It’s been said that we cannot appreciate our present without first knowing our past. Many, sitting in the cushioned pews today, with water available and bathrooms just down the hall, have never known anything else. But, our church hasn’t always been like it is today. It took the faith, prayers, work, and resources of faithful people before us to provide the church home we enjoy today. We must never forget these wonderful people.

Old Lea Bethel, as named, was organized in 1939, but the original one-room church that this brick building replaced was on this land since 1883. After a group went south to establish New Lea Bethel down the road, Old Lea Bethel, with thirty-seven faithful members, elected Rev. CE Sullivan as pastor and started to meet once a month. In July, the first revival was held, and twelve people came to Christ. In December 1939, the congregation faithfully decided that the church would meet twice a month. CE Sullivan pastored Beulah Baptist two Sundays of the month and Old Lea Bethel two Sundays of the month. It wasn’t until 1948 that services were held each Sunday and, in 1954, Old Lea Bethel Baptist hired a dedicated pastor. Nineteen pastors have served Old Lea Bethel Baptist church, with Alan Bottoms Sr serving the longest – 18 years.

Things haven’t always been so convenient. As late as the 1970s, bathrooms were located outside. The church had no well for water until 1965. Baptisms were done in local ponds and creeks, as well as in other churches. In 1991, cushions were added to the pews. In 1993, the first telephone was installed.

But people pulled together. Old Lea Bethel is a family. Water was hauled in a barrel to the church by Warren Wade. Coal fires heated the little church. Members donated land for new rooms and parking. There were times when there wasn’t enough money to pay the bills, but members came through by donating money and working fundraisers. Farmers pledged the money from certain hills of tobacco to help fund church improvements. Old Lea Bethel pulled together, because that’s what families do.

Through these 80 years, faithful prayer, fellowship, and love have made all the difference. In 1978, this sanctuary was dedicated. In 1985, the cemetery was added. In 1999, the fellowship hall was dedicated. A flagpole was added in 2006, a playground in 2007, a new road sign and stew sheds in 2008. Countless trips to various places like lakes, mountains, museums, and attractions have drawn community interest. Missions teams have traveled to Alaska, Kentucky, Montana, and many other faraway places, but we never forget our community and the work that is needed here. Softball teams have won plaques and Bible drill contestants have won recognitions. Our car show has become an anticipated annual event, as has the WMU Sweetheart dinner. And our Brunswick Stew, which used to be cooked in borrowed pots, is now cooked in our own pots twice per year – It’s the best stew in town! Just ask Alan Bottoms.

What made this possible? God’s Grace, steadfast fellowship, love for our church family, and lots and lots of hard work. God has seen fit to bless a little one room church in Frogsboro, NC in ways no one could have guessed in 1939. Through hardships and tragedies, disagreements and schisms, blessings and celebrations, God has provided. No matter what Satan brought against us, God provided the brotherly love to endure. We don’t endure by money – money will certainly disappoint. We don’t endure by possessions – possessions will certainly fade. We don’t endure by health – health will certainly pass away. We don’t endure by power – power will certainly fail. We endure through love - Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.