



The History of Grace Chapel on High Holly Mountain

In the beginning God! It's always about God and if it is not...it's not.

Community Bible Church in Highlands, led by Pastor Gary Hewins established small group meetings in areas where members lived. The purpose was to discuss the Sunday morning message and to grow closer together through fellowship and prayer.

One of these groups was in Sky Valley and included Jim and Betty Miles, Milner and Jane Lively, Nancy Plate' and David and Pam Spears.

In November of 2015 there was a Senate hearing and General Keene had been called to testify regarding ISIS. General Keene made the statement "ISIS is at war with us, but we are not at war with ISIS." As Pam stood at the kitchen sink she heard the Holy Spirit say "Satan is at war with my people, but my people are not at war with Satan." Driving towards the old Sky Valley Lodge that very morning both she and David heard the Lord say, "I want to redeem that building for my glory."

A call was made to Pastor Gary and the vision shared with he and his staff.

Pastor Gary said, "Let's pray and see what God has in mind." A decision was made to call a gathering in January to see if there was any interest in planting a church in Sky Valley. So about 40 people met in the Timeshare Building in Sky Valley for a Sunday morning service and afterwards Pastor Gary asked and received a resounding yes to planting a church. The decision was made to begin Sunday services as soon as possible. The Lakeside Room at the Sky Valley Country Club was secured and thus began Community Bible Church Sky Valley.

Thank you, God! Miracle 1.

What an amazing thing it is to see God at work. For seven years the old Sky Valley Lodge set vacant as The Merrill Trust declined to speak to anyone about renting or leasing the property. Pastor Gary and David Spears were able to meet with Harrison Merrill and a 3-year agreement was made to lease the old Sky Valley Lodge for \$1.00 per year plus repairs and maintenance.

Restoring the building which had been badly damaged by vandalism was done by the congregation along with a few paid contractors. The former restaurant became the Sanctuary; the pro shop the bible study/fellowship area; and the real estate office, the children's area. The lease was signed in April and on

July 3, 2016 Community Bible Church Sky Valley held its first Sunday service in the old Sky Valley Lodge.

Thank you, God! Miracle 2.

Isaiah 61: 3

“the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.”

David Spears and Neil Van Hoogen, Elders at CBC Highlands along with Milner Lively and Tom Floyd elected from Sky Valley served as the first Elders of CBC Sky Valley. Deacons elected were Laylon Wilson, Ed Lindermen and Bruce Turner. Susan Starling would serve as our Church Administrator.

Pastor Gary would travel most Sunday mornings for the next five years to preach the Gospel at 9:00am leaving immediately after the service to make it back in time to preach at CBC Highlands. What a faithful shepherd! Forever grateful to CBC Highlands for their support!

Thank you, God! Miracle 3.

During this period the men would gather on Monday mornings at 8:00am to pray and the women would gather at 10:00am. Of course, one of our fervent prayers was for God to allow us to purchase the old ski lodge. But, God had a much bigger plan in mind.

Isaiah 54:2

“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitation be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.”

After several years of waiting on the Lord, an offer was made by George and Karen Powell to donate land for building a church on High Holly Mountain in Scaly Mountain, North Carolina. In July of 2019 it was agreed by all that the Lord was indeed leading us to a new land on which he would build his church. What a generous gift! Thank you, George and Karen Powell!

Thank you, God! Miracle 4.

So, on September 23 of 2020 we broke ground on High Holly Mountain. But, due to Covid and a Pandemic the building process would be halted. During this period the Lord would send us a new pastor, Steve Kerhoulas who was the former pastor of CBC Highlands. In March of 2021 Pastor Steve Kerhoulas and his wife Candi were called to lead CBC Sky Valley. Is it not interesting that Pastor Steve planted CBC Highlands and Pastor Gary watered; Pastor Gary planted CBC Sky Valley and Pastor Steve watered. Only God! Thank you Pastor Steve and Candi for all you have done for the last 4 years to lead this church!

Thank you, God! Miracle 5.

I Corinthians 3:6
“I planted, Apollos watered...”

In 2021 the “Transition Team” which included many members met for several months to flesh out what our Mission Statement would be moving forward.

“A Bible-based community who glorifies Jesus Christ through
Worship, Discipleship, and Outreach”

A part of this process was the separation from CBC Highlands and the name change from CBC Sky Valley to Grace Chapel on High Holly Mountain. The church had been planted and now the watering would begin.

During this time Carter Miller would teach an amazing Adult Sunday School. Candi Kerhoulas would lead The Women’s Community Bible Study and Chris Stephenson would begin a Women’s Ministry. Outreach to the community would include Wednesday night “Potluck”, Hymn Sings, a July Ice Cream Social, and Thanksgiving meals for the needy.

Easter Sunrise Service to Christmas Tree Lighting to Christmas Eve were services that celebrated the story of Jesus with the surrounding communities.

Participating with Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child, Choices Pregnancy Center, and The Ukraine Partnership put our faith in action outside the church walls. The Benevolence Ministry put our faith in action to those in need of a helping hand. All this and more as the process of building Grace Chapel on High Holly Mountain began anew.

In September of 2023 the work of building the new church began in earnest. After successfully completing a matching funds challenge with CBC Highlands, about half of the funds required to build were now in hand. After much prayer and discussion, the Elders and the members decided it was time to step out in faith and commence building. The goal was to build the church debt free, and it was decided that construction would be paused, if funds were not available...that never happened.

Thank you, God! Miracle 5.

God would show his favor in so many details big and small. Too many to name, but one was through the sub-contractors who gave substantial discounts on their work. A number of these men were also pastors of their own churches.

Thank you, God! Miracle 6.

The Building Committee included Bill Oliver, George Powell, Phillip

Coppage, Pastor Steve Kerhoulas, Milner Lively, Tony Allred and David Spears.

Recognizing the need for someone to oversee the construction an agreement was made with Jason Coppage of Coppage Construction Company. Once again God's provision as Phillip and Sandy Coppage were members of the church. Phillip and Jason coordinated the construction and Sandy the interior and exterior design. A labor of love from a devoted team! Thank you, Jason, Phillip and Sandy!

Thank you, God! Miracle 7.

After the foundation was poured the framing crew informed the Building Committee that they would be unable to fulfill their commitment. Jason Coppage was able to find a replacement crew and this turned out to be a double blessing. Not only was Luis Juarez and crew able to do the framing but continued until completion of the church eliminating the need to seek other contractors. Luis and his crew have been so faithful!

Thank you, God! Miracle 8.

As the congregation faced the question of the funding needed to finish the church God would prove himself to indeed be the God of the impossible through the generous gifts of so many people, the CBC Highlands Church and the Ruth Lilly Philanthropic Foundation.

Thank you, God! Miracle 9

As you look at what God has done you cannot forget the beautiful rock work that surrounds our church. A priceless gift from the North Carolina DOT.

Thank you, God! Miracle 10.

From the beginning the Lord has sent just the right people at just the right time with the exact gifts needed to make Grace Chapel on High Holly Mountain a reality and a lighthouse to this community. The Cross shines bright in the darkness on High Holly Mountain! This story is not finished...it is just beginning!

Thank you, God! Thank you, Jesus!

Thank you, Holy Spirit!

I Corinthians 3:6

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase."

Soli Deo Gloria!