope, the retiring pastor, had brought the last message in 2023, 163<sup>rd</sup> Church Anniversary! To God Forever Be the Glory!