



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES**

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 042-5799

**Purpose of Evaluation**

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

**1. General Property Information**

Property name: Brown Grove Baptist Church

Property address: 9328 Ashcake Road

City or Town: Ashland

Zip code: 23005

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located:

Hanover County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site \_\_\_\_\_ Structure \_\_\_\_\_ Object \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: 18.2

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Brown Grove Baptist Church is located on 18.2 acres on the north side of Ashcake Road. The Church is in the historic African American community of Brown Grove. Brown Grove is located in a rapidly developing area of Hanover County, to the Southeast of the Town of Ashland. Well into the 1960s, the area was rural and the community stretched along Ashcake Road and what is now Sliding Hill Road. Parts of the Brown Grove community also developed on Egypt and Johnstontown Roads. The construction of Interstate 95, the Hanover Airport and industrial park, with outlying industrial facilities has impacted the community, but a core area remains that includes residences, some remnants of stores, associated antebellum plantations (standing and identified archaeology sites), and religious institutions: the nearby Slash Church (listed in the registers) and Brown Grove Baptist Church.

The Church property consists of the main 1940s building, a parking lot, a large open area with a walking trail known as The Roman Road Park, to the west of the church and a cemetery to the east. The Park includes biblical scriptures on wooden plaques. In the back yard of the church sits a children's playground, an A-frame vinyl storage shed, church vans and a small basketball hoop. A historic family gravesite is maintained and visually seen near the

edge of the property on the east side of the church in a wooded area. Overall, the entire parcel is surrounded by original mature trees.

The ruins of the Brown Grove 2-room school house is in a wooded area, on the south side of Ashcake Road. The ruins include visible foundation elements. This is not currently included in this proposal since the resource is located on private property, but if permission is granted, it would be logical to expand the proposal to include the ruins and make this a historic district.

The contributing resources on the property are the 1940s church and the cemetery. The cemetery has about 10-15 headstones that date from the 1950s, but it is likely that there may be more burials with interments that may date back to the late nineteenth century. The 1940s church replaced an earlier building and the cemetery could date back as early as the 1870s.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Gothic Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Further research is being conducted

If the builder is known, please list here: Brown Grove Community members

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1945

#### **Narrative Description:**

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The primary resource is a brick, one-story church, built in 1945. The current church replaced a c. 1920s frame building that burned in 1941. The plan of the 1945 building consists of a front gabled sanctuary and a rear hipped roof rear section that housed offices and secondary spaces. Additions were made to the east and north of the original rear hipped roof section. A large fellowship hall was added in 1986. The fellowship hall features a gable roof. All roofs are clad in asphalt shingle

The primary elevation is three bays wide. The symmetrical side elevations are four bays deep with Gothic window openings and subtle implied buttressing that defines each bay. The church is constructed in a 7-course American Bond. The front elevation features a lower gabled vestibule with a Gothic Arch opening. The arch angles are built in soldier courses and the keystone brick features a subtle decorative cross. This Gothic brick treatment appears on all of the window openings on the sanctuary part of the church. It appears the cross at the top of each arch is formed from cut section of brick.

The windows in the Sanctuary are decorative color stained and milk glass set in metal (lead?) frames. Each of the windows features a central panel with symbolic images. A praying hands symbol adorns a window dedicated to Church and community founder Caroline Dobson Morris (1846-1944). The rear sections of the church that faces towards the road, to the South, feature Gothic openings with custom wood sash. Side and rear elevations have rectangular windows.

The interior of the Sanctuary and rear spaces show some original wood trim and doors. During the 1980s renovation some new wall cladding may have been applied. The configuration of the Sanctuary space has not changed since 1945. The room features two aisles with wooden pews and a raised altar stage at the front of the room with a lectern with side tables and seating for Deacons. There is an apse area with seating for a chorus and musicians. The wall that frames the apse has rounded transition between vertical and horizontal sections. The room features a simple decorative chair rail. The main entrance doors from the vestibule is solid door with a diamond window. The solid doors with diamond upper glazing is all featured at the two doors that flank the Altar dias. These doors provide access to the rear offices and fellowship hall. It is assumed that these doors date to 1945, but not confirmed. The diamond motif on the doors echo the Gothic window openings. The Sanctuary features recessed lighting, a later evolution of the space. The room is fully carpeted over wood floors.

The Fellowship Hall is finished with sheetrock walls, a dropped ceiling with recessed lights, and a tile floor. The rear spaces include restrooms, a kitchen, offices and hallway spaces. The 1940s section of the rear has been updated

with additional trim and new lighting and new floor treatments, and the 1980s addition is intact to that period. The addition behind the altar also contains a baptism pool.

There is a small frame storage shed that may date to the 1980s, located directly behind the church (non-contributing). The historic cemetery is located in a wooded area, to the east of the church. There are headstones for Martha Coleman, Louvania Smith, Henry Taliaferro, Len Brown, and Richard H. Coleman. There are likely other unmarked burials.

There is an asphalt parking lot around the church. The front elevation faces a grass yard with a system of concrete sidewalks. The yard also includes a substantial box metal sign moulder on a large decorative brick foundation.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

There is a modern storage shed. An exercise field that was built in the early 2000s and a historic cemetery on the eastern edge of the property.

#### 4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

#### BROWN GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY AND COMMUNITY GROWTH "UPON THIS ROCK, I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH" MATTHEW 16:18

The story of the beginning growth and achievements of the Brown Grove Baptist Church and the credibility set forth were obtained from many recorded documents and told by many families and community members. This introduction will help readers understand the chronology/history of the Brown Grove community and church from the early beginning and throughout our first 150 years. We are thankful to all who made this possible. Slavery ended after the Civil War and was declared unconstitutional with The Ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution in 1865. African Americans worshipped in the churches of their masters under their guidance and advice. The nearby 18<sup>th</sup> century Slash Church was a home church to some of our ancestors. The task of preparing a place of worship was indeed a venture of faith, courage and sheer determination. These new circumstances provided an ample opportunity for the labors and expressions of Christian men and women.

Brown Grove Baptist Church was organized in the year 1870 by six faithful members, who worshipped in a brush arbor. While no one knows the exact location of the brush arbor, most seem to think it was in the vicinity of the Sliding Hill Road area. The members worshipped in a brush arbor for three years.

In 1893, Edmund (or Edwin) and Martha Brown, residents of Brown Grove community, purchased 1.95 acres of land from Orson and Frances Staley. The land was donated to the congregation by the Brown family with the stipulation that the only use be a church. The deed was accomplished through the descendant of their daughter, Elizabeth (Brown).

No one alive can say who came first; the Jacksons, the Jones, the Morris, the Carters, the Walkers, the Lewis or the Kings. The church is made up of many descendants of Caroline Dobson Morris and husband Jeff Morris. Affectionately, called Grandma Caroline and Aunt Caroline presented herself as a strong and stern woman with loving kinships. Some spoke of her as the mother of Brown Grove and many believe and no one doubted the name Morris is the tie that binds most of the church membership and the community. Currently, her portrait remains hanging in our modern day church. (See photo).

In the 1920's or early 1930's a wooden church was built under the pastor-ship of Rev. S. E. Funn. He served faithfully for 16 years.

A Sock Social Rally was held on June 12, 1922 as one of the fundraisers used to fund the church. (See photo of Sock Rally Envelope).

Rev. Jim Weatherless served as one of the early pastors of Brown Grove Baptist Church. Other pastors followed: Rev. Izeiah Johnson, Rev. J. R. West, Rev. A. J. Ryan, and Rev. T. M. Allen, who served as pastor twice. After the frame church was built and dedicated, numerous members were very active in continuing the work of the Lord.

Lamps resembling chandeliers were used to illuminate the sanctuary. The kerosene lamps were previously used and located in the nearby Slash Christian Church, (whose members were of the white). Black residents from the Brown Grove community were allowed there in the balcony or the back pews.

Rev. M. W. Rainey was installed as pastor of Brown Grove Baptist Church in 1933. During the early 1940's church services were held the first and third Sunday of each month.

In April of 1941, the wooden church was completely destroyed by fire. Services were held at the Brown Grove School, across the street, but later, it too was demolished by fire. Determined, not to let the fire destroy their desire to worship, many walked to Hanover Training School in Ashland, just a few miles to the north. Some were fortunate enough to catch a ride. Others held service at the home of Mrs. Mary Lewis and family, within the community.

Rev. Rainey was still the pastor of Brown Grove when the present day brick church was built in 1945. Church services changed to every Sunday and the membership continued to grow.

Some of the deacons in the early years included Deacons: Harvey Davis, Willie Lewis, Nat Lewis, Johnny Harris, Percy Johnson, Johnny Price, Jeff Morris, Arthur Lewis, Samuel Coleman, Botts Morris, Thaddeus Jones Sr., Garrett King, James Carter, Billy Davenport, Walter Jackson Sr., and others who may have been omitted.

Missionaries and Deaconess were faithful servants too. A few known names: Leizar Jones, Blanche Morris, Lucinda Hall, Shirley (Jones) King, Bessie Taylor, Sarah (Morris) Winston, Romaine King, Mary Lewis and others who may have been omitted.

Several members were active in the choirs. In early days the senior choir consisted of Edith Howard, Irene Lewis, Arthur Lewis, Jane Lewis, Leizar Lewis, Frances Jackson, Willie Lewis, Melvina Jackson, Alease Coleman, Gertrude Jackson, Iris Carter, Laura Ester Jackson, Evelyn Jones, Elizabeth (Walker) Smith, Annie-Kicki (Davis) Proctor, Elizabeth Robinson, Margaret Washington, Sarah (Morris) Winston, Blanche Morris, Helen King, Maxine Coleman, Robert Morris, Sr., Hillard (Hayet) Lewis, Elizabeth (Coleman) Anderson, Goldie Lewis, Ernest Coleman, Willie Jackson, Sr., Herman Carter Sr., Thurman Wormley, Charles Tyler, Bernard Lewis, and others who may have been omitted.

In later years, other choirs were formed to include: The Rainey Memorial Gospel Chorus in memory of Rev. M. W. Rainey, a male chorus, a youth choir, a mass choir (now called sanctuary choir), a young adult choir, The Buds of Promise children choir and currently, a praise dance team was formed under the leadership of Keishanna Morris James.

Several piano players, musicians and choir directors devoted their time and talent at Brown Grove Baptist Church. They were: Mrs. James Grant, Frank Jackson, Mary Lewis, Joseph Hopson, Gertrude Coleman and others who may have been omitted.

Others followed in their footsteps were: Arnita Morris, Robinette Huff, Jerry Davis, William Hoston, McClaudia Nolley, Donald Fonville, Kevin Pleasants, Rev. Lewis Lacy, Cliethenia Durant, Kenneth (Tyler) Spurlock, Jr., Berdie Hayes, Arrianna Morris, Sarah (Morris) Winston, Janice Morris, Cynthia Davis, Brandon Cash, Wanda Bynum, Andrew Alexander, Evelyn Johnson, Braylon Jackson, Cherud Wilkerson, Glendora Woodard, Timmy Fife, James Taylor, Jr., Henry Patterson, Jr., Mario Shelton, Michael Morris, Christian Morris, Christopher Morris, Brian Morris, William Edwards and others who may have been omitted.

In early years of establishing an usher board ministry, Elizabeth Lewis was a faithful usher and served as a very stern president, mentor and trainer to many. Other active ushers include: Lucinda Hall, Iris Carter, Julia King, Delia Lewis, Thelma Peterson, Leizar Jones, Martha (Jones) King Anderson, Gracie Jones, Raymond Lewis, Marshall

Lewis, Wilson Lewis, Oscar Baylor, Leo Lewis, John Lewis, James King, James Lewis and others who may have been omitted.

The third Sunday in August was and still is a special day for members of Brown Grove Baptist Church. It is the Homecoming, Big Meeting, or Revival Time. Whichever words were used, they all referred to the same event. Many visitors would come and the parking was always challenging if you arrived late. Traditionally, family members who have moved away or are away working in other places come back to celebrate community and worship together.

Members Sophie and Mitchell Lewis lived across the road from the church. They would faithfully allow cars to park in their front yard every year. They would also be the eyes and ears of security for the church grounds in those days.

The tables would be set up on the west side of the church the day before. Those arriving for Sunday school service waited with great anticipation of a delicious dinner from many households in the community. Prior to the end of the morning service, family members, especially the grandmothers would politely leave service to prepare for the Big Meeting dinner.

Guest pastors and preachers would be served first. It was quite an honor to have the pastor or visiting preacher request an item from your family basket. Everyone ate outside, on cars, inside cars, on the steps, or wherever space was found. No one dared to enter the sanctuary to eat unless perhaps on a rainy day. Even then, eating was done with very careful hand-mouth coordination. It was a grand time!

After the Big Meeting dinner came the beginning of our evening service. Many testified, many said a prayer or read scripture. Some led a song, clapped their hands and stomped their feet, shouted Hallelujah and praised God in their own way. The preached word was followed by those who confessed Christ and wanted to be saved. All praises to our all mighty God for the souls saved and the added membership of our church.

Many souls were saved under Rev. Rainey's pastor-ship and fiery baptisms. On baptism mornings, members and candidates walked to Loving's Pond, or Cady's Pond or Wingfield's Pond to be baptized. In later years, Dabney's bus was used to provide transportation to the ponds for baptisms. Dabney a community member provided the service. Today, a beautiful stained glass portrait overlooks our modern day baptism pool inside our brick church.

Today, many modern conveniences surround our sanctuary to include a fellowship hall to sit and eat in, heating and air condition rooms, inside bathrooms and a modern day kitchen to cook in. What was and still is today a wonderful and blessed time. To God Be the Glory for the Great Things He has done!

In the 1960's three of Brown Grove's finest men were ordained into the ministry. They were the Reverends Benjamin H Jackson, Sr., Irving Coleman and Warren Lewis.

Rev. Jackson pastored at First Union Baptist Church in Crozier, Virginia (Goochland County) for 26 years and returned for 3 more years after his retirement.

Rev. Coleman pastored at First Baptist Church in New Jersey and Rev. Lewis pastored at Abner Baptist Church in Glen Allen, Virginia.

After winning many souls to Christ, marrying many and burying many, Rev. Rainey was called from labor to reward on December 7, 1961. He was our beloved pastor for 28 years.

Mrs. Nancy Rainey (first lady) survived her husband by 30 years. Brown Grove honored her with a banquet celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday year. Upon her return to Brown Grove, Mrs. Rainey remembered several members

and acknowledged the portrait of her beloved "Pie" (Rev. Rainey) hanging on the wall in the New Fellowship Hall. Months following her banquet, Mrs. Rainey joined her husband.

On May 31, 1964 Rev. Raymond T. Gavins was installed as Pastor of Brown Grove. He was a young man who served faithfully, and preached the gospel with many fiery sermons. Several confessed Christ under his leadership. Rev. Gavins pastored for 3 years and resigned in November 1967.

Rev. James Lynch was installed as Pastor on October 26, 1969. Under his pastor-ship, a large deacon board served consisting of Deacons: Theodore (TB) Carter, Booker T (BT) Carter, Earl Carter, Ernest Hayes, Sr., Alphine Lewis, Thaddeus Jones, Sr., Johnny Harris, Willie R. Jackson, Sr., Walter Jackson, Sr., and others who may have been omitted. (See photo)

In the year 1970, Brown Grove celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> church anniversary with one additional service each month. Various churches in the county and vicinity were our guest.

Sunday, January 23, 1972, four men were ordained as deacons. They were Wallace Jackson, Linwood Lewis, Benjamin Baylor, Sr., and Fleming Morris Sr.

During October 1979, the church's 109<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 10<sup>th</sup> of Pastor Lynch were celebrated with a banquet at the Howard Johnson Hotel in Richmond.

In 1980, the Missionary Circle an out-reach program to the community and surrounding areas was re-organized.

In spring 1981, Lanny Jones, superintendent of the Sunday school department, organized the Athletic Department of the Sunday School Scholars. Anthony Hall served as president and John Lewis and Robert (Jay) Hall, Jr., as sponsors.

A church bus was purchased for church-related functions such as transporting children and adults to Sunday school as well as youth activities. Charles (Sonny Boy) Tyler became the church dedicated bus driver. Others may have been omitted.

Our first Spring Revival, sponsored by the Sunday school, was held featuring 2 nights of bible study.

Betty (Jones King) Lozano became the first woman to serve on the Trustee Board.

In January 1982, Rev. James Lynch resigned. He pastored for 13 years.

The church continued to move forward under the spiritual leadership of our deacons. Members praised God for the many blessings HE had already given to us. We remained faithful.

Seven months later on July 25, 1982, Rev. Fernando E. Temple, Sr., was installed as pastor of Brown Grove Baptist Church.

Under his pastor-ship, many improvements were made to the church. They include some beautification projects to improve the appearance of the sanctuary. The building and grounds were improved with additions, renovations, landscaping and asphaltting.

In 1983, a budget committee was created, new carpet installed in the choir room, a new piano purchased and a handicap ramp was built and installed.

In 1984, a scholarship fund was created; later, named the Frances L Mason Scholarship.

On Sunday, November 18, 1984, William Sessoms and Willie Dendy were ordained as deacons of Brown Grove.

In 1985, the Youth Department was formed.

In February 1986, the Pastor's Aid Ministry was organized and Shirley (Jones) King was the first president. In May 1986, a groundbreaking ceremony took place to begin a new addition to the church.

Emmanuel (Smitty) Davis was ordained in February 1989.

Several deacons were ordained on March 24, 1991. They were: Robert Hall, Sr., Leo Lewis, Charles Tyler, Michael Morris, Robert Hinson and Clifton Arrington.

The Senior Citizen's Ministry was organized and dedicated by Rev. Benjamin H. Jackson, Sr., on November 19, 1995.

In October 1996, Rev. W. Darrell Leftwich was ordained as Associate Minister. Rev. Gracie Jones and Rev. Kelvin Moore were licensed to preach the gospel in November 1996.

Brown Grove held its initial Church in the Field Service on the Jackson property. Today, it still serves as an outdoor annual event shared by our community and other neighborhood churches and communities.

In April 1998, worship services began at 8:00 a.m. Rev. Wendell Sims became an associate minister of the church. A food bank was established by Gracie Jones.

In the year 2000, Brown Grove celebrated its 130<sup>th</sup> church anniversary.

Sometime late 2002 into early 2003 the Roman Roads Park was constructed as a method to introduce the scriptures of salvation. The walking trail was aimed at keeping our members and the community healthy. An outside play area for children was also added.

On March 6, 2003, Rev. Fernando E. Temple Sr., resigned as Pastor of Brown Grove. He pastored for 21 years and leaves a legacy of many souls saved including 82 year old Susie (pronounced Sudie Morris) Walker who confessed Christ and was re-baptized.

During this transition period, God continues to provide us with spiritual leaders who share the utmost concern, love for the church and its people. Deacon Carol Bush served as chairman of the Deacon Board and Kenneth Spurlock Sr., served as chairman of the Search Team for a pastor.

Rev. Herman Truehart humbly accepted the call to serve as Interim Pastor. His spiritual guidance and sermons were a blessing to our church family. Many youth were saved under his interim ship.

The Roman Roads Park was dedicated on November 15, 2003 with a ribbon cutting and brief ceremony of scriptures and prayer. Rev. Trueheart served for 15 months.

The year 2003 continues to be fruitful for the church. The Youth Department name changed to Youth Ministry under the leadership of Robert (Jay) Hall Jr., with the assistance of Kenneth Spurlock Sr., and Valerie Booker mentoring approximately 50 youth.

Youth Minister Jason Stanley from Lebanon Methodist Church whose members were mostly of the white race and youth director Jay Hall from Brown Grove Baptist Church whose members were mostly of the black race agreed to work together to bring the two ministries together to show unity within the community.

Prayerfully, many ideas and projects emerged. Some included: Habitat for Humanity, the Virginia Food Bank, Hanover County Missions and Caritas for the Homeless. Many blessings were received throughout the Hanover County and the Richmond Area.

The youth ministries enjoyed worshipping at each other church and participating in youth revivals, youth lock-ins and bible studies. It was a worship experience that all who attended shall never forget.

On February 27, 2005, Rev. Gordon Pleasants was installed as pastor of Brown Grove. Under his pastor-ship, Reverends Robert Morris and Edna Grier were licensed to preach the gospel. During this time, Lanny Jones was also ordained as a deacon.

Brown Grove continued to prosper. In April, 2005 a church van was purchased. During the summer months, the youth were blessed to charter a bus to various cities to study its history and to vacation. Some favorite places included, Cincinnati, New York City, Atlanta and Myrtle Beach.

On May 21, 2006, Anthony Hall and Kenneth Spurlock Sr., were ordained as deacons.

Rev. Benjamin Jackson, Sr., introduced The Principle Place to the seniors of Brown Grove. The Mission: To respect and present the spiritual principles, vital to the preservation of life, family and community as told by the valued elders of the Brown Grove Baptist Church through public presentation and narrative documentation.

In 2006 and 2007, the Principle Place honoree and their family were recognized once a month during morning worship service. The honoree's autobiography would be read. It became a wonderful occasion to learn something about them we did not know.

Brown Grove sent youth director Jay Hall to Costa Rica in January, 2008 for its first overseas mission trip.

Rev. Gordon Pleasants resigned on April 27, 2008 after 3 years of ministry. Many hearts were sad to hear of this news.

Trusting God to send us another shepherd, and to lead the flock at Brown Grove, various ministers were selected by the deacons to preach sermons for a full month. Church members voted November 9, 2009 and selected Rev. Dr. Darius E. Beechaum.

On April 18, 2010, he was installed as pastor of Brown Grove Baptist Church. He is a young man with great wisdom and knowledge, called by God to teach and preach thus said the Lord.

Under pastor's leadership, more property has been purchased that surrounds the church. Annual themes have been devised and many improvements have been made to the building and grounds.

Rev. Beechaum's mission is to provide a place of worship where we can walk together in Christian Love; to grow in the knowledge of holiness, sustain worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine and to support the community by winning souls to Christ and the building of healthy families.

In October, 2010 the church celebrated 140 years and 5 years with pastor Beechaum. He continues to introduce to those who may not know his best friend, whose name is Jesus the Christ.

With the support of the church family in 2011, Stephanie Brown, Stacy Brown, Aaron Hall, Drucilla Harris and Kelsie Moore were blessed to travel with youth director Jay Hall back to Costa Rica for another mission trip.

The team did repairs on a church that served the poor of that area. They held Bible School and fed over 200 children who lived in extremely poor conditions.

Jay Hall is thankful for a supportive church family, many devoted parents and sponsorships.

Today, the youth from this ministry are adults with families of their own showing leadership in communities in and out of the states. Some are teachers, engineers, news reporters, musicians, a hair stylist, to name a few. Several have their own business and some are successful employees in large companies.

In 2014, Keishanna (Morris) James became the youth director with a new generation of people. She has approximately 20 youth department members and 12 praise team members. Keishanna believes her leadership would not be possible without the support of the dedicated parents and guardians. Our youth continues to demonstrate and display God's word through new ideas and genuine creativity.

Around March 7, 2020, our faith in the Lord would prove to be tested to the highest level. A serious and extremely contagious respiratory virus called Coronavirus (COVID-19) began spreading to all 50 states and abroad causing a pandemic crisis nationwide. Churches, schools, retail stores, restaurants, barber shops, beauty salons, fitness gyms were ordered to close by the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the official advisory was to social distance 6 feet apart.

Virginians were ordered by Governor Ralph Northam to stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus more rapidly. Many businesses had to close and only essential staff workers were required to go to work. This attack on the economy left millions unemployed. The numbers surpassed the Great Depression time. Grocery stores and pharmacies shelves, continues to run out of essential items. Food banks were established, Restaurants could only sell take-out food, pickup and delivery.

Some young and some old became seriously sick and were hospitalized. Some self-quarantine at home. Unfortunately, on a statewide level, thousands have lost their lives to this serious virus.

Overall, there are many who are fearful and there are many who continue to be faithful and trust God even in the midst of turmoil and challenging times such as this.

March 29, 2020 a drive-up giving idea was put in place by the leadership of the church. Members faithfully drove onto the church grounds and dropped their tithes and offerings in a basket. We thank God for the monetary blessings received to continue our church missions and helping others in need.

Sunday, April 5, 2020 was our first online church service made possible thru an application on the internet called global.Gotomeeting.com. This program gave us the capability to use our computers, tablets, smart phones or to just dial in from any regular phone to hear God's word from Pastor Beechaum.

On April 8, 2020, we were blessed to add our Wednesday night bible study online or dial in options.

April 19, 2020, we celebrated 10 years with pastor and people working together. A drive-in service was held on the church grounds. Our Hallelujah and praises were demonstrated by honking of horns.

Drive-in services were continued the first and third Sundays in the month from 10:00am to 11:15a.m and online and dial-in service from 11:30a.m to 12:15p.m.

Saturday, May 2, 2020 was our first online and dial-in Sunday school class with Deacon Kenneth Spurlock, Sr., from 7p.m. – 7:45p.m. The lesson topic “The Righteous Branch” was taken from the book of Jeremiah Chapter 23 verses 1-8. Starting Saturday, May 16, 2020, the teaching time was extended to 1 full hour.

As we wait patiently for our church doors to reopen to the public, the inside sanctuary has been improved with new carpet. The pastor’s office has been refreshed with a coat of paint and new décor.

We know as the weeks and months rapidly approach, many things are uncertain. We continue to give thanks to God for so many blessings bestowed upon us and for 150 years of divine ministry and 10 years with our beloved pastor, Rev. Dr. Darius E. Beechaum here at 9238 Ashcake Road.

We thank God for all our generation of people and for allowing them to have a vision to build a place of worship and believing: “There is No Limit When God is in it”!

**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):

Private:  X  Public\Local \_\_\_\_\_ Public\State \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Federal \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title:  Brown Grove Baptist Church Vestry/ Dr. Darius E. Beechaum

organization:  Brown Grove Baptist Church

street & number:  9328 Ashcake Road

city or town:  Ashland  state:  VA  zip code:  23005

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ telephone:  (804) 798-5010

Legal Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Leizar Coleman –Trustee Chairperson  Date:  1/25/2021

**•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••**

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title:  Mrs. Diane Smith Drake -Usher

organization:  Brown Grove Baptist Church Member

street & number:  4421 Breezy Bay Circle #107

city or town:  Henrico  state:  VA  zip code:  23233

e-mail:  diances35@comcast.net  telephone:  804-921-2055

**6. Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager

name/title: \_\_\_\_\_

locality: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: \_\_\_\_\_

city or town: \_\_\_\_\_ state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Addendum/Historic Context

### The Growth of Brown Grove Community and its Contributors

The community survived the turned of the century and the Great Depression. Families helped each other. They bartered or pooled their resources to endure hardships. Children witnessed their fathers cutting cardboard and placing them in their shoes to give some protection from the elements they encountered.

In the early years, residents worked as sharecroppers and were very active in the church.

As years passed, many earned enough to purchase their own land and build homes. Families were raised to respect God, family and education. These lessons were as valuable as those leading to a diploma.

In the 1930's and 40's many people worked as domestics or at the laundries. The work was hard and the hours were long but with the help of family members, the work was done. Men continued to work farms and some worked as carpenters, masonry and bricklayers. Some enlisted in the segregated armed forces to fight against Hitler's forces in Germany and Togo's Japan. After the war, many returned to Brown Grove community to face a segregated United States.

The community still continued to prosper despite the burning down of a school and a church. The children continued their education now at the Hanover Training School in Ashland VA.

Social life in the 30's 40's and 50's was somewhat limited. People would travel from house to house to play and listen to the Victrola (record player). Walter Jackson and Harrison Johnson would play checkers until the early morning hours. Large crowds would gather at many homes to listen to Joe Louis's fights on the radio.

Baseball games were popular and Brown Grove had a team. Mr. Armstrong and Lester Jackson organized the team. Games began in the neighborhood and then moved to the highway location (off Route 1). Players included Theodore Carter as pitcher. Others were Booker T Carter, Albert Johnson, Frank Johnson, Winfred Davis, Lloyd Ginny Winston, Alphine Lewis, Henry Carter and others who may have been omitted.

The 50's brought a few changes to the community. The roads were paved, residents began to seek employment. Women went to work. Many worked at the Ashland Shirt Factory.

Jackson's Grocery was built and owned by Willie Jackson Sr., Neighbors would signal him "Go to The Store" when someone wanted to make a purchase. He would faithfully walk to the store and accommodate his customers.

During the 60's, television brought us world events, to the homes in Brown Grove. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movements were presented in our living rooms. Frances (Jackson) Jones was in downtown Richmond when the sit-ins began at the Woolworth's Department Store.

Rev. Benjamin Jackson Sr., Elizabeth Robinson and other men and women from the community attended and witnessed Dr. King's "March on Washington (DC) and heard his "I Have a Dream" speech first hand.

Desegregation of the schools began in the 1960's, first on a voluntary basis. Some of Brown Grove children attended the previously all white Henry Clay and Elmont Elementary and Patrick Henry High Schools.

Among them were Marvin Jackson, Herbert Carter, Theodore (Ted) Carter Jr., Ronald Harris, Sandra (Mason) Watkins, Benjamin (Chuck) Jackson Jr., Kathy Carter, James Jackson, Jr., Clinton Jackson and others who may have been omitted. Some met at Jackson's Grocery and a courageous bus driver drove them to school. They heard the bad name calling and descriptions. With all the negative things placed before them, they were brave enough to deal with the challenges. Schools later were fully integrated in Hanover County Public School System and other surrounding counties.

As television informed us of the positive and humorous events of the 1960's, we also saw and learned of the tragedies and assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert (Bobby) F. Kennedy.

The 1960's, 70's and 80's brought economic changes to the Brown Grove Community. Interstate 95 was built and a new traffic route was developed along with Speed and Brisco Truck Stop and the Shell Gas Station off Lewistown Road.

Employment opportunities improved for the young and the not so young, however; that led to other businesses (Hanover Industrial Air Park and Virginia Precast) and the re-zoning of parts of the Brown Grove Community on Ashcake Road.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century continued to bring more changes and opportunities, however bitter sweet. An area off Lewistown Road (part of the community) was re-zoned and described by county officials as a destination location. Due to community opposition and concern, meetings were held at Brown Grove Baptist Church where county government officials presented information regarding future plans for the area to include an outlet mall.

Despite our efforts, the county plans for an outlet mall continued but the mall was never built. The community witnessed several developments to include Bass Pro Sporting Shop, hotels, fast food stores and more. This generated more traffic and possible crime to our neighborhood.

Today, the growth of the Brown Grove community is still ongoing. A new traffic pattern was created from Lewistown Road into the Hanover Industrial Park. Residents encountered a concrete medium strip in front of their property and their use of a one way property entrance.

The Interstate 95 over-path (bridge) on Lewistown Road was re-constructed for safety and to accommodate additional thruway traffic to many more developments located in North Lake and surrounding businesses. New traffic lights and pattern now serves these localities.

In the coming years, our historic Brown Grove community makeup and designs may look different and impact Ashcake Road, Lewistown Road and even Sliding Hill Road.

Others can only imagine the hardships and sacrifices that were made to keep our heritage, and landmarks unforgettable.

We pause and think about 150 years of a church and community working together whose contributions allowed many to prosper, preserve and protect their families and their labor.

Lord, we thank you for your many blessings and may your grace and mercy continue to surround us and our community with your love. Amen

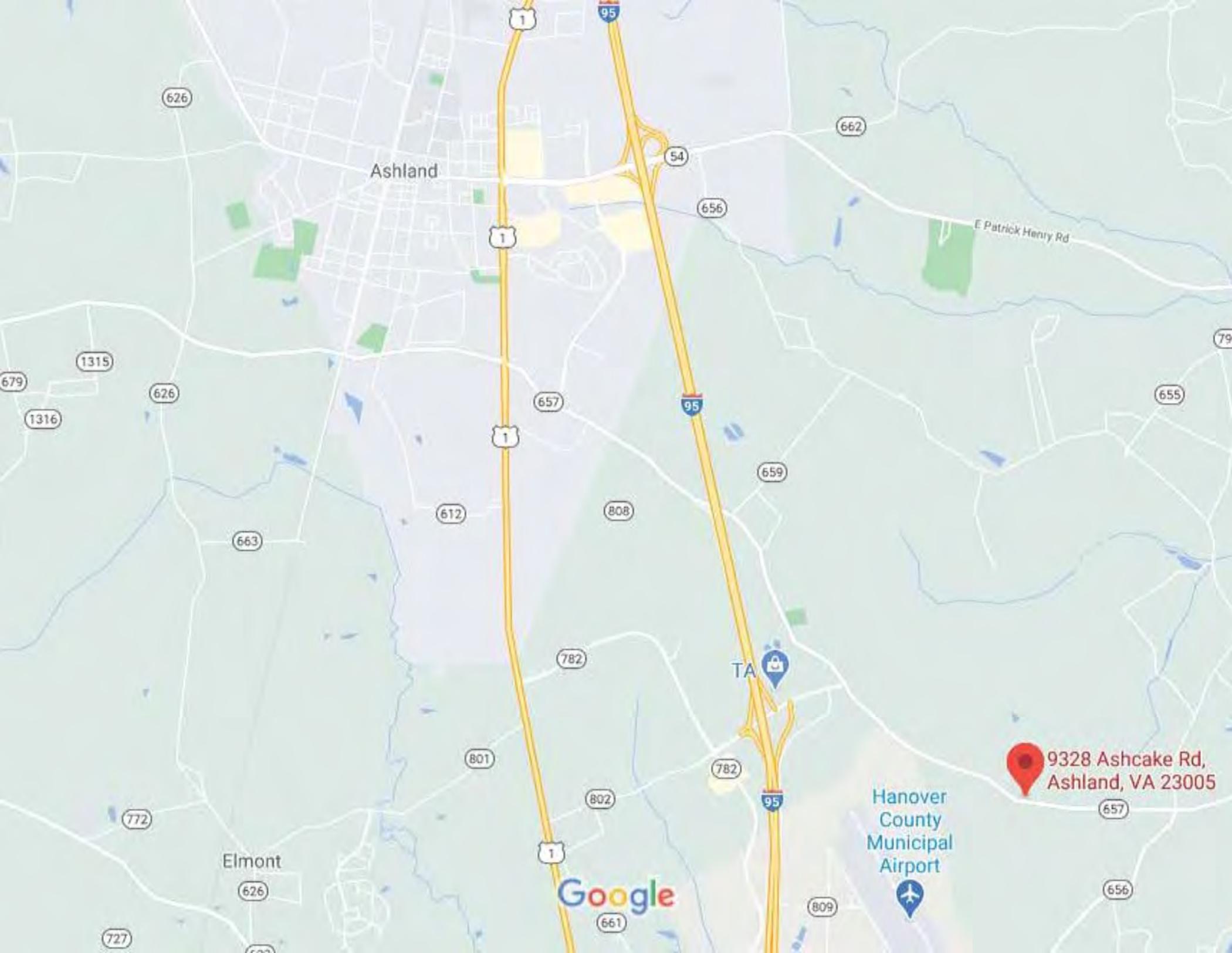
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