

## Mechanics & Farmers Bank Salutes Goodwill Baptist Church Inc. "The 21st Century Church"

By Paula McCoy

Mechanics and Farmers Bank salutes Goodwill Baptist Church as their church of the month. "We congratulate Goodwill Baptist Church on their good works. Their ministries are in touch with the needs of the community and help individuals live successful and productive lives," says Evelyn Acree, city executive of Mechanics and Farmers Bank. "We look forward to establishing a long term relationship with Goodwill as they realize their vision. They are indeed a church of the 21st century", says Acree.

Goodwill Baptist Church Incorporated, a 121 year old church located in Arcadia, NC (Hwy 150 West), right outside of Forsyth County is a 21st Century Church. Pastor Philemon A. Samuels and his wife, Reverend Gloria Samuels, envisioned a different kind of church – a Christ-centered church for the people. The 21st Century Church is a movement that is being promoted by many seminaries. It is a church that helps individuals "better serve God". It changes as the world changes – from a church building programs to a people building process. A 21st Century Church is characterized by its focus on its congregation to help them flourish and grow; that is decentralized and responsive to the grass roots; that establishes ordination and training standards to create strong, biblical leaders; that is based not on coercive connectionalism, but on relational and spiritual connections; that honors the Scriptures and embraces the Confessions; that engages in creative and articulate mission partnerships. The pastors of 21st Century Churches are "agents of change". They are moving away from the traditional way of "doing" church; they are "being" churches without walls. Churches that are not moving in this direction are slowly dying.

Goodwill Baptist Church is alive and well. The church's motto, "running with vision and ministering with excellence" is evidenced in how the church is growing and meeting community needs. The church currently have 500 members and are in the final planning stage of a 1,500-seat sanctuary and Family Life Center. "We no longer have enough room to do the kinds of ministries that we are doing or to add the kinds of ministries that are needed by our community", says Pastor Samuels. The church has purchased 25 acres of land; the new facility will be constructed on six of those acres.

The facility will feature a stage type pulpit that will accommodate live TV recordings with a sound studio. The family life center will house a full gym with a weight room, a day care, accommodations for hosting health fairs, business expos, and other community related services. The family life center will have classroom space for educational purposes, workshops, and training and will include a fully equipped commercial kitchen that will provide for banquets and other activities.

The community in which Goodwill Baptist is located is a mixed community. The church's ministries is geared toward a multicultural approach. "Regardless of ethnic backgrounds," says Pastor Samuels, "everyone is welcome. Jesus died for all of us". Goodwill will begin two Sunday services beginning April 1st at 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Samuels has been the pastor of Goodwill for 13 years but has been in ministry for 31 years. Coming from a lineage of ministers, Samuel's father, the late Rev. W. Samuels was a pastor at Mars Hill Baptist Church. His brother, Rev. J.R. Samuels, pastors at St. Stephens Baptist Church. The Samuels have two daughters, Bril, age 24 and Joi, age 23.



Pastor Philemon A. Samuels and  
Prophetess Gloria M. Samuels

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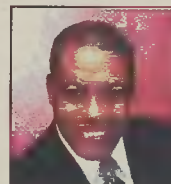
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