A HISTORY OF
HARDINGVILLE BIBLE CHURCH

Established 1865

A History of Hardingville Bible Church

The beginnings of Hardingville Bible Church trace back to the 1830s when a small group of believers began to meet in a **one-room school house** south of Hardingville for

personal spiritual growth. Because of the fervent preaching at these meetings, especially on "the sinner's doom" and "the second death," the school became known with ridicule as "Brimstone." These initial meetings, while spiritual in nature, do not seem sufficient for the constitution of a church. There is no record that the ordinances were observed or that there was any formal membership, name, organization, or officers. But God began a work in the midst of this small group of dedicated believers that would persist for years to come.

The first indication of this group's formation as a church is their 1865 purchase of a tract of land at the same crossroads where the current church meets, for $459 ($150 per acre). The **first church building** was subsequently erected, and the gathering was

named Hardingville Siloam Methodist Protestant Church. Since there is no record of a town named "Siloam" in this area of New Jersey, we assume that the founders of the church intended a reference to the Biblical site of the Pool of Siloam (Nehemiah 3:15; Isaiah 8:6; John 9:7, 11). The local newspaper read, "Providence permitting, the new Methodist Protestant Church at Hardingville, Gloucester County, will be dedicated to the service of Almighty God, on Thursday the 21st of January [1866]. Services commence at 10 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the afternoon, 6¾ in the evening. By order of the Committee, January 9, 1866." The early church also held Saturday night class meetings for prayer, praise, and study. August 28 through September 1, 1867, the church held a special camp meeting event which included opportunities for individuals to purchase items and for proceeds to "go towards paying for the new M. P. Church, at Hardingville." Instead

of taking offerings, funds for the pastor's salary, the sexton's salary, utilities, and building improvements were raised with special collections or through "subscriptions" collected by the members of the "Begging Committee."

On Wednesday, September 8, 1875, the church held a special "Harvest Home" 10th anniversary celebration for the public, complete with special addresses from "eminent speakers, appropriate music by the Glassboro Brass Band, and ample provision . . . for dinner and supper, [as well as] an abundance of good ice cream and confectionery."

The church built its **first parsonage** in 1910 and installed a bell and belfry in 1913 under the leadership of Walter Crossing (1913-1916). The Lord gave a "great revival" to the church, December 1913 through February 1914, when 158 souls came forward.

In 1939, the northern and southern branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church united to form the Methodist Church (U.S.). Because the church had doctrinal differences with this newly merged Methodist Church, Pastor Hibbert (1939-1944) led the church to come out of the Methodist Church and to change its name to Siloam Bible Protestant Church, along with 33 sister churches who broke with the Methodist church for the same reason. It subsequently became a member of the Bible Protestant movement which became known as the Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches in 1985.
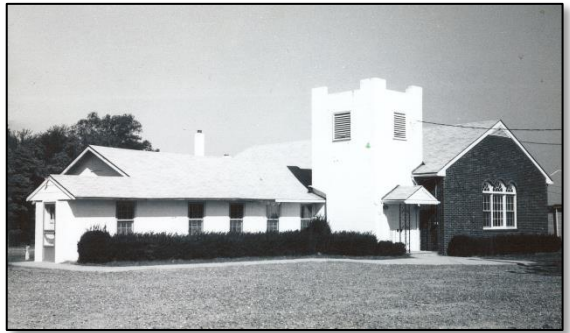
A Sunday school addition was built in 1951, under the leadership of J. K. Miller (1945-1952). This facility is currently used for office space and for our pre-school children. The small bathroom in this portion of the building functioned originally as a connector from the original church building. According to a local news release, on June 7, 1953, Rev. B. R. Biscoe (1952-1953) initiated a plan "to reach the traffic flying by" to the shore by opening a **drive-in church**. "Motorists sat and listened to the first outdoor service via a public address system. . . . Microphones carried the service over three loudspeakers installed on the outside. . . . There are drive-in restaurants, drive-in banks, and other drive-in ideas; so why not drive in to find life eternal." (In the photo to the left, note the loud-speaker installed just under the roof line so people in the cars surrounding the church could hear the service.)

The ground breaking ceremony for a **new church** was held on June 3, 1956, and a building dedication ceremony was held in May, 1957, during the pastorate of William Adams (1953-1961). During the ministry of Joseph Zearfaus (1967-1980), the church again made a formal name change to Hardingville Bible Church and constructed a new parsonage in 1970. A fellowship hall was completed in 1981.

Under the leadership of Mark Franklin (1982-2013), the church saw significant growth numerically and the facilities were improved and expanded in many ways. Air conditioning was added to the Church in 1983. Then, as a result of church growth, an **extension to the main auditorium** and extensive remodeling was completed in 1987. In anticipation of the Lord's continued blessing, the church purchased five acres of property in 1989 and another 10 Acres in 1992. In June of 1990, the church celebrated the 125th anniversary with four Sundays of special events, including an "Old Home Day," a visiting musical ensemble, and an "Old Fashioned Sunday." The parsonage was moved to its present location in 1994, and an educational wing was completed and dedicated on January 15, 1995. Shortly the church built the current auditorium, completed in 1999. The church acquired the mission house in 2000, added a new roof to Harmony Hall in 2003, and expanded Harmony hall in 2006. Pastor Franklin went into eternity in October of 2013 after an extended battle with cancer, but the church will continue to feel his influence for years to come. Pastor David Saxton led the church from 2014-2016, and the Lord blessed HBC with the installation of Rev. John Mark Turner as Senior Pastor in 2018.

Throughout the years of this church's existence, many souls have repented of their sins and come to trust Jesus Christ as their only way of salvation because of His work of regeneration in their hearts, and many have been baptized as believers. Pastors have performed countless weddings and funerals. Special camp meetings, revivals, and conferences have stirred the saved to live more for the Lord, and missionaries have been sent around the world. The faithful have met for Sunday School, weekly worship services, prayer meetings, church picnics, and fellowship times. Many have served in ministries of music, evangelism, and visitation. But most importantly, throughout the life of this church, God has worked consistently to transform many sinners to look like His Son. As we consider the 150 years of God's work in and through this assembly, let us confidently expect Him to show His goodness and greatness for many years to come.

The Pastors of Hardingville Bible Church

J. P. Wilson (1866-1867)
G. B. Robinson (1874-1875)
J. Snider (1877)
R. J. Patterson (1880-1881)
P. V. Petty (1882-1884)
C. S. Powlson (1884)
W. M. Stalcup (1885)
J. L. Watson (1890-1891)
J. Cossaboon (1891)
Joseph Hopkins (1891-1893)
James Mluffberry (1895)
T. B. Castle (1896)
J. T. Maybury (1897-1898)
J. C. Angelo (1898)
J. Speerlie (1898-1900)
G. C. Reynolds (1901-1902)
Z. Walker (1902-1905)
P. V. Petty (1905-1907)
Mc. Dowell (1908)
H. S. Biggs (1909)
Walter Crossing (1913-1916)
A. R. Reichert (1916-1917)
Walter L. Angelo (1918)
T. W. Smith (1919)
James Nutt (1920-1921)
C. W. Letts (1922-1925)
Murray Hamilton (1926-1928)
W. M. Tees (1929-1931)
H. H. McConnell (1932-1936)
W. S. Patrick (Apr.-Oct. 1936)
A. M. Freer (Oct. 1936-1938)
E. F. Keller (1938-1939)
Hibbert (1939-1944)
J. K. Miller (1945-1952)
B. R. Biscoe (1952-1953)
William Adams (1953-1961)
Frank Bruce (1961-1962)
Floyd Mitchell (1962-1964)
Earl Booth (1964-1967)
Joseph Zearfaus (1967-1980)
Earl Gant (interim, 1980-1981)
Edward Dorren (1981)
Mark Franklin (1982-2013)
David Saxton (2014 – 2016)
John Mark Turner (2018-present)