Shady Grove church marks 100th birthday

By KATRICE FRANKLIN
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The Great Depression, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement and Desert Storm. The Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church has not only survived but grown through these turbulent times in history.

The road, said Rev. Lionel Lee, who is the pastor of Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church, has not been easy. But the church has made it through, increasing its membership from 60 to 450 members.

"All of our work has paid off," Lee said.

And on Sunday at 11 a.m. the church will celebrate its 100th year anniversary with a special service and an old-fashioned feast.

"I have spent a quarter of my life and a quarter of the church’s history here," the 63-year-old minister said.

"When I came the church was only having service twice a month. Now we have weekly services along with Sunday School and Bible study," he said. "We also have an outreach ministry in nursing homes, tutorial programs for kids in the summer and college scholarships."

Shady Grove remained in its original church building until 1984 when the church dedicated its new building, which is adjacent to the original church.

"This church is twice as big as the old one. We’ve added a dining area, classroom and an auditorium," Lee said.

The church has had seven ministers in its century of existence. One minister, the Rev. John Clark, spent more than half of...
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his life in the church. His dedication is one of the things Lee wants his members to celebrate on Sunday.

"On our anniversary I would like church members to remember the sacrifices of Rev. Clark who put in 51 and a half years of his life," Lee said.

Lee said that as he gets close to retirement he has fulfilled every dream that he had hoped for the church.

"As I move toward retirement, I would also like church members (Shady Grove) to remember that it took the salvation of all our people to keep the doors open."