

## Minutes

### 2020 Fall Semi-Annual Meeting

The 2020 Fall Semi-Annual Meeting was held virtually via Zoom. We met at 7pm and enjoyed seeing all the pastors and representatives who participated in the meeting. Brother Don Rogers from Four Oaks First Baptist opened up our meeting with a word of prayer. Our theme this year is "Pushing Back the Darkness... One Neighborhood at a Time." We have experienced a year like no other with the arrival of Covid. Churches have had to rethink how to do ministry and still be effective in reaching the lost and meeting the needs of their members and the communities around them. Regardless of this difficult season, we have seen so many of our churches launch successful outreach ministries to their neighbors. No matter what we have faced we have stood strong and forged ahead in reaching the lost! As we gathered, we were also reminded that just because the world stopped, we kept going. Our Baptist men and women reached out where they could and offered support where it was needed. As an Association we joined in as well and offered assistance with various efforts through our office. Even now, as we continue to endure this pandemic, the work and outreach continues.

With our county growing at a tremendous rate, there are now more people inside our Association than ever before. Our boundaries are expanding and we now have 12 churches outside the county line. Just last month during the September General Board meeting, we voted to work with a new congregation in Goldsboro. Unity Victory Baptist Church is a Haitian congregation that is ministering to thousands of Haitians in that area as well as neighboring counties. With that addition, Moderator Steve Roy revisited a conversation that we had last year about the possibility of changing our name to better serve those churches outside of the county. In fact, we now have churches in eight counties! We voted in September to form a study committee to discuss, learn, and work on the probability of becoming the **Triangle East Baptist Association**. We want all of our churches to feel like they belong regardless of boundary lines. A few other Associations in our state have, within the last few years, made a change as well to better clarify their inclusiveness for all their congregations. A great discussion was had during the Fall meeting and many were excited about the possibility. The study committee, appointed by Moderator Steve Roy, will report their findings at the January Board meeting and will decide how to proceed.

During the business portion of the meeting, we voted on and approved new officers, department directors, appointments, and committees for the new year. We also approved the 2020-2021 budget. We heard from several of our departmental directors and committee members (you can read their individual reports in the Book of Reports to learn how they have carried out their ministry during the last year). The group also approved the Program Committee's submission for next year's program for the Spring and Fall meetings.

Rev. Dwayne Batten, Pastor of Princeton Baptist Church, delivered our annual sermon on Acts 8:1-8. He related how during the early days of the new church it was "smooth sailing" as many new believers were added to the church daily. Everyone was flourishing and growing mature in their faith with one heart and one mind. Not one person had a need among them as they were sharing their possessions and providing for each other. Then, when they encountered "choppy waters" and persecution entered the land many of them scattered into regions that were unfavorable for Jews to inhabit; namely Samaria. Just like today, church life as we know it has been disrupted and "normal" has changed for us all. If we follow the early believers' example, we will continue on. They gave themselves to earnestly studying the

Apostle's doctrine and preaching the gospel in spite of their circumstances. We would do well to be like them. May we be strong, unified, and resolute in our mission to spread the Gospel to our neighbors.

After such a great word of encouragement, we all agreed that Pastor Dwayne spoke to each of us and reminded us to press on. With full and hopeful hearts we were dismissed in prayer by Moderator Steve Roy.