First Baptist Church
Mount Airy
North Carolina
Celebrating 125 Years

1879 - 2004
DONATED BY ANDY KENNIS
Forward

This collection of the histories of the First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina, was assembled for the occasion of the 125th Anniversary of the church on October 3, 2004. You will notice that the information about the early years is repeated in some of the histories. It may remind you that much of the information in the gospel of Mark was repeated in Matthew and Luke. As you read, you are encouraged to enjoy both the repetition and the variety. The events described in these histories cover only a small portion of the life of this church, but hopefully the information that is here will be treasured by those who call First Baptist Church their own.

A 125th anniversary is cause to celebrate and reflect. Our celebration included the return of former members and pastors who had moved away. We began our day by joining together in the sanctuary for a period of devotion. Then we had time to browse through displays of historical exhibits in the Fireside Room and videos of days-gone-by in the surrounding rooms. Copies of this history and ornaments made of pieces of stained glass from a long-ago broken window in the Old Sanctuary were available in the breezeway. Later we came together again for a time of worship. A men’s quartet sang and Dr. Randall Lolley preached. A covered-dish lunch followed in the Fellowship Hall, giving us time to enjoy each other.

One of the highlights of the 125th Anniversary was to have pictures of the men who served as pastors of our church displayed in our new Hall of History. These pictures are also included in the back of this book. The leadership of these men, as they allowed God to use them over the years, has definitely shaped the growth of the church. And certainly the contributions of the members, both men and women, throughout the 125 years cannot be underestimated.

It is interesting to note that the lightbulb was invented in the same year that our church was organized. May we suggest that just as the lightbulb brought light to the world, so did the members and work of the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy. As men and women through the years have allowed God to lead in their lives, they have brightened and illuminated many things. May we go forward as a church in seeking God’s will in our lives that God may be glorified and that we may be the people He would have us be.

Committee to Plan the 2004 Homecoming and 125th Anniversary:

Larry Andrews Sarah Lee McGee Nancy Twitty
Dot Brannock Martha Morgan Anne Webb
Mae Joyce Liz Solters Dr. Roger Gilbert, Pastor
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"The Mount Airy Baptist Church of Christ was constituted August 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1879. The following Covenant (and Constitution) was unanimously adopted:

\textbf{Covenant}

Having been as we trust brought by Divine Grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ and to give ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other to walk together in Him with brotherly love to His glory as our common Lord.

We do therefore in His strength engage.
That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other as occasion may require.
That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God and the ordinance of his house.
That we will cheerfully contribute of our means as the Lord has prospered us, for the maintenance of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, for the support of the poor and to the spread of the gospel over the earth.
That we will in all conditions, even till death strive to live to the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

(The above is printed from a copy of the covenant made in the minute book of 1896 to 1908 by Mr. John A. Martin who was elected Church Clerk on July 7, 1898.)
An Article from a 1910 Edition of  
*The Mount Airy News*  
About the Dedication of Our First Granite Building

Since 1879, thirty-one years ago, the Baptist people of this town have worshipped in the wooden building on North Main Street. The house was considered one of the best when it was built, but during the thirty years passed, the ideas of the people have changed and the membership has prospered and become more wealthy, and there was a great demand for a larger and better building. To meet this demand, plans were adopted … for the new building, and the work commenced. The panic came and during one year almost nothing was done.

It was the intention of the Building Committee to use brick for the walls, but the Woodruffe Brothers Thomas, George, and Frank, whose home is near the church, changed all the plans by donating the necessary granite rock to build the church. Of course, this offer was accepted and it is largely to the credit of these three gentlemen that the present splendid structure is what it is today. For besides giving the material, they are architects themselves and they have been free to help in planning the work.

Those who know say that nearly every man in the church who is able to give has responded as liberally as his brethren could ask, and in many instances, great sacrifices have been made.

The people of the town who belong to other churches and many who belong to no church have aided liberally and shown that they were heartily in sympathy with the work.

All the structure is completed except the inside work of the main room which is the largest in the building. The large Sunday School room and three small rooms now are used to worship in and they will seat as many people as the old house would accommodate. It is the intention of the people to complete the church as soon as possible, but just when that will be, no one knows.

Mr. J.I. Belton, one of the deacons, and a man who has been a contractor for years and built many of the finest and most costly residences in this part of the state, has taken special pride in looking after the work. And while he has made it look costly, and it really is costly, he has had the work done so that it has not cost the people much more than ordinary work.

And it was this beautiful building that was dedicated to God last Sunday. Every Baptist in this town is proud of it, or should be, and so should every man who is in sympathy with the spread of Christian truth. The sermon was preached at 12 M. by Dr. W.H. Baylor of Baltimore, Md. after a review of the past history by Rev. C.C. Haymore who served the church the first ten years after it was organized. In the afternoon a "house warming" was held at which all the pastors and many of the prominent citizens of the
town made short addresses. Rev. Livingston Johnson, of Raleigh, was present and took part in the services.

A brighter day is before the Baptist people of this town. The church is now sufficiently strong to pay a man of ability to preach and serve as pastor and the importance of the work here is well known to all the membership.

With the new church building and the present pastor, Dr. Carter, who has the work well in hand and the co-operation of the membership, it will be no distant day until the church here will be doing a greater work than it has ever before accomplished.
Sixty years ago this church was organized in a frame building which stood on the
knoll and is now being used by the Intermediate Department of the Sunday School each
Lord’s day.

Rev. J.H. Lewellyn, a beloved pioneer preacher of Surry County, acted as
Moderator of the organizing presbytery and Dr. A.C. Dixon as clerk. Dr. Dixon later rose
to world pre-eminence as a Baptist divine, but at that time was a young man, recently a
student in Wake Forest College.

Rev. C.C. Haymore, a young preacher from the same college, was elected the first
Pastor of the newly organized church.

The organizing of this church is believed to be unique in the fact that the day it
was founded the membership had at hand a new, and for their day, up to date church
house ready and paid for.

The name given this infant organization was The Mt. Airy Baptist Church of
Christ. Sixteen persons coming, most of them from the White Plains Baptist Church and
other nearby sections, formed the charter membership.

The organization of this church grew out of a protracted meeting, conducted in the
Presbyterian Church during the previous summer (1878) by Dr. Dixon who was invited
by Rev. C.C. Haymore to conduct this meeting. These two young college mates labored
tirelessly to win souls for the Master. There was no local Baptist Church to receive the
new converts, so they were permitted to be baptized into the fellowship of nearby
churches until a house could be erected for them a church home. The heroic sacrifices
incident to the erection of this first building are worthy of more than a passing remark for
those of our generation who are inclined to feel the financial responsibility incident to
modern church building and financing.

It will be recalled that in this early day there was very little money to be had. Mt.
Airy at that time was a more country village with a population of not more than 500
people. When a few interested converts began to consider building a house of worship,
the great problem was money and where it would come from.

After a great deal of public praying, planning and discouragement, Sam
Greenwood, a public spirited citizen, who at that time was not particularly conspicuous
for his religious zeal, got up in the meeting and said, “Gentlemen, above town a short
way, I own a large tract of pine timber. If you men will cut the trees and have them
sawed into lumber, I will give you all the lumber you need to build your new house.”
The ice being broken, Bob Dick Galloway, James Greenwood and Charles Whitlock each subscribed one hundred dollars to pay for labor and materials that they, themselves, could not perform or provide. Mr. Galloway gave the lot upon which to build, took charge of the logging and lumbering operations, assisted by other willing hands. Funds ran low, and those most interested in the venture again were obliged to make further donations, while a large number of public spirited men and women came to the rescue, with smaller contributions so that on August 9, 1879, the house was completed and ready for the formal installation with Rev. C.C. Haymore its first pastor. The newly organized church began holding services two Sundays in the month.

A Sunday School was promptly organized and began to hold sessions every Lord’s day. For many years progress was slow, and the young pastor was greatly handicapped in his work for lack of funds. What his salary was at the beginning of his ministry, the records do not show. Six years later (1882) his yearly salary was $37.50; in 1883, $47.50; in 1884, $52.50. Two years later his salary was $85.50. The records show for that year that at its close the brethren were behind in payment of this small sum $17.25. About this time the Baptist State Convention began to donate a small sum annually to support the work, and this was kept up until 1891.

From the beginning small contributions were made annually to the cause of Missions. It will be recalled that the anti-mission sentiment in this section was particularly strong and this acted as a brake in financing the church’s growth. A large element, both inside and outside the church, felt that salvation was free and therefore it was wrong to pay preachers and missionaries for their services. Hence our pioneer preachers were forced to labor in the Kingdom for little or no pay, depending for support largely on their own resources or the unrecorded generosity of friends and relatives. The records of the church reveal a number of curious facts, as illustrative of the ideas of a bygone generation.

The first church building had two entrances, one for women, another for men, and running down the center of the middle section of benches was a six inch board to separate the male and female worshippers. Youth cannot be balked, so there is a tradition to the effect that often times young couples would come early to church, separate at the entrance, hasten inside so as to occupy adjoining pews with only this thin board separating them. This procedure doubtless scandalized the church officials, gave rise to no little disturbance in the conduct of worship. Also for a great many years in the names of males and females—members of the church—were recorded on separate pages in the church book. Male members only were supposed to participate in the monthly business meetings, and these were required to be present at all such meetings, or show a good excuse. The women were not invited to these meetings, and doubtless would not have been welcome had they insisted on coming and participating.

Thus the history of this church may reasonably be taken in the years gone by as a cross section of the development of Protestant Christianity. During that time you can see
how that women in the church, as in the business and political world, have had to fight for the places of usefulness they occupy today.

In 1887, eleven years after the church was founded, the women began to seek an opportunity to be of service in the Kingdom. A wave of missionary enthusiasm was sweeping over the entire country at this time so the women of this church having been, as they believe led of the Spirit, organized a missionary society with Mrs. J.H. Blakemore as President. From the very beginning the women helped with the work of the church by assessing monthly dues of ten cents from each member. This giving the church its first idea of regular and systematic giving. At first this organization assumed various names, such as Ladies Aid Society, Ladies Benevolent Society, etc. but always active under some name. At the present time, the name Woman’s Missionary Union is maintained. Growing from a very small number they now have a great group, which is divided into seven circles for convenience. Each circle has its own name and Chairman. The present membership of the union numbers 163. Under the supervision of the Missionary Union, the young people and children of the church have been organized into the various auxiliaries sponsored by the W.M.S. with a combined membership of 118. The feminine touch has been developed and made itself felt in church affairs and means much in the growth and influence of any modern church.

As early as 1893 the women of the church were becoming active, for the church records show that in a business meeting of that date a woman was appointed along with other delegates to represent the church at the session of the Pilot Association of which it was then a part. At this same meeting certain other women were appointed on a committee to help raise funds for the new church building then contemplated.

By the early nineties, the town had grown and church activities increased to the point where it was felt that a new building was needed, and that services should be provided for more than two Sundays a month.

The pastor’s salary had been increased from time to time until 1891 when it stood at $250.00. In 1894 an agitation was started to have services three Sundays a month, but it took two years to bring the majority of the membership to the point of actually providing the necessary funds.

In 1896, $125.00 was added to the salary and the church began having services three Sundays a month. A year later a pastor was employed for his full time at a salary of $500.00. Thus it will be seen that the church struggled on for 18 years before it could afford the services of a fulltime pastor. The membership in 1896 numbered 81 communicants.

Another fact noted in passing is that the church of the olden days was much more zealous to keep its membership purged of erring members than is the church of today. Seldom was there a business meeting held that some member was not reported for misconduct and one or more excluded from the church roll. However, in each case an effort was made to win the erring off back to Christ and his church. The making, selling
and drinking of corn liquor and the fights attending thereto, was recognized as the main cause for church disciplining 25 or 50 years ago. It is gratifying today to note that the general tone of Christian conduct appears to be on an upward trend—a higher plane of living. This perhaps limits the necessity of so much church disciplining. The degree to which this has all been eliminated is a cause for rejoicing throughout Christendom.

Starting with a church house worth some $1,500.00, the church struggled on until the time arrived when new and more commodious building was an imperative necessity though the membership was small in numbers and financially weak in 1900. Meanwhile under the ministration of the pastors who were men of God, the congregation and Sunday School had grown steadily and the Lord laid the matter of a new church house on the hearts of his people.

To take the lead in this enterprise, He sent as pastor, Rev. J.E. Smith who was a man of large vision.

The total expenditures for the year 1905 amounted to only $1,003.67. Yet in the face of that, at the November business meeting the church leaders decided to erect a church house that with furnishings would cost $25,000.00.

The next year, 1906, work was begun on the granite building, which is at the present time being used. The financial depression of 1907 came on. Money was hard to get, banks failed, so the work on the church house simply had to stop for lack of funds.

While the work on the building was at a standstill, Brother Smith went into the factory district of the town and organized a mission there. The original plan was for this work to be carried on jointly by the different denominations of the town, but then some of the churches decided to pull out and give the work over to the Baptists, provided they assume all obligations incurred. The Baptists accepted this obligation, and somehow managed to carry on. Out of this venture grew, through the generosity of Brother R.L. Haymore, the Haymore Memorial Baptist Church which is today a thriving organization, housed in a building that any community might be proud of.

Again work was begun on the new church and the outside walls finished. By this time Dr. E.T. Carter had become pastor of the church, and it was due in a large measure to his ability as a mechanic and to the tireless efforts of his two hands that the interior of the chapel or prayer meeting room was finished, and occupied in 1909.

It was Dr. Carter’s idea that the old church house be converted into a parsonage. The work of rearranging the building for a parsonage was begun during Dr. Carter’s ministry but was left for his successor, Rev. T.H. King and family, first to occupy this building. The old church house parsonage has since been converted into Sunday School rooms for the Intermediate Department. The Baptists have long since bought a very nice parsonage, convenient and appreciated.
After years of struggle and sacrifice, the edifice was completed and dedicated in the later part of 1912. Dr. Walter M. Johnson preached the dedication sermon. At the time of its dedication, a debt of $6,000.00 was being carried on the personal note of leading members of the church and congregation. These notes were to run over a period of six years, but the last one was returned at the end of the fifth year.

In the meantime, Brother Eugene Olive had succeeded to the pastorate of the church and new life seemed to begin. We had a large Sunday School and all available space was being crowded to its full capacity. There were officers and teacher training courses for Sunday School workers. B.T.U. workers were being invited to come in from time to time to organize and train the young people. The Sunday School decided to have a monthly teacher’s meeting—coming to church for supper and attending the meeting after the supper. One man gave a barrel of dishes to be used for serving suppers. The Southern Baptists had launched their $75,000,000 campaign. Everybody was enthusiastic. Sunday School rooms were overcrowded with pupils. The public schools and colleges were filled to capacity. Expansion was in the air so the church leaders started another enterprise, that on the face of it looked foolhardy. They began to erect a Sunday School annex that cost the church about $15,000.00. Again, seemingly, we were exceeding our means and getting into debt. Finally, the work was completed, the bills paid, and today we Baptists thank God for His goodness to us in His leadership.

In these buildings which have been dedicated to the Kingdom work, we believe men and women living and dead have laid up a treasure that time will not soon efface, a monument that will endure for the use of coming generations. This church building is easily worth $80,000.00 to $100,000.00 today and a parsonage worth $10,000.00. During this building campaign evangelistic efforts have been uppermost in the minds of the people.

Dr. I.T. Jacobs came to this church June 1928—remained with us until June 1933. During his ministry this church grew spiritually, numerically, and financially. He was fearless in his preaching, wise in his leadership. He and his good wife and children were much loved and sorely missed at their going. During Dr Jacob’s first year here the First Baptist Church observed its (50) fiftieth anniversary and a joyful occasion it was, having as guests as many of the former pastors as could possibly come. They were Rev. C.C. Haymore, Rev. T.H. King, Dr. E.T. Carter, Rev. E.I. Olive, Rev. E. Gibson Davis. Many visitors were also present who had at some time or another been members of this church or Sunday School. This gathering will long be remembered. Many who were present on that day, and who were responsible in many ways for the building and support of this church have been called to their reward.

Rev. J.R. Johnson of Galax, Va. came to this church in 1933. This was at a time when the church was feeling the effects of the depression, but Rev. J.R. Johnson was a Christ like character and faithful in his service, sympathetic in his ministry. He conducted two revival meetings unaided, except by the choir director and church membership. Many people accepted Christ during these meetings and were baptized. Everyone loved Brother Johnson and his family.
Dr. Walter L. Johnson came to this church November 1, 1933. He was a very earnest and enthusiastic worker, suggesting to us many things which we could do as an improvement. Through his leadership our Sunday School grew and we began having weekly teacher’s council meetings each Wednesday evening one and one half hour before the prayer meeting hour. Having a supper then discussing whatever problems or plans we may have in each department of the Sunday School, also having the Sunday School lesson for the following Sunday taught. These meeting have proved to be very helpful. Our B.T.U. was also built up.

The work being rather hard for Dr. Johnson, he asked that he be allowed an assistant. After much discussion and prayer, David Mashburn was secured as an Educational Director at a salary of $1,200.00. Mr. Mashburn was very capable and untiring in his work. Dr. Johnson resigned his work here on August 1, 1938 to take up work in Mexico City, Mexico doing educational and evangelistic work on the Foreign Mission Board Seminary in El Paso, Texas. Mr. Mashburn was then in charge of all the church services, later being assisted by Dr. Risner during November and December 1938. Dr. Risner is dearly beloved by all the church.

Last year (1938) this church had a most effective Vacation Bible School for two weeks. Mr. Mashburn was in charge with 47 teachers, 254 pupils were enrolled, average attendance was 223—all denominations—cost of the school was $63.52.

The Sunday School of First Baptist Church has been a standard school for 1937, 1938 and 1939.

Mrs. Nannie Raine Brower, one of the 16 charter members of this church, was on November 27, 1938 called to come up higher having been a faithful, consecrated, member for fifty nine years.

A careful estimate shows that between 3,000-4,000 persons have joined this church. Two of its members sleep on the battlefields of France, one member, Mrs. Maggie Nutt Herring accompanied her husband Rev. D.W. Herring to the Foreign Fields. The church has ordained and sent into the ministry four preachers—Rev. John Marrion, Dr. A.A. Martin, Rev. Robert Loftus and Rev. Oscar Haywood.

Starting with 16 members, the church now numbers 883 resident members. The Sunday School has enrolled 681. The proposed budget for this year (1939) for all purposes was $9,235.00.

Rev. Albert S. Hale is the present pastor of this church having come to us January 1, 1939. He is a very fine Christian man and is finding his way into the hearts of this people and under his wise leadership this church should go forward in a great and mighty way for Jesus Christ.
The pastors whom God has sent to labor among us, we have been singularly fortunate. Rev. C.C. Haymore, the founder and father of the church, labored for ten years and during his lifetime never ceased to pray for the advancement of the work. During a little more than half a century this church has been shepherded by 16 pastors: Re. C.C. Haymore, Rev. L.R. Pruitt, Rev. J.H. Lambeth, Dr. A.D. Haymore, Rev. A.R. Love, Rev. J.M. Hamrick, Rev. A.L. Betts, Rev. J.E. Smith, Dr. E.T. Carter, Rev. T.H. King, Rev. E.I. Olive, Rev. E.G. Davis, Dr. I.T. Jacobs, Rev. J.R. Johnson, Dr. W.L. Johnson, Rev. Albert S. Hale. Of this number 9 have ceased their labors and their works do follow them. We cherish a warm place in our hearts for each of these pastors whom it has been our privilege to know.

As time goes on, many seats are made vacant, many of the older members being called home. Thank God for their having been in service so long. One elderly man who is at this time a member of this church can remember when there were only 3 Baptists in the town of Mt. Airy. Another man served faithfully as Chairman of Board of Deacons for twenty-five years.

This church has recently installed an Austin organ at the cost of $4,000.00. The dedication of this instrument was held in the church April 26, 1939 with Mr. Thompson head of Music Department of W.C.N.N.C. giving a recital which was much enjoyed by the music lovers of Mt. Airy and vicinity.

When reading the records of this church, it can be seen that God has indeed been leading on to greater things for His sake, so “Rejoice in the Lord, again I say, Rejoice.” Phil 4:4.

Written by Mr. A.G. Webb when we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the church.
The First Baptist Church of Mount Airy, N.C., was organized August 9, 1879, as the Mount Airy Baptist Church of Christ, with sixteen members, in a little frame building which stood on the knoll back of the present church building; and it is now being used (after many changes) as a meeting place for the Intermediate Department of the Sunday School each Lord’s Day. Rev. J.H. Llewellyn, a pioneer preacher of Surry County, acted as moderator, with Dr. A.C. Dixon, then a student at Wake Forest College, as clerk, and Rev. C.C. Haymore, a young graduate of Wake Forest College, was elected as first pastor. Mr. Jackson, father of W.A. Jackson, was the first clerk.

The organization of this church was unique in the fact that the day it was organized the membership had, for their day, a new and up-to-date church house ready for use and paid for.

Most of the charter members came from the White Plains church to form the new organization. The organization of this church grew out of a revial meeting conducted in the Presbyterian Church during the previous summer of 1878 by Dr. A.C. Dixon, who was invited by the Rev. C.C. Haymore to do the preaching. There was no local Baptist church to receive the new converts, so they were permitted to be baptized into the fellowship of the White Plains Baptist Church until a church house could be erected.

By heroic sacrifices this church building was made possible. In these early days there was very little money to be had. Mount Airy at this time was a small country village with a population of not more than 500 people.

The land on which the church now stands was given by Bob Dick Galloway. Mr. Sam Greenwood, father of Mrs. Andrew Stewart, gave the lumber from which the church was built. Mr. Galloway, Mr. James Greenwood, Mr. Charles Whitlock, and other public spirited citizens gave funds for labor and other materials—to take care of the work they could not do with their own hands.

This newly organized church began holding two preaching services a month and a Sunday School each Lord’s Day.

For many years progress was slow, and the young pastor was greatly handicapped in his work for lack of funds. There is no record of what his salary was at the beginning of his ministry, but six years later in 1882, it was $37.50 annually; in 1883, $47.50; in 1884, $52.50; and in 1886, $85.50. About this time the Baptist State Convention began to donate annually to the support of this church and this was kept up until 1891. From the beginning this church made a small annual contribution to missions. There was a
strong anti-mission sentiment in this section. There was a group both inside and outside the church who felt that salvation was free—therefore, it was wrong to pay preachers or missionaries for their services.

The first church building had two entrances, one for women and one for men. And running down the center of the middle section of benches was a six-inch board to separate the male and female worshippers. Youth cannot be balked, so there is a tradition to the effect that oftentimes young couples would come early to church, separate at the entrance, then hasten inside the church so as to occupy adjoining pews with only the narrow board separating them.

And also for a great number of years the names of male and female members of this church were recorded on separate pages of the clerk’s book. Only male members were supposed to participate in the monthly business meetings of the church, and they were required to be present at all such meetings or give a good excuse.

In 1887, eleven years after the organization of this church, the women began to seek an opportunity to be of service in the work of the church. At this time a tide of missionary enthusiasm was spreading over the country. The women of Mount Airy Baptist Church of Christ believed they were lead by the Spirit to organize a missionary society. Mrs. J.H. Blakemore was first president.

From the very beginning the women helped with the work of the church by assessing monthly dues of ten cents per member. Later the Ladies Aid Society and Ladies Benevolent Society were organized. This work by the women of the church has grown through the years until today the missionary society has 152 members with nine circles and five auxiliaries of the W.M.U. The records of this church of 1883 show that a woman was appointed on a committee to represent this church at a meeting of the Pilot Mountain Association, of which this church was a member. Other women were appointed on a committee to raise funds for a new church house.

In 1897, a full-time pastor was called to this church at a salary of $500.00. In early days this church rarely ever had a business meeting that some member was not reported for misconduct and one or more names dropped from the church roll.

During these years the town of Mount Airy had grown. This church was growing in numbers and strength. The Sunday School was larger and the need existed for a larger church building. So in 1905, under the leadership of Rev. J.E. Smith, plans were laid for a new church building which was to cost about $25,000. The following year the work was begun on the granite building which is now being used. The building was dedicated in 1912 while Dr. Carter was pastor.

Under the leadership of Rev. Smith, a mission was started in the factory section of Mount Airy. In the beginning it was to be a union mission, but later other denominations pulled out and left the work to the Baptists who organized a separate church now known
as the Haymore Memorial Baptist Church, with Brother R.L. Haymore, a generous, loyal friend to see it through to its present success.

The old church house of the Mount Airy Baptist Church of Christ was converted into a parsonage, and it was completed under the ministry of Rev. T.H. King. This is being used today as the Intermediate Department of the Sunday School of the First Baptist Church and as a meeting place for Troop 38 of the Boy Scouts.

Upon the resignation of Rev. King, this church called Rev. Eugene Olive to the pastorate of this growing and expanding work. The Sunday School became crowded, and a larger and more up-to-date quarters were needed; and under his leadership the new Sunday School plant was erected.

This church called Rev. E. Gibson Davis as its leader after Rev. Olive resigned. Under Rev. Davis’ noble ministry, many members were added to this church and much of the church debt was reduced.

In March 1928 this church called Rev. I.T. Jacobs to become its pastor. Under his leadership this church purchased the present parsonage, raised most of the debt on the church indebtedness, and half of the debt on the parsonage. There was a marked growth in additions to the church and increase in gifts. It was during his ministry that this church celebrated its 50th anniversary. The Rev. C.C. Haymore, the first pastor, was present on this occasion, along with many former pastors.

At the close of Dr. Jacobs’ ministry, this church called Rev. J.R. Johnson who served this church in a faithful and useful ministry.

November 1933, this church called Rev. Walter L. Johnson. He was a very enthusiastic, earnest worker. Through his leadership the Sunday School grew and the weekly Teacher’s Council meetings were begun. David Mashburn was secured as an Educational Director at a salary of $1,200.00 to assist Dr. Johnson.

In 1938 Dr. Johnson resigned his pastorate to take up work in Mexico for the Foreign Mission Board. Mr. Mashburn was then in charge of all the church services, being assisted through November and December by Dr. Reisner.

November 27, 1938, Mrs. Nannie M. Brower, one of the charter members of this church, passed away after 59 years as a faithful, consecrated member.

January 1, 1939, Rev. Albert Hale began his pastorate of this church. Under his leadership this church accomplished much for Christ. He and his family endeared themselves not only to the members of this congregation, but also to the people of the town. The new Austin Organ was installed and dedicated during Mr. Hale’s ministry.

Rev. Redwine, our present pastor, came to us soon after Rev. Hale resigned and is carrying forward the great work that was started by former pastors.
The First Baptist Church has ordained and sent out into the ministry four ministers: Rev. John Marion, Dr. C.A. Martin, Rev. Robert Loftis, and Rev. Oscar Haywood. One member, Mrs. Maggie Nutt Herring, accompanied her husband to serve on the foreign mission fields.

The following have served as pastors of the First Baptist Church since its organization:

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rev. C.C. Haymore</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Rev. L.R. Pruette</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Rev. J.R. Lambeth</td>
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<td>Dr. R.W. Haymore</td>
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<td>Rev. A.R. Love</td>
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<td>Rev. J.M. Hamrick</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Rev. A.L. Batts</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Rev. J.E. Smith</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Dr. E.T. Carter</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Rev. T.H. King</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Rev. E.O. Olive</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Rev. E.G. Davis</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Dr. I.T. Jacobs</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Rev. J.R. Johnson</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Rev. W.L. Johnson</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Rev. Albert Hale</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Rev. R.K. Redwine</td>
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Historical Sketch---
of The First Baptist Church
Mount Airy, N.C.
75th Anniversary
August 8, 1954
Written by Edward F. Lovill
based on histories written previously
by Mrs. A.G. Webb and Mrs. George K. Snow

Seventy-five years ago this church was organized in a small frame building which stood upon the knoll where the old parsonage now stands. Rev. J.H. Lewellyn, a beloved pioneer preacher of Surry County, acted as moderator of the organizing presbytery and Dr. A.C. Dixon as clerk. Dr. Dixon later rose to world preeminence as a Baptist divine, but at that time was the twenty-four year old pastor of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church. Rev. C.C. Haymore, a young preacher from Wake Forest College, was elected to serve as first pastor of the newly organized church.

The organization of this church was in a sense unique in the fact that the day it was founded the membership had at its disposal a new and modern building completed and paid for. The name which was given to this infant organization was the Mount Airy Baptist Church of Christ. Sixteen persons, most of them coming from the White Plains Baptist Church and other nearby sections, formed the charter membership.

The organization of this church grew out of a protracted meeting conducted in the Presbyterian Church during the previous summer (1878) by Dr. Dixon who was invited by Rev. C.C. Haymore to conduct this meeting. These two young college mates labored tirelessly to win people for Christ.

There was no local Baptist Church to receive the new converts, so they were permitted to be baptized into the fellowship of nearby churches until a house could be erected for them as a church home. The heroic sacrifices incident to the construction of this first building are worthy of some comment for those of us today who are inclined to feel that the responsibilities of modern church building and financing are too perplexing.

At this time Mount Airy was a small country village with a population of not more than 500 people. When a few interested converts began to consider building a house of worship, the great problem was money and the source from which it would come. After much public prayer, planning and discouragement, Sam Greenwood, a public-spirited citizen, who at that time was not particularly conspicuous for his religious zeal, got up in a meeting and said, "Gentlemen, above town a short way, I own a large tract of pine timber. If you men will have the trees cut and sawed into lumber, I will give all the lumber you need to build your new house."
Thus the ice was broken. Bob Dick Galloway, James Greenwood, and Charles Whitlock each subscribed one hundred dollars to pay for labor and materials which they themselves could not perform or provide. Mr. Galloway gave the lot upon which to build, took charge of the logging and lumbering operations, assisted by other willing hands.

Funds ran low, however, and those most interested in the venture were obliged to make further donations. A large number of generous men and women came to the rescue with smaller contributions so that on August 9, 1879, the house was completed and ready for the formal installation of Rev. C.C. Haymore.

The newly organized church began holding services two Sundays each month. Soon after a Sunday School was organized and sessions were held every Lord’s day. For many years progress was slow, and the young pastor was greatly handicapped in his work by lack of funds. The records do not reveal what his salary was at the beginning of his ministry here. In 1882 it was $37.50; in 1884, $52.50. In 1886 his salary was $85.50. At the close of that year the church was behind $17.25 in payment of this small sum. About this time the Baptist State Convention began to contribute a small amount annually to support the work. This was continued until 1891.

From the beginning small donations were made annually to the cause of missions. At this time the anti-mission sentiment was particularly strong in this section and acted as a brake in financing the church’s growth. A large element, both inside and outside the church, felt that salvation was free, and therefore, it was wrong to pay preachers and missionaries for their services. Hence, our pioneer preachers were forced to labor for little or no pay, depending for support largely on their own resources or the unrecorded generosity of friends and relatives.

The old original church building had two entrances, one for women and another for men. Running down the center of the middle section of benches was a six-inch board for the purpose of separating male from female worshippers. Youth cannot be balked, and there is a tradition to the effect that often times young couples would come early to church, separate at the entrances, and then hasten inside in order to occupy adjoining pews with only the thin board between them.

This practice doubtless scandalized the church officials and perhaps gave rise to no little disturbance in the conduct of worship. Also for many years the names of males and females—as members of the church—were recorded on separate pages of the church book. Only male members were supposed to participate in the monthly business meetings, and these were required to be present at all such meetings or to give good reason for their absence. For some years, too, the church had a policy of dismissing from the fellowship any members whose conduct was reported to be unbecoming to one professing the Christian religion.

At this time women in the church—as in the business and political world—had to fight for the places of usefulness which they occupy today. In 1887 they began to seek an
opportunity to be of service in the Kingdom. With missionary enthusiasm sweeping over the entire country the women of this church having been, as they believed, led by the Spirit, organized a missionary society with Mrs. J.H. Blakemore as president. From the beginning the women helped with the work of the church by assessing monthly dues of ten cents from each member. This imparted to the church its first idea of regular and systematic giving. At first the organization assumed various names such as the Ladies Aid Society, Ladies Benevolent Society, etc, but it was always active under some name. It is now the Women’s Missionary Union.

Growing from a small number they now have a large group divided into several circles with each circle having its own name and chairman. The feminine touch has been developed to such an extent that today it makes itself quite effective in church affairs.

By the early nineties the town had grown some and church activities increased to the point where it was felt that a new building was needed, and that services should be provided for more than two Sundays a month. In 1896, $125.00 was added to the pastor’s salary, and the church began to have services three Sundays a month. One year later a pastor was employed full time at a salary of $500.00. Thus is was 18 years after its founding before the church could afford a full time minister. The membership in 1896 numbered 81.

The church struggled on until the time came when a more commodious building was an apparent necessity. Under the ministration of pastors who were men of God the congregation and Sunday School had grown steadily. To lead in the enterprise of constructing a new building the church called Rev. J.E. Smith, a man of great vision. Total expenditures for the year 1905 amounted to only $1003.67; yet in the face of this fact at the November business meeting the church leaders decided to erect a church house at a cost of $25,000.00. In 1906 work was begun on the granite structure which today houses the sanctuary and a portion of the Sunday School. When the financial depression of 1907 followed, work on the new building was forced to terminate.

While this was at a standstill, Rev. Smith went into the factory district of the town and organized a mission there. The original plan was for this project to be carried on jointly by the different denominations of the town, but later some of the churches decided to withdraw and give the work over to the Baptists. The Baptists accepted this obligation, and somehow managed to keep it maintained. Because of the generosity of Mr. R.L. Haymore this venture became what is now the Haymore Memorial Baptist Church.

Once again work was started on the new church, and the outside walls were finished. By this time Dr. E.T. Carter had become pastor of the church, and it was due in a large measure to his ability as a mechanic, and to the tireless efforts of his hands that the interior of the chapel or prayer meeting room was finished and occupied in 1909. It was Dr. Carter’s idea that the old church house be converted into a parsonage.
The work of renovating the building for a parsonage was begun under his ministry, but was left for his successor, Rev. T.H. King and his family to be its first occupants. This structure has long since been converted into Sunday School rooms. About 25 years ago the church purchased a house on Rawley Avenue which since that time has served as a home for its pastors.

After years of struggle and sacrifice the new edifice was completed and dedicated in the latter part of 1912. Dr. Walter N. Johnson preached the dedication sermon. At the time a debt of $6,000 was being carried on the personal notes of leading members of the congregation. These notes were to run over a period of six years, but the last one was retired at the end of the fifth year.

In the meantime Brother Eugene Olive had become pastor of the church. We had a large Sunday School and all available space was crowded. There were officers and teachers training courses for Sunday School workers. B.T.U. workers were invited to come in from time to time to organize and train the young people. The Sunday School decided to have a monthly teacher’s meeting, coming to church for supper and attending the meeting afterwards.

With a wave of expansion and enthusiasm sweeping the country, the church leaders undertook another enterprise which on the surface seemed foolhardy. It was decided to erect a Sunday School annex which would cost $15,000. Finally the work was completed and all the bills paid.

When the call was extended to Rev. E. Gibson Davis in 1923, few realized the far reaching effects his dynamic personality and strong preaching would have on our church in this section of North Carolina.

His years of service here were marked by large congregations and many won to Christ. After five years of service he received a call of greater responsibility and has risen to be one of the greatest of Southern Baptist ministers.

Dr. I.T. Jacobs was called to this church in 1928; he remained until June, 1933. During his ministry the church grew spiritually, numerically, and financially. His preaching was excellent; his leadership wise. In his first year here the First Baptist Church observed its 50th anniversary, and a joyful occasion it was. Many of the former pastors were guests at this celebration. There were Rev. C.C. Haymore, Rev. T.H. King, Dr. E.T.Carter, Rev. E.I. Olive and Rev. E. Gibson Davis. Many visitors were also present who had at sometime or another been members of this church or Sunday School.

Rev. J.R. Johnson of Galax, Virginia came to the church in 1933. This was at a time when the church was feeling heavily the effects of the depression. Rev. Johnson was a Christ-like character who was faithful in his service and sympathetic in his ministry.
Dr. Walter L. Johnson came to this church November 1, 1935. He was an earnest enthusiastic worker, suggesting to the church many things which would bring further improvement. Through his leadership the Sunday School continued to grow. As the work was rather hard for Dr. Johnson, he requested that the church secure an assistant. After much discussion and prayer, David Mashburn was employed as an educational director at a salary of $1,200 per year.

Dr. Johnson resigned his work here on August 1, 1938, to go to Mexico City, Mexico, where he did educational and evangelistic work for the Foreign Mission Board Seminary in El Paso. This left Mr. Mashburn in charge of all church services. He was later assisted by Dr. Risner during November and December of 1938.

Rev. Albert S. Hale came to the church January 1, 1939. Because of his capable leadership and exemplary life the church made great progress in its work for the cause of Christ. It was during his ministry that our present church organ was installed; it was dedicated April 26, 1939 with Mr. Thompson, head of the Music Department of W.C.-U.N.C., giving a recital.

In 1943 Dr. R.K. Redwine was called to serve as pastor, and this he did effectively during a period of great stress as the years of World War II and those immediately following were.

In May 1948 the church voted to extend a call to Rev. R.C. Paulette of the First Baptist Church of Berryville, Virginia. This he accepted. His first sermon was preached here on July 11, 1948. In September of that year Miss Sarah Lee Hegler of Greer, South Carolina was employed as educational director, a position which she competently filled for three years.

The church had been needing to extend for some time and finally acquired the Haymore property adjoining it to the north. In 1950 the old house was remodeled and used for Sunday School classrooms. In the early part of 1951 the church agreed to take under its care a mission church located in the Sulphur Springs section. This church has now been moved from its original location and is now housed in a good cinder block structure on the old Springs Road.

On July 29, 1951 the church in special session finally voted to proceed with an extensive building program which had long been contempoated. On April 23, 1952 ground-breaking ceremonies were held and Mrs. S.M. Inman turned the first spade of dirt. On July 4 of that year cornerstone laying was celebrated. The building was dedicated the week of March 1-6, 1953, with seven former pastors in attendance to assist with the celebration.

The church has a history of which it can be justly proud. Under the faithful, devoted and untiring efforts which characterize the ministry of Rev. Paulette, this church has made unparalleled strides and has been abundantly blessed. The church has ordained and sent into the ministry four preachers: Rev. John Marion, Dr. G.A. Martin, Rev
Robert Loftis and Rev. Oscar Haywood. In April 1953 the church granted a license to preach to Edward F. Lovill. Two of the members of this church sleep on the battlefields of France. Mrs. Maggie Nutt Herring accompanied her husband Rev. D.W. Herring to the foreign fields. Starting with 16 members the church now has a resident membership of approximately 800 with Sunday School enrollment about the same.

During these past 75 years this church has been guided by 18 pastors. They are: Rev. C.C. Haymore, Rev. L.R. Pruitt, Rev. J.H. Lambeth, Dr. R. Dan Haymore, Rev A.H. Love, Rev. J. M. Hamrick, Rev. A.L. Betts, Rev. J.E. Smith, Dr. E. T. Carter, Rev. T.H. King, Rev. E.I. Olive, Rev. E.G. Davis, Dr. I.T. Jacobs, Rev. J.R. Johnson, Dr. W.L. Johnson, Rev. Albert S. Hale, Dr. R.K. Redwine, and Rev. R. Carrington Paulette, the present pastor.

On this 75th anniversary of our church we pay tribute to the courage, faith and sacrifices that have made this fellowship of believers today a citadel of the power of God. Let us here now dedicate ourselves anew to the tasks and responsibilities which are and shall be ours as a church and as individuals in bringing the Kingdom of God to mankind.
The organization of the First Baptist Church of Christ, as it was first called, grew out of a revival meeting conducted in the Presbyterian Church during the summer of 1878. This meeting was held by the invitation of the Rev. C Columbus Haymore.

On August 9, 1879, following the revival, sixteen persons were called together. They met in a small frame building, and sitting around a table with a kerosene lamp providing the light, they pledged themselves to the cause of the new church. The Rev. J.H. Lewellyn a beloved pioneer preacher of Surry County acted as moderator of the organizing presbytery, and Dr. A.C. Dixon was Clerk. Dr. Dixon later rose to Baptist preeminence, but at that time was a 24 year old pastor of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church. The Rev. C.C. Haymore, a young preacher from Wake Forest College, was elected to serve as first pastor of the newly organized church. These two young college classmates had labored tirelessly to win people for Christ.

There was no local Baptist Church to receive new members so they were being permitted to be baptized into the fellowship of nearby churches until a suitable house for worship could be erected. The heroic sacrifices incident to the construction of this first building are worthy of comment for those of us who today are inclined to feel that the responsibilities of modern church build and financing are too perplexing.

At this time Mount Airy was a small country village with a population of not more than 500 people. When the few interested converts began to consider building a house of worship, the great problem was money and the source from which the money would come. After much public prayer, planning and discouragement, Sam Greenwood, a public spirited citizen, who at that time was not particularly conspicuous for his religious zeal, got up in the meeting and said, “Gentlemen, above the town a short way, I own a large tract of pine timber. If you men will have the trees cut and sawed into lumber, I will donate it and it will be all the lumber you will need to build your new church house.”

Thus with the first steps taken, Bob Dick Galloway, James Greenwood, and Charles Whitlock each contributed one hundred dollars to pay for labor and materials which they themselves could not perform nor provide. Mr. Galloway gave the lot on which to build, a knoll overlooking the town, and took charge of the logging and lumbering operations assisted by the other willing hands.
Funds ran low, however, and those most interested were obliged to make further donations. A large number of generous men and women contributed many small donations, so that on August 9, 1879 the small church was completed and ready for the formal installation of Rev. C.C. Haymore as pastor.

The organization of this church was in a sense unique in that the day it was organized and founded the membership had at its disposal a new and modern church building completed and paid for. The name given this infant organization was the Mount Airy Baptist Church of Christ. Sixteen persons, most of them coming from the White Plains Baptist Church and other nearby sections, formed the charter membership.

The newly organized church began holding services two Sundays a month. Soon a Sunday School was organized and sessions were held each Lord’s day.

For many years progress was slow and the pastor was greatly handicapped in his work by lack of funds. The records do not show the early salary, but in 1882 it was $37.50 yearly; in 1884, $52.50. In 1886 his salary was $85.50, and at the close of that year the church was behind $17.25 in paying even this small sum. About this time the Baptist State Convention began to contribute a small amount annually to the support of the church. This support was continued until 1891.

From the beginning small donations were made annually to the cause of missions. At this time the anti-mission sentiment was particularly strong in this section and caused a drawback in financing the Church’s growth. A large element, both inside and outside the church, felt that salvation was free, and therefore, it was wrong to pay preachers and missionaries for their services. Hence our pioneer preachers were forced to labor for little or no pay, depending on support largely from their own resources or the unrecorded generosity of friends and relatives.

The old original church building had two entrances, one for women, and another for men. Running down the center of the middle section of benches was a six inch board for the purpose of separating male and female worshipers. There was a tradition that often times young couples would come early to church, separate at the entrance, and hasten inside to occupy adjoining pews with only the thin board between them. This practice probably scandalized the church officials and perhaps gave rise to some disturbances in the conduct of worship. Also for many years male and female members of the church were recorded on separate pages of the church book. Only male members were supposed to participate in the monthly business meeting and were required to be present or show just cause for their absence. For some years the church had a policy of dismissing from the fellowship any members whose conduct was unbecoming one professing the Christian religion. The list of grievances was long and somewhat nebulous.

At this time women in the church—as in the business and political world—had to fight for places of usefulness which today they occupy. In 1887 they began to actively seek ways to be useful and to serve in the Kingdom of God. With missionary enthusiasm
sweeping over the entire country, the women of the First Church of Christ, led by the Spirit, organized a missionary society with Mrs. J.H. Blakemore as president. From the beginning of the Ladies Aid Society, the women helped with the work of the church by assessing monthly dues of ten cents from each member. Part of the money was used for missions, and part for local church needs. This brought to the church its first idea of a regular and systematic giving program. The organized women assumed the names of Ladies Benovolent Society, Ladies Aid Society, etc., but were always active under some name. They are now called Woman’s Missionary Union. As their membership grew they divided into circles in 1918, each with its own name and chairman. They formed a circle in each geographical area of town. Today these organized groups, as they are now called, make themselves quite effective in church affairs and the cause of mission.

By the early nineties the town had grown and the church activities had increased to the point that the members felt a new building was needed, and service should be held more than two Sundays per month. In 1889, $125.00 was added to the pastor’s salary. The church began to have services three Sundays a month. One year later in 1890, the Rev. L.R. Pruett was employed full time at a salary of $500.00 a year. Eighteen years after its founding, the church could afford its first full-time minister. Rev. L.R. Pruett served the church until 1895. In 1895 the Rev. J.H. Lambeth served, followed by R. Dan Haymore. Rev. A.R. Love was called July 19, 1901 and resigned one year later. He was followed by Rev. J.M. Hamrick who stayed a very short while, followed by Rev. A.L. Betts who resigned in 1904.

The church struggled on until the time came when a larger building was an apparent necessity. Under the ministry of pastors who were men of God, the congregation and Sunday School had grown steadily. To lead in the enterprise of constructing a new building, the church called a man of great vision, the Rev. J.E. Smith. Total expenditures for the year 1905 were $1,003.67, yet despite this fact, at the November business session the church leaders decided to build a church house at a cost of $25,000.00. In 1906 work was begun on the granite structure which is now known as the Sunday School rooms. When financial depression of 1907 followed, work on the new building was forced to a halt.

While work on the church was at a standstill, Rev. Smith went into the factory district of the town and organized a mission there. The original plan was for it to be sponsored jointly by the different denominations of the town, but later some of the churches decided to withdraw and give the work to the Baptists. The Baptists accepted the obligation and somehow managed to carry on the mission. Because of the generosity of Mr. R.L. Haymore, this venture became what is now known as Haymore Memorial Baptist Church.

Once again work on the new church was begun, and the outside walls were finished. By this time Dr. E.T. Carter had become pastor of the church, and it was largely due to his abilities as a mechanic and to the tireless efforts of his hands that the interior of the chapel or prayer meeting room was finished and occupied in 1910. Dr. Carter
suggested that the old church house be converted into a parsonage for the ministers to live in.

The work of renovating the old church building for a parsonage was begun by Dr. Carter, but was left for his successor, Rev. T.H. King who came in 1912, along with his family to be its first occupants. About 1929 a larger parsonage was purchased on Raleigh Avenue to serve as the pastor’s home, and the old house (formerly the old church) was converted into Sunday School rooms and later Scout rooms.

After years of struggle and of sacrifice, the new granite church was completed and dedicated in the latter part of 1912. Dr. Walter N. Johnson preached the dedication sermon. A debt of $6,000.00 was being carried on the personal notes of leading members of the congregation. The notes were to run over a period of six years, but the last one was retired at the end of the fifth year.

On April 3, 1921 the Rev. Eugene I. Olive became pastor of the new church. There was a large Sunday School attendance which filled all the available space. There were officer and teacher training courses for Sunday School and BYPU. Workers were invited to come from time to time to train and organize young people. The Sunday School had a monthly teachers’ meeting. They met for supper and for training afterwards.

With the wave of expansion and enthusiasm sweeping the country, the church leaders undertook another enterprise. They decided to build a Sunday School annex which would cost $15,000.00. This was added on to the new granite structure. Finally the work was completed and all the bills were paid.

When the call was extended to the Rev. E. Gibson Davis in 1923, few realized the far-reaching effects his dynamic personality and strong preaching would have on our church and this section of North Carolina. His years of service were marked by large congregations with many converts to Christ. After five years of service he received a call of larger service and rose to be one of the greatest of Southern Baptist ministers.

Dr. I.T. Jacobs was called to the First Baptist Church on July 1, 1928, and remained until June 19, 1933. During his stay, the church grew spiritually, numerically and financially. He was a wise leader and a great booster of the Woman’s Missionary Society. The First Baptist Church, as it was by now called, observed its 50th Anniversary in Dr. Jacob’s first year here. It was a joyful occasion. Former pastors present for the celebration were: Rev. C.C. Haymore, Rev. T.H. King, Dr. E.T. Carter, Rev. E.I. Olive and Rev. E. Gibson Davis. Many others were present who had been members of the church or Sunday School.

The Rev. J.R. Johnson came to minister to the church in 1933. This was at a time when the church was feeling heavily the effects of the depression. Salaries had been cut back due to lack of funds. Rev. Johnson was faithful in his service and sympathetic in his ministry.
Dr. Walter L. Johnson came to this church November 1, 1935. He was an earnest, enthusiastic worker and had many suggestions which would further improve the church. Through his leadership the church and Sunday School continued to grow and he requested that an assistant be secured. After much discussion and prayer, David Mashburn was employed as an educational director at a salary of $1,200 per year.

Dr. Johnson resigned his work on August 1, 1938 to go to Mexico City, Mexico to work for the Foreign Mission Board Seminary of El Paso. This left Mr. Mashburn in charge of all church services. He was assisted for a while by Dr. Risner as an interim pastor.

Rev. Albert S. Hale came to the church January 1, 1939. Through his very capable leadership the church made great progress in its work for the cause of Christ. A church organ was installed and dedicated on April 26, 1939, with a recital by Mr. Thompson, head of the Music Department of Woman’s College of Greensboro, North Carolina.

In 1943 Dr. R.K. Redwine was called to serve as pastor, and this he did most effectively during a period of great stress brought about by World War II. He put the church on a strong financial basis through the co-operative program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In May of 1948 the church voted to extend a call to the Rev. R. C. Paulette. This call he accepted and he preached his first sermon on July 11, 1948. Miss Sarah Lee Hegler (Mrs. Ed McGee) assumed duties as Pastor’s Assistant on September 1, 1948.

The church had felt a need to expand for some time and finally acquired the Haymore property adjoining the present property on the north side. In 1950 the old house on the property was remodeled and used for a short time as Sunday School rooms. On July 29, 1951, the church in special session voted to proceed with its extended building program which had long been contemplated and needed. On April 23, 1952, ground breaking ceremonies were held and Mrs. S.M. Inman, the oldest living member of the church, turned the first spade of earth. The cornerstone laying was celebrated on July 4th, in keeping with the church tradition of cornerstone laying for the older church buildings. In 1952 another tract of land lying on the north side of the present property known as the Sydnor property was acquired by the church. Construction proceeded and the granite educational building was dedicated the week of March 1-6, 1953, with seven former pastors in attendance to help with the celebration.

In the early part of 1951, the church agreed to take under its care a mission church, Pleasant View, located in the Sulphur Springs area. Sunday School teachers and leaders went from the First Church and helped the new congregation to become an established church. It later became an independent church April 17, 1955.
When the Rev. Paulette was extended a call to a pastorate in Staunton, Virginia, the church extended a call to the Rev. Preston Taylor who came September 27, 1955. He moved into a temporary parsonage as the old one on Raleigh Avenue had been sold and a new one was under construction. During his ministry another piece of property lying somewhat behind and to the east of the present church property, was acquired by the church to be used for parking.

Rev. Taylor was extended the honor of becoming associate pastor to Dr. T.F. Adams of First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, and feeling that this was in accordance with God's will, he left in August of 1961.

The pulpit committee recommended that the church extend a call to Rev. Kenneth B. Wilson, and he came to the church in January of 1962. Rev. Wilson was a dynamic person with a great vision of the church becoming larger and more effective. It was during this time that the church had its highest number attending Sunday School, 775, and attained its highest church membership of 1105 on roll in 1963. He challenged each person to live up to his potential service for the Lord.

The First Baptist Church again branched out to extend help to another mission church, Eastside Mission on Riverside Drive. Financial aid as well as willing workers were supplied by the church.

At this time the church called Mr. Mel Anderson as its educational director, and for the first time a full time minister of music was also employed. A kindergarten ministry was begun, using the church facilities. Rev. Wilson's zeal and a Forward Program resulted in formulating plans for the construction of a larger sanctuary, as the present one was becoming too small and somewhat antiquated. A church plan was adopted and work was begun on the plan for a new sanctuary, made of granite in keeping with the other buildings. Rev. Wilson found it necessary, due to his health, to resign August 30, 1964.

It was decided on March 14, 1965 to call the Rev. James Lee Powell, Jr. of Houston, Texas to serve the church as pastor. Rev. Powell was a young man originally from North Carolina. He came at a difficult time with new church plans already begun by others. He performed his duties well and the new sanctuary was completed and dedicated October 6, 1968. It is a spacious sanctuary with an imposing façade of granite, guarded over by a bell tower topped by a cross which reminds all that God gives eternal life to all who accept Him by faith. Rev. Powell terminated his ministry here in 1969 when he accepted a position as Secretary with the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

In the year of 1970 a call was extended to the Rev. J.L. Bryson who served with enthusiasm and love to an ever growing and changing congregation. He ministered to the congregation well, but due to bad health he had to resign in 1978.
In the more recent years there have been many persons who were called by the church to fill jobs that were created by increased membership and to lessen heavy work loads. Some of them not previously mentioned are: Ministers of Education Mr. Alfred Stanley, Mr. Hershel Adams, Mr. Stan Howell. Current Minister of Education and Youth and also Associate Pastor is Mr. Jerry Meeks.

There are people who have gone out from this church into the ministry and other related vocations for which the church is proud and grateful. They are: Rev. John Marion, Dr. G.A.Martin, Rev. Robert Loftis, Rev. Oscar Haywood, Rev. E.F. Lovill, Rev. Arthur Decant, Rev. Richard Wynne, and Rev. Bert Wood.

Currently the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy is seeking a pastor who will help begin the next 100 years of history.

The one hundred year history of the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy has been one of successes and many disappointments. Hard work, dedication, and the love of God and fellow man have made this history what it is. One is aware that the successes of the church can not be measured in its physical acquirements, its budget or its numbers on roll, but rather in the place the church has in the hearts of all who know and love it. Many dedicated and faithful people are no longer here, but their deeds of service and love shall always live. It is those people who have made this history of the First Baptist Church. May the present membership gladly take up the task begun by those faithful sixteen people 100 years ago to bring the Kingdom of God to all mankind.
On March 25, 1887, the Ladies’ Benevolent Society of the First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina, began with the chief purpose of “aiding the church in its work—both spiritually and financially to help the poor and sick, and to bring the poor children into Sunday School.” Those that felt able were to contribute as much as ten cents a month. Mrs. J.M. Matthews had the distinct honor of being the first president of a group that would begin weaving the bright colors of the love of God throughout the unique pattern of history for the First Baptist Church as a whole. Pastor C.C. Haymore, along with eleven charter members, was present at the first meeting, and the first major undertaking was to have the church painted. A “feast” sponsored by the society brought in $39.30 for that project.

“Afflictions which God saw fit to send upon the town” and inclement weather kept the society from meeting at various times; nevertheless, the group grew not only in size but in its outreach to those in need of a Christian spirit.

Two years later, on March 18, 1889, the ladies changed the name to a missionary society, and although a major focus remained improvement of the church and grounds, they began to send money to a missionary in China.

Usually, the society met in homes of the members, and the program consisted of a member reading the scripture, singing, and prayer. They served refreshments which almost always included coffee with whipped cream or tea.

It was this small band of spirited ladies who paid for work done at the church: $.75 on one occasion for a gravel walk from the street to the door; $1.50 for digging a grave; $.75 for a case enclosing a baby’s coffin. In February, 1890, they adjourned the meeting early so they could go and select oil lamps for the church for which they paid $10. They met to clean the church and paid for papering, as well as carpet and curtains. A portion of the money from an oyster supper was used to buy a curtain for the pulpit and paint for the baptistry. They spent $45 to cover chairs and then fixed the windows “so it wouldn’t rain on them.” They were ingenious at raising money: Once they received $1.25 for hay mowed on the church yard.

As the ladies became more missionary minded, they began to reach out to neighboring churches. They gave Walnut Cove $5 to help with the framing of their church, and they held a festival which raised $23 to help Brother Haymore in his church at Pilot Mountain. Money was paid out to furnish “comforts for a poor, sick woman.”
and they began to help the Baptist Orphanage at Thomasville by sending boxes of needed items such as “worsted”, socks, and money.

In 1892, the ladies decided to “take in sewing” to distribute among members to add to the treasury. The sale of “fancy work” left over from a bazaar brought in over $5, and an ice cream supper yielded $20.

By 1885, this industrious group began to send money for home missions as well as foreign missions. They were contributing $5 yearly to Rev. D.W. Herring in China. The secretary was instructed to correspond with Miss Fannie Heck, President of the first state WMU in Raleigh, as to ways of making the meetings more interesting. After that mention of her, Miss Heck was constantly referred to in letters, etc., encouraging members to remain loyal in their support of missions. She was to be a dynamic force in promoting Woman’s Missionary efforts for our state.

The first mention of a missions journal was made in March, 1896. Also, at that time, Mrs. C.C. Haymore was appointed as one of the first delegates from WMU to attend the Southern Baptist Convention. The report which she gave upon her return “filled the members here with fresh courage and zeal for the work which societies all over the South were accomplishing.”

A war in Cuba in 1897 stopped missionary work there. In January of that year a week of prayer and self-denial was observed. Each day at 1:00 p.m., the ladies were to engage in prayer. The envelope system of raising money from the entire congregation was initiated in 1901. They were called the “mite envelopes.

In 1905, a new group called “The Ladies’ Aid Society” was formed with Mrs. E.H. Wrenn as president, and the two groups continued to meet simultaneously for several years. The meetings moved to the church except during the winter months when “the church was so cold.” The programs in the early 1900’s reflected the times. For instance, in January, 1901, the subject was “The Colored People”; in February, 1909, “European Rule in Africa—Blessing or Curse?” In March, 1912, the subject was “The Evils of So Many Foreigners Coming to Our Borders”; and in March, 1916, the subject was “child labor.” Mrs. Cullen Merritt gave some interesting remarks about her visit to Cuba in 1914.

In addition to helping the Baptist Orphanage, a proposal was made in 1906 to help Mars Hill College—“a Baptist school in the mountains for the purpose of educating boys and girls.” Each member brought a useful item and the ladies prepared “a box.” The first tea to raise money for state missions made $10.50. It was “a success beyond all expectations as there was a downpour of rain.” The group voted to send all the money in the treasury (about $16) to state missions.

In 1910, Mrs. A. Finch went to Mountain View Church at Low Gap to organize a new WMS, and Ethel Lowe became the leader for the Girls Auxiliary. She married J.E.
Cockerham and in 1915 moved to Mount Airy where she served as G.A. leader in our church. She has been an active member since that time.

The needs of people everywhere were great, and the ladies "yearned for a great number in the church to help them in the work," so they began to canvas the church membership to try to enlarge the society. The ladies were constantly being urged by the pastor to visit more (especially the poor and the sick), and they often received pleas from Miss Heck urging them not to fall behind in contributing to the great cause of missions. In 1911, there were only eleven Southern Baptist missionaries in all of Africa.

On September 9, 1912, the annual meeting of the Associational WMU was held in our church. It was reported as "a good meeting with all arrangements perfected and the meeting well-rendered."

The first mission study class was held in 1912, and in November of that year, Mrs. E.H. Wrenn and Mrs. Joe Belton were appointed to write on the subjects: "The Liquor Evil" and "Religious Indifference." These were to be read at the State Methodist Union Service.

The year 1912 closed with twenty-seven members on roll with an average attendance of eight. Gifts included $10.00 to foreign missions, $21.85 to home missions, and $20.00 to state missions.

In January of 1915, the society voted to use as a mission study, a book by Fannie Heck, entitled In Royal Service. Also at that meeting, it was suggested that members visit (by two’s) the foreign people at the Quarry and hold prayer services and persuade them to attend church.

On October 11, 1915, all members present subscribed to the Royal Service magazine, and in December a "much afflicted family was given a pounding for Christmas."

In addition to the meeting of the missionary and aid societies, in 1916, it was decided to have a mission study class every Monday afternoon. March 16 was set aside as Missions Day and a "thank offering" taken. A great day was reported with an offering for the mountain schools and home missions of $20.20. In April ten members volunteered to give one afternoon each week or two for visiting in the interest of the church. The following month thirty-eight visits were reported. In February of 1917, the ladies began to work toward helping with a Building and Loan fund. At the same time, they sent boxes of old clothes to Red Springs for them to sell to get money to help build a church.

The first missionary circle was organized on South Main Street by Mrs. E.H. Wrenn in October of 1917. It was appropriately named the Wrenn Circle for its founder and to distinguish it from the W.M.S of the church. This was just the beginning of a concept to enroll ladies in all areas in a contributing missions group.
It was one of these meetings, in the home of Mrs. McCain, that Mrs. Jessie Morris attended as a visitor. Mrs. Morris recognized a special quality among the ladies that she wanted in her own life. She invited the ladies to have their next meeting with her and it was there—in her own home and her second W.M.S. (circle) meeting—that she was converted. Later in 1932, when the Morris’ home burned, the W.M.S. gave a shower to help relieve the loss of all their belongings. The family moved to Mrs. Morris’ father’s farm, across the Virginia line, and while there, attended Mount Carmel Church. When Mrs. W.A. Jackson and Mrs. J.C. Hill went to Mount Carmel to help organize a W.M.S., Mrs. Morris, having attended meetings in Mount Airy, was asked to be the leader. Later, her family moved back to Mount Airy, joining First Baptist Church once again. She has been a member ever since.

It was in May of 1919 that a memorial fund was established in the state in memory of Fannie Heck. That was also the year that the Southern Baptist Convention found itself in dire financial difficulty. The “Million Dollar Fund” was established in which it was hoped to get 100,000 people to pledge to give a dollar a year for ten years. This fund was heavily supported by our members and the drive was so successful throughout the convention that the convention got on its feet and never allowed itself to get in that situation again.

As the WMU grew, so did its commitment to educate the total church family about missions, and by 1920 there was an active organization of Sunbeams, Girls’ Auxiliary, and Royal Ambassadors; and plans were being made to organize a Young Women’s Auxiliary. (This was accomplished in June, 1921.)

A letter of appreciation was read at the meeting in January, 1921, from “our student at Oxford (who was studying to be a missionary) for our aid toward her education.” In personal service, Mrs. A.G. Webb did some sewing and otherwise looked after some children in distress. For four years, Mrs. C.W. Taylor was the sole support and looked after “an old woman with no other means.” In February, 1921, money was given to send to the starving children of Europe, and in May, a collection ($8.25) was sent to starving China. In December the regular program was dispensed with to take up urgent matters. The pastor brought a plea for the Russians who were “in such great need.” As a result, the entire church contributed to a “bundle day” in January of 1922 and sent a box of clothing to Russia.

Much emphasis was placed on personal service, and the ladies kept personal service records, making reports at each meeting. Efforts were made to visit the White Plains and Flat Rock churches to see what could be done to help them organize a WMS. When the WMU Training School requested fruit, fifteen members willingly pledged one quart each. In November and December of 1922, the ladies hemmed forty-one linen napkins for the Baptist Hospital and provided for two families in need. The following personal service report for the society as a whole was given in February, 1924, by Mrs. A.G. Webb:
199 visits to the sick and shut-ins 3 glasses of jelly
146 hours of nursing 1 quart of apple butter
124 trays to the sick 7 visits to the jail and county home
7 quarts of fruit juice 15 rolls of paper
172 quarts of milk 1 testament
86 garments

On April 24, 1924, Miss Elizabeth Lovill reported on the annual meeting at Goldsboro where it was decided that the circle plan would be carried out in all the societies, and at each meeting of the WMS a different circle would have charge of the program. Four circles, in addition to the Wrens, had already been organized in our church in 1922: the Olive, Nannie M. Brower, Maggie Nutt Herring, and Fannie Heck. Also, an emphasis toward standardization of the societies was begun across the state. The circles enlarged upon the personal work being done, and it was called community missions.

In December of 1924 two quilts were sent to the orphanage, two outing gowns to a sick woman, two pair of pajamas to the hospital in China, two bushels of apples to the orphanage, and a box of clothing to the Mountain School at Bostic.

At the January meeting in 1925, the thirty-five members present discussed ways and means of combining the Missionary Society with the Ladies’ Aid Society (formed in 1905). It was voted that each circle would act as “mother” to one of the youth organizations. In January of 1925 dues were raised from ten to fifteen cents a member which went for local work. The WMS also voted to pay $2.50 a week toward a choir director for the church, and they sent $10.00 a month to Miss Midkiff from Flat Rock who was attending school at Buie’s Creek. A committee was appointed to look after the purchase of shrubbery for the church lawn.

In August of 1926 the associational report revealed that the WMS of the First Baptist Church had given $2,449.71 to all causes—missionary, hospital, orphanage, building fund, parsonage, and Christian education.

The Society ordered two gross of flavoring in 1927 to be sold at ten cents a bottle. In September, Mrs. L.P. Wrenn announced that her circle was planning a bazaar at Christmas and asked other circles to join. In December, the group cleared $129.29 from a turkey supper combined with the bazaar.

The group discussed financing the publishing of a church bulletin and gave $25.00 toward enlarging the kitchen. In July of 1928 Mrs. Jacobs, wife of the new pastor, was present when they voted to limit meetings to one and a half hours. (An added note to reveal how times have changed: Dr. Conduff was paid $8.00 for a tonsil operation on Margie Thomas. Her mother had died when she was nine; her father was sick and the WMU reached out to a child who later married, and along with her family has been a loyal member of FBC through the years.)
Two resolutions were adopted at the September meeting in 1928: (1) Our circles do not sponsor picture shows; (2) Refreshments will be served at the general meetings—(One circle will give the program and another be responsible for refreshments.) The society gave $100 toward the purchase of a new parsonage, and in October, 1928, a new circle was formed for young business women. There were nineteen members, and Mrs. Marshall Fowler was chairman.

Programs of special interest included one on YWA work given by a recent graduate of Meredith College (June, 1928), Miss Alma Webb. In March, 1929, Mrs. R.R. Jackson presented the program as if being broadcast over Station WMS of FBC. It focused on Negro churches around Mount Airy and a special feature was a special presentation by Mrs. L.P. Wrenn of “The Creation” by a black poet, James Weldon Johnson. Special music on many occasions was presented by Mrs. J.S. Bray, soloist, accompanied by Mrs. J. C. Hill at the piano.

In May 1929, Dr. Jacobs gave a review of the Southern Baptist Convention in Memphis in which he reported that the WMU was the most progressive organization in the Southern Baptist Convention (composed at that time of eighteen states). North Carolina was third that year in organization of new societies; third in the number of tithers; first in special prayer observation for home, state, and foreign missions; had a larger number of WMU members than any other state in the convention; and was fourth in total contributions. Over three million dollars was given by the women in the eighteen states across the convention.

When the church was given the opportunity of placing a name over the door of a room furnished by the Society for the Baptist Hospital, it was unanimously decided to honor the name of Nannie M. Brower. A new method was used for dividing the circles: all names would be put in a ballot box and drawn by the circle chairmen.

In December of 1929, it was reported that our Society made the Standard of Excellence for the year. A new constitution stated: “the object of the Society shall be to stimulate a mission spirit in women and young people of the church—through prayer, increased knowledge of the Bible, study of missions, and systematic contributions to various objects fostered by Baptist Woman’s Missionary Union of the state. It will further be the object to see to the religious training of the children through the young people’s organizations.” At that time, there were two active G.A.’s, an R.A., Sunbeams, a Y.W.A., and five circles with an enrollment of 94. Some of the men of the church were becoming involved in R.A. work. Mentioned were Mr. J.E. Stimpson, Claude Swanson, Dr. P.W. Green, and Lewis Webb (1932).

The ladies were so enthusiastic that even in winter months, it was not rare for forty members to be present at the general meeting. It was decided in February, 1930, to give a banner to the circle with the largest number at the general meeting, and I’m not sure how this was accomplished, but in April, 1931, the Maggie Nutt Herring Circle won
by six-sevenths of a member, and another time the Fannie Heck won by one-eight of a member.

The switch away from dues to a free-will offering was made in 1931; however, it obviously did not work, for dues were reinstated in January, 1932.

Names of missionaries on foreign fields were given to each circle to be responsible for correspondence and gifts. Mr. Ray of the Foreign Mission Board suggested that the gifts be sent through them due to the heavy duty on the gifts before the missionaries could receive them.

The year 1932 showed a very active WMS: five circles with an average attendance of sixty-six. The four junior organizations continued to be active with each contributing to the cooperative program, home missions, and the Baptist Hospital. Dr. Jacobs often met with the WMS urging them to work toward getting absent members back to church and to seek out newcomers, and, if Baptist, invite them to church.

The ladies also continued their efforts in the home church by continuing to give $100 a month to the Building Fund. They sponsored socials for new church members, kept a supply of vanilla flavoring on hand, had bake sales, read mission books, and took tests on them to keep up with their Standard of Excellence. They furnished baby layette sets for the Health Department, and at the request of Mr. Earl Wray and Mr. J.W. Hylton, furnished refreshments for a social to arouse interest in the church choir. There was even a "Cook Room Chairman" who announced at the December, 1932, meeting that "all pots and pans are in their proper places." They collected soap wrappers for Meredith College and had charge of arranging flowers for the church.

Total visits in 1933 included 843 to the needy, church members, strangers, Baptists with letters elsewhere, shut-ins, sick (home and hospital), and the county home and jails. Total hours of relief work amounted to 469. Quilts and quilt scraps were given to the county home. Seventy-one pieces of linen were given to the Baptist Hospital along with ninety-eight jars of jellies and preserves. There were 187 baskets of flowers given to the sick. Work among the Negroes included one Sunday School organized, as well as literature and hymn books furnished. Total contributions for the year exceeded $2,044.00. Out of 400 church women the WMS had 105 enrolled with an additional 150 in young people’s organizations.

That year (1933) would be difficult to surpass; however, 1934 produced additional efforts. Support was given to a missionary in Romania, and through visitation fourteen new members were added in only three months. Personal service throughout 1934-1936 remained a major thrust and in addition to being responsible for one of the youth organizations, each circle sponsored a missionary organization in various churches in the area: Virginia Street Colored, Antioch, State Mountain, White Plains, and Flat Rock.
The year 1937 began with a "get acquainted" social honoring the church’s first educational director, David Mashburn and his wife. The WMS even helped David buy a car so he could be more effective in his work. Each circle was assigned a month in the new year to provide some special service to the jails and county home. The circles took on the responsibility of serving supper each Wednesday night to the Sunday-school officers and teachers. A very special black man aided the ladies with their cooking. His name was __________ Roberts and he was an excellent cook and baker. During this year $100 was given toward the support of NeWa Chaai, a native pastor in Wuchow, South China. He worked with Rev. Rex Ray, whom the Society was already supporting as a missionary.

Several young people who added a "special touch" to the program in 1937-1938 were Christine Webb, Barbara Wrenn, Jimmy Harrison, and Billy Edwards.

During 1938-1939, the ladies in the WMS continued their enthusiasm for missions and remained loyal in the support of the church as a whole. On January 15, 1939, they appropriately gave the church a kitchen shower, for two days later they would be entertaining the new pastor and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. Albert Hale. They also reached out to other churches helping to sponsor societies at Fancy Gap, Low Gap, White Plains, New Bethel, Highland Park, Antioch, and Calvary. A note from the February meeting in 1939 indicated that Miss Annie Armstrong had died. On Friday, May 6, 1939, the YWA honored the ladies of the WMS with a tea in recognition of the Golden Jubilee of our organization.

Later that year the circles held cottage prayer meetings before the revival in June, and much activity centered on cleaning the church, buying carpet, buying song books and the "janitor situation." In December discussion resulted in setting aside all Mondays to church work: first Monday, circle meeting; second Monday, general meeting; third Monday, visitation; fourth Monday, WMS council meeting.

During the years 1940-1945, the world situation was reflected in work being done for the Red Cross and in devotionals focusing on prayers for our men in the service on land, sea, and in the air. The various circles sent Christmas cards to all our boys in the service. A program in May, 1945, was in honor of all the boys in the service and their mothers. Twenty-six pictures of the boys were arranged on a table and the mothers of each told who they were and where they were serving. They also helped with Veteran’s nights.

Dr. R.K. Redwine was the new pastor in 1943, and in that year, Mrs. W.A. Jackson from our Society had the distinct honor of being named Associational Superintendent of the WMU.

During the series of revival services in 1946 the ladies were asked to entertain the visiting minister in their homes by providing meals. In October, the WMS program was presented by two of the men of the church: Ted Reece and James Bray on the subject:
"Preparing to Build." In June, 1946, our WMS honored Mrs. R.K. Redwine (our pastor’s wife) with a tea in recognition of her new state office with WMU.

In 1947 circles were asked to contribute to a camping fund for young people and to collect clothing for the World Relief Fund. They were also taking turns making favors for hospital trays and teaching mission study books within each circle. Mrs. J.S. Bray presented the WMS with a silver punch bowl and cups to be used on special occasions. Total contributions for the year were $3,138.48.

Early in 1948, Mrs. Redwine wrote the WMS a letter of appreciation for the farewell party and gift. A few months later, it was announced the WMS would be entertaining the new pastor and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. Carrington Paulette, at a reception on May 8, 1948. As pastor’s wife, Mrs. Paulette played a very active role in WMS.

In August of 1948 a polio ban on all youth gatherings prevented the young people’s organizations from meeting. In November, 1948, Sarah Lee Hegler, the new pastor’s assistant, had charge of the program. Sarah Lee became active as YWA leader and carried the girls to Camp Caswell the following summer. A year later, Sarah Lee announced plans to marry a Mount Airy boy, Edward Lee McGee, Jr., and they are still (1986) members of First Baptist Church. The WMS entertained for Sarah Lee with a tea at the C. Binder’s, and many of the circles gave showers for her.

The yearly report for 1948 showed another increase in contributions. In addition to a box for overseas relief valued at $300.00, the total to all causes was $3,520.02. Of that amount, $160 was given to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. (My, how we’ve grown!)

In 1950 Rev. Paulette asked the WMS for support for the Sunday evening services and prayers for the Sulphur Springs mission. It was also that year that Mrs. W.A. Jackson, president, asked the circles to help sponsor the radio program, "The Surry Baptist Hour."

The local nurses were honored by the WMS with a reception at the parsonage as an “endeavor to let others know we love and care for them.” It was so well received that for several years, it became an annual event. In December, 1950, the YWA’s, under the direction of Sarah Lee McGee, presented the December program with the theme, “Gifts for the Christ Child.” Dolores Mills was soloist.

The year 1951 brought new avenues of service when circle chairmen were asked to secure help for Bible Schools to be held in the country churches. Each circle was also responsible for one day’s refreshments for our own Vacation Bible School. Later in 1951 Mrs. R.R. Jackson gave an interesting program on visits to great cathedrals, abbeys, and churches during her tour of Europe. It was in October, 1951, that the society voted to join the Mount Airy Chapter of the United Council of Church Women with dues of two cents per member.
A week of dedication services for the new educational building was held in March, 1953. To focus on this, Rev. Paulette gave a program to the WMS on: “A Larger Usefulness for the New Building.” Under the direction of Mrs. Lois Weldon and Mrs. Lena Loflen, the Sunbeams were very active in 1953 with forty-six members attending.

Rev. Paulette encouraged our ladies to become more interested in and better informed about our Baptist work by subscribing to The Biblical Recorder to each home. Of interest to some would be that the Associational Meeting of WMU was held at Green Hill School house on February 23, 1954. (I didn’t realize it was still in use at that time.)

Suggestions were made in February for starting a church library, and the WMS played an active role in planning for the church’s Seventy-Fifth Anniversary celebration. This was also the time it was decided that the WMS year would run from October through September rather than January through December.

In September of 1955 it was noted that there were thirty-five churches in Surry Association with no WMS organization. It was suggested that we at First Baptist make a strong effort to encourage more of them to organize.

It was also at this time that the Paulette’s relinquished their ministry with us. In appreciation for the dedication with which they had served (and especially Lovina who had taken part in almost every endeavor), they were presented a gift of two salad forks in their sterling silver.

A ‘coronation” service for G.A.’s was held in May, 1955. In July of that year, the WMS voted to put flowers in the church on the Sunday following the passing of any member of WMS. A new pastor, Preston Taylor and his wife were welcomed at a tea in October, 1955.

The WMS voted in 1956 to accept the church’s offer to finance literature and entertainment for the WMS up to $200. (Now in 1986, we are one of few churches where the WMS is supported through the church budget.) The Industrial Treasury would be retained for flowers and miscellaneous expenses.

A poster contest on alcoholism was sponsored among the young people with prizes being expenses paid to summer camp. The Prayer Chairman, Mrs. A.G. Webb, began the practice of inviting shut-ins to participate in an Intercessory Prayer League for missionaries and during the special weeks of prayer. It was also voted to send Royal Service to each shut-in. They were given lists of missionaries and a calendar of special events to keep them aware of prayer needs and requests. At the close of 1956, total membership in WMS was 179. Prior to the fall revival that year, Rev. Taylor asked the WMS to carry on a definite program of soul-winning under his leadership. At least two members per circle were asked to participate in a study of evangelism and to do evangelistic visitation.
At the beginning of the new year in October, 1956, the WMS could boast of an attractive yearbook compiled by Mrs. W.A. Campbell and Mrs. Lucien Wrenn, Jr. That year for Christmas, Mrs. Otis Oliver asked the WMS ladies to dress dolls for the Salvation Army. This was a successful endeavor which the ladies embraced with love and pride. (I remember dressing one, myself!) An amendment to the by-laws before the year ended stated that officers would be elected every two years rather than each year.

Mrs. J.S. Belton, president in 1957, began her term with the practice of having a prayer at each general meeting for those members of the society having birthdays that month. Since the idea was still relatively new, it was needful to continue to stress giving “through the Cooperative Program.”

“Queen for a Day” was initiated in January, 1958, to encourage attendance at general meetings. The circle chairman with the most members at the general meeting would be “Queen for the Day.” If a chairman was named Queen three times, she would receive a special pin. If a chairman could boast of having the most members present more than any other circle throughout the year, Mrs. J.S. Belton would present a book in her honor to the library. Four members were honored for being present at every general meeting in 1958: Mrs. R.F. Butner, Mrs. C.W. Taylor, Mrs. Roscoe Stewart, and Mrs. Frank Longest. They were presented a book, Life’s Little Extras.

Meetings in 1959-60 would be held at 10:00 a.m. in the months of January, April, June, July and September. During November, February, May, and August, meetings would be on the second Monday night at 7:30 p.m. This was done so the night circles would be able more actively to participate in the general meetings and present some of the programs. In March and December there would be no general meeting except for special services during the Week of Prayer.

Each circle was to be in charge of soul-winning visitation for one month out of the year. That year (1959-1960) the eight-year-old Sunbeams became World Friends. Total membership in 1959-1960 was 246 (83 in young people’s organizations). There were 195 members contributing through the Cooperative Program (fifty tithers reported). Finally, the “cooperative way” had caught on!

“Eyes for the Needy” was a well-received and successful project in 1960. Mrs. Porter Cox reported a great need for old eye glasses among people in other countries. The circles also contributed toward the purchase of medical kits for refugees. The ladies were encouraged to take advantage of our well-equipped library and in keeping with this idea, the library would be open after all general meetings.

The Grace McBride YWA was organized at the hospital’s home for young nurses under the leadership of Mrs. Oren Bradley. Eighteen nurses attended. Also during 1960, the G.A.’s received advanced recognition. In social activities, Miss Lyna Baker, church secretary, was honored with a farewell party and gift of silver candlelabra before her wedding.
The Blue Ridge Hotel was the scene of a Dutch luncheon of the United Church Women in 1961, and plans were made for an Improvement Fund for the parsonage of the associational missionary. In May, the WMS relinquished the duty of furnishing flowers for the sanctuary to a standing church committee for that purpose.

The WMS was kept busy during the next few years entertaining for retiring staff members: Mel and Barbara Anderson (1964), Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Wilson (1965), Betsy McGee (1965).

When the Baptist World Alliance was held in Miami in June of 1965, Mrs. Isaac Jones, Associational WMU Director, and Mrs. Oren Bradley, wife of our associational missionary, were aided in their efforts to attend. Upon their return, they gave an exciting report to our society. Also when Mrs. Isaac Jones retired from her duties as Associational WMU Director after serving for thirteen years, our society voted to give $25 toward a special gift to honor her.

In 1966, the council recommended that each WMU president be given a pin and gavel guard during her term of office. The WMS was in charge of the clothing closet (located in the Junior Department), and clothes were collected for the Indian children at Cherokee. Two large boxes in excess of a hundred items were contributed.

Changes in the organizational structure of WMU work took place during 1968. It was voted to set aside present by-laws to adopt the new plan: "one in which all women can be involved in some special 'action' program of her choice." Under the new plan the WMU has four tasks. The four tasks for the WMU (which are the same for Baptist Men) were outlined as follows:

Task I -- Teach missions to our church family
Task II -- Engage in mission action and personal witnessing
Task III -- Support missions through prayer, money, gifts, support to missionary Families, creating an environment for response to missions call
Task IV -- Work with our church and denomination

There would be fewer officers and no standing committees. Three groups were established: (1) mission study groups, (2) mission prayer groups, (3) mission action groups.

Mary Rowe served as Director during this difficult year of transition, and Mrs. Oren Bradley (a state officer) was invaluable as an interpreter for the new plan. In the early seventies effort was made to encourage all Baptist women to join a group which most interested them and meeting at a time in which they could participate.

The first Monday in November of each year was designated as Women's Day of Prayer with the purpose: "to gather in small groups or large groups to remember who we are, and as God's children, love one another and show by our actions that we care for lost people and people in need."
Our Baptist Men under the leadership of Jack Loftis and Mission Action Chairman, Rachel Hill, began to work together on a survey to establish areas of interest for direct mission action in our community. Of the various areas named, more responses were made in the areas of (1) the aging, (2) drug and alcohol abuse, (3) the sick.

Enlistment and enlargement was the focus during each month of 1974. Plans were made to participate in the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Surry Associational WMU at Mount Carmel Church on April 25. Mrs. George K. Snow and Mrs. R.S. Crawford were among past presidents recognized. Also, in April of 1974, the forty-ninth anniversary of the Cooperative Program was noted with a special program and renewed emphasis.

New missions projects in 1974-1975 included: inviting the lonely into our homes for holidays, collecting clothing for the children in Bangladesh, helping with the newly established Yokefellow organization, and establishing contact with international students (especially at Surry Community College), and sending toilet articles such as shampoo to the Women’s prison in Raleigh.

Social activities for the year included hosting a mother-daughter tea for Acteens of the association and honoring the Surry pastors and their wives at a tea. On July 13, 1976, at Calvary Baptist Church, a picnic was sponsored by the Surry Brotherhood in honor of the Bradley’s sixteen years as associational missionary (and wife). The ladies contributed toward a gift for Mrs. Bradley in appreciation of her dedication and untiring promotion of all missionary efforts in our church as well as in all churches in the association and in the state.

Aims for advancement were studied and worked on during 1976-1977. Acteens were presented crowns during a morning worship service, and plans made for a Missions Study Book Readathon in which all church members were encouraged to read and learn about missions through reading.

A three-year’s emphasis was begun in 1977-78: (1) to improve the image and quality of teaching missions, (2) to encourage participation in mission study, and (3) to help women, girls, and pre-schoolers to grow and develop spiritually.

The denominational emphasis remained “Bold Missions Thrust” with the watchword: “Let the church reach out” (Isaiah 40:31). A book was presented to Rev. and Mrs. J.L. Bryson in 1978 in recognition of their loyal support to missions during their ministry.

Dr. Al Miller and Sandra brought about a renewed emphasis on the youth organizations and the total missions program. At the time they arrived during our Centennial celebration, there was only one of the young people’s organizations associated with WMU in existence: Mission Friends, under Mrs. Emily Hiatt’s leadership. Now seven years later, there are seven active groups for youth: two G.A.’s, one Acteen, two Mission Friends, and two Royal Ambassadors.
The books used for study during 1978-1979 emphasized spiritual development which in turn would encourage personal and group involvement in missionary endeavors.

Emphasis on partnerships in prayer and ministry was to be the focus of 1983. Our church exceeded its goal of $8000 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 1983. During 1984 an Acteens Prayer Retreat was held in March and a GA International Banquet in April of 1984. Several of our ladies attended the state annual WMU meeting in Fayetteville in February and the WMU Week at Ridgecrest in June.

In 1984, it was decided to change the names of the groups (originally circles) to honor various missionary couples. An enlistment-enlargement activity in October, 1984 involved the R.A.’s (who cooked hamburgers), the G.A.’s (who baked sheet-cakes), and Acteens (who decorated). A demonstration from each group explained the group’s goals. In September, the WMU sponsored a shower for Dave Quall’s new bride, Trisha, to which all ladies in the church were invited.

Mission Action plans for 1984 included supporting missionary children through the birthday calendar; support to rest homes, Surry Community Nursing Center; special remembrances to shut-ins on special holidays; support for the Baptist Home in Winston-Salem, Hope Valley, Yokefellow, Senior citizens; hospital favors; refreshments for Vacation Bible School; and ministry to the bereaved in our church.

During 1985 all groups showed steady growth and enthusiastically engaged in mission action. The women added three groups making a total of eight (plus an active Brotherhood). During the emphasis of the season of prayer for home missions, Mrs. Caleb Hill, posing as Annie Armstrong, spoke at Wednesday evening and Sunday morning services to enrich our knowledge of home missions.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal for 1985 of $8,600 was surpassed. As an added emphasis for support of this goal, Mrs. Maynard Beamer, posing as Lottie Moon, spoke at the morning worship services in December telling about her life and interest in missions. The display, created by Mrs. Mary Rowe and Mrs. Inglis Rowe, was set up during the whole month of December to encourage more interest and giving.

On January 7, 1986, the general meeting focused on the history of the WMU in our church. Excerpts from the history were presented by Sarah Lee McGee, author of the history. Christine Beamer presented a humorous skit written by her mother, Mrs. A.G. Webb (now deceased) entitled “Visitation.” Carole Kerley, president of the Baptist Women, presided.

The WMU in our church celebrated the 100th birthday of the state WMU with a birthday party on Wednesday night, January 8. As costumes from various periods in the past one hundred years were modeled, Sandra Miller told of mission highlights and events which took place in our church and state. Following the Historical Fashion Parade, the lights were lowered and Baptist Women representatives brought out trays of
cupcakes with lighted candles while the group sang, “Happy Birthday, WMU.” Later in the program Mission Friends lighted the candle on the large birthday cake. Prayer guides were given to church families (including shut-ins) to begin one hundred days of prayer culminating with the State WMU Centennial Celebration in Raleigh on April 14, 1986. Among the ladies attending from our church were: Hazel Brannock, Martha Morgan, Mary Rowe, Emily Hiatt, Sarah Howerton, Louise Crusenberry, Sandra Miller, Nancy Belton, Lynn Manchester, Carole Kerley, Patsy Shepherd, and Sarah Lee McGee.

The Associational WMU organization marked the centennial celebration with a drop-in tea on January 12, 1986. Mrs. Vivian Lowe and Mrs. Sandra Miller were co-chairman for this event.

Several unique functions characterized WMU in our church (in the past few years). Rather than circles, the ladies had the option of choosing the interest group which suited them best: prayer groups, Bible study groups, or mission action groups. New groups continued to be organized, and some were named for a missionary or missionary couple which the group continued to support with prayer, correspondence, and in other ways when needed.

Mission action now centers on meeting “real” needs that haven’t been met before including:

gifts to the Alcoholic Center for Women and Hope Valley for men
ditty bags (containing personal items) for Cross-roads Mental Health
canned goods for the Yokefellow Ministry
annual banquet for Senior Citizens
hospital favors
ministry to the bereaved
visitation to shut-ins each month
ministries to nursing centers and rest homes
women’s prison in Raleigh (tooth brushes & paste, raincoats, stamps, etc.)
Vacation Bible School, including a hot dog lunch on the last day

Mrs. Martha Morgan, WMU Director during 1986, stated: “Although I’m sure WMU in our church still has a long way to go, we are growing and improving in our concept of missions. We are providing mission services to our community, state, and world and activating a genuine concern among the women and children in our own church. One of the most important things is that we are seeing new leadership develop among the younger women which is so vital to our growth. The leaders of the young people’s organizations are doing an excellent job. The youth are attending associational meetings and camps to add depth to their commitment to missions.” Martha attended the Southern Baptist Convention WMU annual meeting in Atlanta in June.

It would indeed be difficult to exaggerate the influence that women through WMU have had in the life of the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy. Despite lean years, epidemics of flu and polio—despite wars and other afflictions, the undaunted missionary spirit has remained a constant force. Every pastor and educational director has been
entertained and felt the support of the WMU. The WMU has helped with church anniversaries and contributed in some way to almost every physical, as well as spiritual need of the church. WMU has reached beyond the scope of First Baptist Church in Mount Airy to embrace the cause of missions in our state, nation, and throughout the world.

As Nancy Curtis, Executive Director of WMU in North Carolina, stated:

The concern for missions would certainly never have reached the proportions it has attained without the constant dedication of women who continue to find fresh, alive, vital ways to present the same story. The names of organizations and methods used alter. Offices to be filled will vary, and numerical growth will experience its ups and downs. But the central purpose of Women's Missionary Union remains the same—missions. This is the rallying cry in small churches and large, rural and city dwellers, the elderly who have given a lifetime of service and the very young who are just beginning to serve (Biblical Recorder, January 4, 1986).

And so the pattern has emerged boldly and beautifully as we have seen WMU at work weaving its bright threads of love and ministry throughout these pages of living history that will continue into tomorrow with the same clear call "to go and to tell." We, of this generation, have been made keenly aware of the world, its needs, and our mission. Now, we must fulfill that mission until it is time to pass on to those who will follow us the courage, faith, and vision to spread the love and knowledge of Christ to future generations throughout the world until "every knee shall bow and acknowledge Him as Lord."

Past Presidents—WMU—First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>1887-1888</td>
<td>Mrs. J.M. Mathews</td>
<td>1928-1930</td>
<td>Mrs. F.D. Holcomb</td>
<td>1952-1954</td>
<td>Mrs. R.S. Crawford</td>
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<td>1889</td>
<td>Mrs. C.C. Haymore</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Mrs. L.P. Wrenn</td>
<td>1954-1956</td>
<td>Mrs. W.A. Jackson</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>Mrs. E.H. Wrenn</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Mrs. W.A. Jackson</td>
<td>1956-1957</td>
<td>Mrs. C.L. Johnson</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>Mrs. G.M. Booker</td>
<td>1933-1934</td>
<td>Mrs. R.R. Jackson</td>
<td>1957-1959</td>
<td>Mrs. J.S. Belton</td>
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<td>1892-1893</td>
<td>Mrs. J.H. Blakemore</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Mrs. Lester Haynes</td>
<td>1962-1963</td>
<td>Mrs. J.R. Bray</td>
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<td>1894</td>
<td>Mrs. C.C. Haymore</td>
<td>1938-1939</td>
<td>Mrs. W.A. Jackson</td>
<td>1963-1967</td>
<td>Mrs. Frank Longest</td>
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<td>1895-1897</td>
<td>Mrs. W.C. Moore</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Mrs. A.B. Council</td>
<td>1967-1968</td>
<td>Mrs. Henry Rowe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1898-1899</td>
<td>Mrs. O.T. Moore</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Mrs. Lester Haynes</td>
<td>1968-1972</td>
<td>Mrs. Oren Bradley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-1910</td>
<td>Mrs. Cullen Merritt</td>
<td>1941-1942</td>
<td>Mrs. A.B. Council</td>
<td>1972-1973</td>
<td>Mrs. Emily Hatt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911-1914</td>
<td>Mrs. W.C. Moore</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Mrs. W.M. Johnson</td>
<td>*1973-1974</td>
<td>Mrs. Emily Hatt</td>
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<td>1915-1920</td>
<td>Mrs. John Foy</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Mrs. W.A. Jackson</td>
<td>1974-1977</td>
<td>Miss Lessie Smith</td>
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<td>1920-1921</td>
<td>Mrs. W.A. Jackson</td>
<td>1945-1946</td>
<td>Mrs. J.S. Belton</td>
<td>1977-1979</td>
<td>Mrs. M.G. Stanley</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Mrs. J.C. Hill</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Mrs. W.A. Campbell</td>
<td>1984-1986</td>
<td>Mrs. Kent Morgan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926-1927</td>
<td>Mrs. George K. Snow</td>
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*Beginning here, the title was changed to Directors.
Dr. Alfred L. Miller was our new pastor as First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina began its second century on August 25, 1979. Dr. Miller, his wife, Sandra, and their two children, Donna and Steve, came to us from First Baptist Church, High Point, N. C.

At this time the parsonage on Wrenn Avenue was sold for a total of $79,099.30, and we began allowing the ministerial staff to receive housing allowances.

On November 7, 1979, a beloved and long-time servant (especially in our children’s department), Miss Elizabeth Lovill, died after injuries received in an accident as she was crossing the street in front of the church following prayer service. This was a very traumatic experience for the congregation.

It was also during 1979 that we increased our missions contributions to twenty per cent of the total church budget.

The year 1980 began with a new ministry to the migrant workers in Surry County. Each Sunday morning coffee and doughnuts were served to migrants and their employers. Afterward, Dr. Miller, with two interpreters, spoke to the migrants. This has now become a major focus for Surry Baptist Association during the summer months.

On April 9, 1980, Larry Keesler was employed as full-time organist and choir director. Mr. Keesler studied music at Moody Bible Institute and came to us from First Baptist Church, Kernersville, N.C. His wife, Becky, became a teacher at Tharrington Elementary School. Together, they have served our church faithfully in many areas. Becky has for several years, been Director of Vacation Bible School and has also made an outstanding contribution to Woman’s Missionary Union and its organizations.

Joyce Bunn (Mrs. Dana) was employed as Minister of Education and Youth in the summer of 1980. Joyce was a graduate of Appalachian State University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Her husband served in the same capacity at Central Methodist Church.

In 1981 our church began operating with a church council as the board that would make recommendations to the church body concerning major decisions affecting the life of the church. The council was to be composed of Sunday School Director, WMU Director, Chairman of the Diaconate, Ministerial staff, moderator, clerk and three members from the church at large. This system is still in effect (1990). The Diaconate was given the responsibility of serving the church family through visitation and meeting the needs of individuals and families. A fellowship committee was formed and we began
having suppers on Wednesday night at which time meetings for WMU organizations began for Baptist Young Women, Girls' Auxiliary, and Acteens. There was a total of 158 members in all of the WMU organizations including Baptist Women's groups. (It has grown to 174 members in 1989.)

A change in the constitution permitted quarterly church council and church conference meetings rather than monthly.


The youth were also very active in 1981. Two special events included a Mountain Top Retreat at Standing Stone State Park in Tennessee (July 4-12) and a trip to Ridgecrest (July 25-31). Youth Week was a highlight of the year, and a Bike-a-thon was held to raise money for St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

An audio-visual ministry to shut-ins (with help from the WMU) was begun in 1981. This enabled those who could not attend church to hear tapes of the services.

Our choir got a "dressing-up" with new choir robes in 1983.

John Crane was the first member from our church to go as a volunteer to a foreign missions field. He went to Montserrat, an island in the Caribbean, and witnessed while serving as a dentist for the people. He returned to Montserrat in the summer of 1984.

On April 4, 1984, Rev. David Qualls was called as Minister of Education and Youth. Dave came to us from Alexandria, Virginia and was single; however, before all the young ladies could get their hopes up, we found out that he was engaged to be married!

The Steele property adjacent to the new sanctuary was acquired in 1984 for additional parking space although it has yet to be made into a facility for that purpose.

Our revival in March of 1984, began with supper each night at 5:45 pm, a practical workshop at 6:30, and a service in the sanctuary at 7:30. Rev. Vic Cole was guest minister.

On August 5, 1984, our 105th anniversary and homecoming event was held with the next to be held in 1989.

In 1985 another one of our men volunteered for foreign missions. David Rowe carried his expertise as an engineer, as well as his Christian witness, to the people of Togo, Africa.
The old sign in front of the first sanctuary was removed in 1985 and was replaced with a handsome granite marker donated by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Joyce and located more appropriately in line with the newer buildings.

A time change for Sunday School and the Worship Service was begun in 1985 (9:30 and 10:45), and a study was made of the feasibility of locating a new pastor’s study on the third floor of the new sanctuary. This study was later voted on and built in 1986 at a cost of $40,093.00.

Mary Rowe became the third member of our congregation to go as a missions volunteer. In the summer of 1986, she went to Panama to witness as she showed the Ladies there how to make beautiful handcrafts. She returned to Panama in 1987 and 1988.

A Long Range Planning Committee began meeting in the spring of 1986 charged with the responsibility of determining a course of action to take our church into the twenty-first century. “The task was difficult,” says Chairman, David Rowe, “as we had to look at our church from all perspectives—examining ourselves as we really are and trying to develop a plan to take us forward. We looked at our mission as a church, our physical plant, community demographics, and many other aspects affecting our church life.” After three years of study and hard work, a plan was developed which should serve as a guide for years to come. Highlights of the plan include a charge to a building committee for developing needed space, a family ministry to help preserve our families, and an emphasis on increasing the quality of our fellowship. The Building Committee elected by the church included the following: Zack Blackmon, Chairman, Caleb Hill, Frank Longest, Sam Hennis, David Rowe, Al Miller and Larry Keesler.

Myron Kidd became our Minister of Education and Youth in July, 1986. Myron, his wife Cindy, and their two young sons, Mark and Bryan, came to us from North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and remained with us until September, 1989. One of the highlights of Rev. Kidd’s ministry with the youth was a missions trip each summer.

Dr. Steven Carreker was guest minister for the revival held May 18-21, 1986. Our Woman’s Missionary Union celebrated its centennial in 1986. A history was written by Sarah Lee McGee (Mrs. Edward) noting highlights of 100 years of missionary endeavors. The history showed that WMU has played a major role in the development of our church through the years. Our pastor’s wife, Sandra Miller, served as Centennial Chairperson, not only for 1986, but during 1987, when Southern Baptists also celebrated a centennial of WMU. The year culminated with a celebration in Richmond, Virginia. Members of our church who attended that event were Mary Rowe and Rev. and Mrs. Oren Bradley. A Birthday Party was held in our church for all those from Surry County who could not be in Richmond. Members of our congregation reflected the spirit of the occasion by wearing dress from some period during the past 100 years. Our pastor was even in full costume in the pulpit that day.
Our church ordained our Minister of Music, Larry Keesler, in October of 1987, and in January of 1988, another member of our church, Danny Culler, was ordained. Rev. Culler immediately became pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church.

In April, 1988, the church purchased a Ford, 15-passenger diesel van. The van has been enjoyed by many groups including the Youth, Senior Citizens and WMU.

Dr. Miller resigned in September, 1988, having accepted a call to Clinton, N.C. A reception honoring the Millers was held on October 23, 1988. At this time a presentation was made by the personnel committee of a large, framed, original Pat Woltz print of "Pilot Mountain." The WMU presented Mrs. Miller with a framed Pat Woltz print of "Cross Creek in the Snow" and a lighted ceramic church. These presentations were made by Sarah Lee McGee who had written poems to honor both Dr. and Mrs. Miller.

Mary Rowe took part in another volunteer missions project in 1989, this time going to Botswana, Africa. The program she brought to us after this trip brought us all closer to the missions field and helped us understand and relate more readily to what missions is all about.

Another person who has contributed to our missions involvement is a former member, Carole Dowell (Mrs. Jimmy). She goes each summer to the area that is to be the focus of the foreign missions study for the WMU and then comes back to share what she experienced in a unique mission study.

When the Millers left, the personnel committee engaged Dr. Carlton Mitchell as Interim pastor and he and his wife, Miriam, began a ministry with us that lasted eight months. Dr. Mitchell is chairman of the Department of Religion at Wake Forest University. He and his wife endeared themselves to our congregation, and he lovingly prepared us for the coming of a new minister.

A committee was nominated to serve as a Pastor Search Committee composed of the following: Ed McGee, Chairman; Chris Crusenberry, Dot Loftis (Mrs. Jack), Helen Crane (Mrs. John), and Steven Conrad. On April 1, 1989, a reception was held for a prospective pastor, and Rev. Jim Langford preached on the following day. The church unanimously called Rev. Langford, and he began his ministry with us in June. Rev. Langford and his wife, Sandra, came to us from Ahoskie, N.C. During the four months that they have been here, Jim and Sandra have already niced a special place for themselves in the hearts and lives of the members of First Baptist Church. We are expectantly moving toward a new era in our church as we celebrate this 110th anniversary.
THE REMODELING, RENOVATION, AND REPAIR
of the
OLD SANCTUARY BUILDING
First Baptist Church of Mount Airy
Written by Robert O. Poplin, Jr.
October 6, 1993

Our church’s Old Sanctuary Building was completed and dedicated in 1912, and its Sunday School Annex was completed in the early 1920’s. The Education Building was completed in 1953. The church’s present sanctuary building was completed in 1968. The following is an account of developments that led to the remodeling and rededication of the Old Sanctuary Building and of the implementing and completion of two associated projects, the construction of a new parking lot north of the present sanctuary building and the incorporation of the church.

After worship services were moved to the present sanctuary the Old Sanctuary Building’s Sunday School rooms continued to be used for Sunday School classes as in the past, and a men’s class met in the Old Sanctuary itself. After some time the Old Sanctuary was refurbished. However, not very long afterwards bad leaks developed in the roof with water literally pouring into the south tower area, and into the vicinity of the northwest entrance. At the latter place a barrel was used to catch the water. These leaks were not immediately stopped and considerable damage occurred, especially to ceilings, floors, and carpeting.

As time went on the Old Sanctuary was used less and less. It continued to be used as a meeting place for a men’s Sunday School class, and for occasional meetings, but mildew formed on the hymnbooks in the pews, and the room became musty.

The need to do something about the Old Sanctuary Building, and to improve the parking situation at the church, was noted and commented upon by succeeding Long Range Planning Committees. The church had such a committee as an ad hoc committee for some years, and in the late 1980s the committee encouraged action on these two things by the church. The property immediately north of the New Sanctuary became available and was purchased by the church for development into a parking lot, and a Building Committee was eventually appointed.

This committee, at a meeting held on July 14, 1988, with Zack Blackmon, Sr., as Chairman, and the Rev. Dr. Al Miller, pastor, Larry Keesler, minister of music, Myron Kidd, educational director, as members, worked to determine the space needs of the church to carry out its functions. Square footage needed for kitchen and dining room space, Sunday School rooms, nursery space, music ministry, and storage, plus the need for recreational facilities and for parking space, were all considered.

At a committee meeting on September 20, 1988, architect Steve Wilber met with the group to consider the possibility of meeting these needs by remodeling the Old
Sanctuary Building, i.e. gutting it and rebuilding the interior, and by adding parking spaces on the existing property of the church.

There then followed months in which the architect drew plans, these were shown to the Building Committee, changes were suggested, new plans were drawn and shown again to the committee, and the process repeated. As a result of this work the plans were definitely improved. It was decided to build the parking lot on the area immediately north of the New Sanctuary first.

In a special called meeting of the church held in the Old Sanctuary following the regular Wednesday night dinner, September 6, 1989, Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, made a presentation to the over 200 persons present. Using slides and an overhead projector, Zack unveiled plans for converting the Old Sanctuary into a Fellowship Hall, with a kitchen and rooms in the Sunday School Annex area. These plans, with the architect's drawings, which were available for examination, met with general approval. Interested members presented several suggestions for further improvements as a result of this meeting.

There were many things to be considered. If, instead of remodeling the Old Sanctuary Building it were to be torn down, members would be losing a building beloved by many for its architectural beauty, a building beloved by many because of memories of events there, and a sanctuary that is beautiful because of its shape, its ceiling, and the decorative stained glass windows. Too, a new building could cost more to build than would the proposed remodeling. Also, a new building could not be built as near the property lines as is the present structure because of changes in the building code. It seemed best, then, to remodel, renovate, and repair.

Of course there was the question of how the church could pay for such a project, and of how much it would cost. Another called session was held in the Old Sanctuary on Wednesday evening, September 20, 1989, to discuss the funding of this project. During this meeting the "Challenge To Build" method of fund raising was presented to the group by the Rev. Jim Langford, pastor, as one that could be used. There were many questions asked. Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, conducted this meeting.

It was announced on Sunday, September 17, 1989, that it was planned to vote on the Building Committee's recommendation for remodeling the Old Sanctuary Building on Sunday, October first; however, in the Newsletter of September 27th, it was announced that a number of requests had been received that the vote be delayed, and that as a result the vote would not be taken as had been scheduled.

In January, 1990, the Building Committee met with each of the adult departments on a Sunday in lieu of having the Sunday School lesson to discuss plans for an additional parking lot on the north side of the present sanctuary and plans for remodeling the Old Sanctuary Building. Zack Blackmon was the principal speaker in these meetings. The general reaction was favorable to both projects. Still, some folks were loath to see the Old
Sanctuary be made into a dining room/fellowship Hall. Too, there was a group that wanted very much for the church to have a sort of gymnasium for use by the young people of the church.

On Sunday morning, March 4, 1990, the church membership voted by secret ballot, 237 – 38, to proceed with the building of the proposed parking lot, to remodel the Old Sanctuary Building, and to put covers over some walkways.

On Sunday morning, March 18, 1990, the church voted unanimously to use the “Challenge To Build” plan, furnished by the Southern Baptist Convention, for financing this work. At the suggestion of Jackie and Sarah Houston, “Here’s Hope,” the theme being used for Baptist simultaneous revivals at the time, was made the theme for our fund-raising drive. Mrs. Louise Hill was selected to chair the drive to raise funds over a three-year period. The campaign was to begin on Sunday, May 20, 1990. On that Sunday morning in each adult Sunday School Department, the classes met as one large class for a special lesson promoting “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope.”

The Rev. Jim Langford was away on Saturday, May 19, 1990, receiving the Doctor of Ministry Degree from Drew University at Madison, New Jersey, and did not return home until after the morning worship service next day. Mark Rogers, Moderator, presided over the worship service, at which David Rowe gave a testimony and Robert Clegg, consultant for “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope,” delivered the message.

The “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” campaign really got underway with a church-wide banquet held in the Elk’s Lodge on Sunday evening, May 20, 1990. Louise Hill, chairperson, presided. Haywood Jordan rendered the invocation. After the meal Louise made some remarks and was followed by ten speakers, each of whom stepped to the microphone without introduction and spoke briefly. First of these was Robert Poplin, Chairman of the Trustees, who spoke briefly on the history of the church, and “set the tone of the meeting.” He was followed in turn by Dr. Roger Kerley, Zack Blackmon, Sr., Sam Hennis, Cindy Wilson, David Rowe, Dr. John Crane, and consultant Bob Clegg. Jackie Houston, accompanied by Larry Keesler, sang a solo. The Rev. Dr. Jim Langford, pastor, made some remarks, and Louise closed the meeting with prayer.

During the following days pledges to be paid over a three-year period were received from members toward raising funds to pay for the new parking lot, and for the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building. This fund-raising campaign was a success.

Meetings of the Building Committee with the architect, Steve Wilber, continued, usually on a monthly basis. The possibility of adding a third floor to the existing Education Building was even considered as an option. The architect suggested that the practical way to meet the need for a recreational facility was to build a separate building for this, consisting primarily of walls and a roof over a concrete slab.
On May 23, 1990, the members of the Building Committee were listed as follows:
Committee:
  Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman  House & Grounds
  Caleb Hill  Board of Trustees
  Frank Longest  Church Council
  Sam Hennis  Finance Committee
  David Rowe  Long Range Planning Committee
  Jim Langford  Pastor
  Larry Keesler  Music
  Kevin Wilson  Education

Appointed Members:
  John Brewington  Contracts & Purchasing
  Richard Loftis  Engineering HVAC
  Zack Blackmon, Jr.  Engineering Electrical/Env/Safety
  Joe Edwards  Engineering Electrical/Const/Insp
  Maynard Beamer  Governmental Coordination
  Benny Brannock  Maintenance – Housing

Caleb Hill dropped out of the committee later, and in December, 1990, was replaced by Robert O. Poplin, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Sub-Committees on May 23, 1990, were listed as follows:
  Parking Lot  Kitchen/Dining
  Zack Blackmon, Sr.  Zack Blackmon, Jr.
  David Rowe  Frank Longest
  John Brewington  Larry Keesler
  Maynard Beamer  Education
  Joe Edwards  Kevin Wilson
  Benny Brannock

  Recreation
  John Brewington
  Kevin Wilson

By June of 1990 various committees were making recommendations concerning their areas of particular interest. The Kitchen Committee had been quite active in working up plans for a new kitchen that would have the equipment needed to prepare food, and a proper serving space to serve cafeteria-style meals to those who attended the Wednesday night suppers, and to those attending meetings of the Surry Baptist Association at our church.

When the Building Committee met on October 17, 1990, it had approved the latest plans for the new parking area, and the governmental permits for its construction had been obtained. On that evening a contract was signed by Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman, with the J. G. Coram Company to construct it at a cost of $65,350.00.
Work on this project began immediately and the new parking lot was first used on Sunday, December 2, 1990. This new lot was much more spacious than some folks had expected it to be. There is an entrance into the lot off Main Street from in front of the New Sanctuary, which allows automobiles to be stopped in the driveway to let passengers out before going on to the parking area, and which can be used by a funeral procession going south on Main Street. A second entrance/exit is near the center of the north side of the parking lot, and connects with Galloway Street.

With the opening of this new parking lot members stopped parking on Main Street while attending Sunday services. This street by the church carries four lanes of traffic and is part of Business US Highway 52. It is illegal to park on a four-lane federal highway.

When the Building Committee met on December 19, 1990, members expressed their satisfaction with what had been done, and reported that church members were pleased with the new lot. The final cost for the work of the J. G. Coram Company was $77,425.00 as there had been some change orders since the original contract was signed. Members of the committee present at the meeting on December 19th were: Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman, Zack Blackmon, Jr., Joe Edwards, John Brewington, Frank Longest, Benny Brannock, Robert Poplin, Sam Hennis, Richard Loftis, Larry Keesler, Kevin Wilson, and J. T. Henson, members.

In this meeting of December 19, 1990, the Building Committee received recommendations and reports from various committees pertaining to kitchen arrangements, classroom arrangements, expansion of the basement area and for rooms to be used there, the expansion of the upstairs floor to extend over the Old Sanctuary Annex, et cetera. The architect, Steve Wilber, listened patiently to these. Later he reworked the plans to provide for that which had been requested and agreed upon, and gave an estimate of what the suggested changes would add to the cost. There had been a concern about how extending the upstairs floor over the Old Sanctuary Annex might affect the existing roof support framework, which is made of heavy timbers, but the architect assured the group that this was not a major problem.

During the following months committee members visited other churches to see their layouts, and to obtain ideas for incorporation into the plans for our church. The Building Committee met monthly. Slowly plans were drawn that incorporated changes that had been suggested and approved.

When it was first decided to proceed with the remodeling project the anticipated cost was considerably less than that which was finally agreed upon and contracted for. This was because various groups within the church were called upon to study the plans and to make recommendations for changes that they believed should be made. For example, one was the recommendation that the area beneath the Old Sanctuary be excavated so that several basement rooms could be added there. Another was that the upstairs floors of the rooms in the northwest corner of the main building and the floors of the upstairs portion of the Sunday School Annex be extended through the open space
over the Old Sanctuary Annex, thus making all these upstairs areas into one larger and more useful area. Both of these suggestions were so obviously sound that, despite their adding materially to the costs of the project, they were adopted.

Adopting these and other suggestions did add to the cost, but it gave us a more useful and spacious building. The groups with special interests, as for example the kitchen and the nursery workers, were given an opportunity to have their suggestions considered, and they were usually approved.

On January 16, 1991, it was reported in the Newsletter that the first year’s commitment to “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” was $136,846.66, and that $127,562.93 of this had been received by that date.

The Newsletter of January 23, 1991, stated that the Rev. Dr. Jim Langford had completed his first year as pastor here and that 1990 would be remembered as the year in which “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” was begun.

On Wednesday evening, April 10, 1991, at a business meeting Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, and Steve Wilber, architect, discussed changes to the original plans for the remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building recommended by various committees. Apparently, on Wednesday, May 1, 1991, in another business session, it was voted to adopt the proposed changes.

In September both General Construction Contractors and Subcontractors were invited to submit bids for the work, the Subcontractors to have their bids in to the architect, and the General Construction contractors to have their bids in to the church by 3:00 p.m. on October 22nd and October 24th respectively.

Blue Ridge Enterprises was the low bidder for the general construction, their bid totaling $1,480,815. A.Z Price was the low bidder for plumbing work, Loftis HVAC was low bidder for mechanical work, and E.P. Belk was low bidder for electrical work. Construction time was estimated at 450 days.

The church’s Newsletter #42, dated November 13, 1991, carried the announcement shown below on its front page.

**HISTORIC CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 17**
**CHURCH TO VOTE ON REMODELING**

Sometime between 11:00 and noon on November 17, First Baptist Church will be called into conference to hear the motion that it proceed with plans to remodel the Old Sanctuary Building at a cost of $1,386,779. If seconded, the church will vote on the motion. The remodeling would begin in December 1991, with the building to be complete for occupancy no later than February or March 1993.

The church voted by an overwhelming majority in May 1991, for the Building Committee to get bids not to exceed 1.5 million dollars for the remodeling. It has
acted, therefore, at the direction of the church. Do be present to hear the report of the Building Committee, and vote on the matter now before the congregation.

The pastor, in his “From the Pastor’s Pen” column, thanked those who had worked on the project. He said his sermon on Sunday, entitled “Not Equal Gifts But Equal Sacrifice,” would be based on the “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” theme used in May 1990, when the official campaign started. The sermon was based on the report of the twelve spies sent out to spy out the “Promised Land” and the reaction of the Israelites to their report upon their return, with the obvious inference that we were not to be like the naysayers in that account.

On the advice of church leaders, the congregation voted to postpone entering into a contract for the remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building until additional financial data could be gathered for the lending institutions, as required by them before offering to lend the church the money needed to finance the project. The discussion was lengthy, but was conducted in a spirit of cooperation.

It became evident in late 1991 that a more adequate plan of financing the remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building was needed. A new “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” campaign was carried out in December 1991. Members were furnished a brochure that explained why a new campaign was being made. The Building and Finance committees in a joint meeting appointed a sub-committee chaired by Mrs. Martha Morgan with John Brewington, Haywood Jordan, Richard Loftis, and Robert Poplin as members, to draft a letter asking for additional pledges from members sufficient to payoff the prospective loan for the remodeling. It suggested that effective January 1, 1992, new ten-year pledges be made by members. They could be for the same amount already pledged or more. Pledges could, of course, be altered as circumstances dictated. Brochures were to be mailed on December 8th, December 6th was to be a “Day of Prayer” for the campaign, and pledges were due in the church office by December 20, 1991.

Pledges having been received sufficiently, a Business Conference was called for Sunday, January 19, 1992. The church membership voted by secret ballot, 170-51, to adopt the motion, (composed by Robert Poplin), offered by Zack Blackmon, Sr., to proceed with the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building. Below is a copy of this most important motion:

“I move:

1. That our church accept the bid of Blue Ridge Enterprises for the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building, and of Contaminant Control for the removal of asbestos from the heating system in that building;

2. That our church contract with these companies to do this work, and that it authorize our Trustees to sign such contracts for the church;
3. That the Finance Committee be instructed to negotiate the selling of bonds to buyers, or the borrowing of money from a lending institution, as necessary for the carrying out of this project, all such arrangements to be subject to the approval of the church before closure;

4. That our church’s Trustees be authorized to sign documents pertaining to the sale of bonds, or the borrowing of money, for this project as approved by the church, and to pledge our church’s property as collateral for any such loans as necessary, for the church;

5. That the Trustees be authorized to arrange for the storage, sale, or disposal of items of used building materials and furnishings no longer needed by our church.”

The vote on the motion was by secret ballot. Jack Loftis, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Mrs. Nadine Bradley, church Clerk, and Robert Poplin, Chairman of the Trustees, served as a canvassing committee for the voting. The motion passed, 170–51, (77%-23%).

In the Newsletter of January 22, 1992, Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, announced that Contaminant Control planned to begin removing asbestos from the Old Sanctuary Building’s heating system on February 3rd, (later postponed to February 6th), and that Blue Ridge Enterprises planned to begin work on the remodeling on Monday, February 17, 1992. These announcements, of course, meant that the last day on which Sunday School classes could meet in the Old Sanctuary Building was Sunday, February 2, 1992.

On Friday, January 24, 1992, Robert Poplin, and two Mexicans he had employed, along with Jackie Houston, Custodian, and Mrs. Annie McBride, Financial Secretary, moved those church records that were stored in a closet in the Old Sanctuary Building to the south closet of the pastor’s study, in the upper east end of the New Sanctuary Building.

On Thursday evening, January 30, 1992, the Trustees visited the Old Sanctuary Building on a reconnaissance and inspection tour to see what things needed to be moved in preparation for a sale of discarded property, and what things were to be placed in storage during the remodeling work, and what things were to be carried to the places displaced Sunday School classes would be meeting in during the period of the remodeling. Trustees present were Robert Poplin, Chairman, and Maynard Beamer, Warren Simmons, Bernie Slate, and Lynnette Young; Dr. Dale Simmons was absent. Pike Electric Company volunteered to lend the church a large trailer in which to store furnishings from the Old Sanctuary Building that would not be used during the construction period but would be used afterwards -and the trailer was placed between the buildings that afternoon. Later the Trustees joined the members of the Finance Committee in the Fellowship Hall to hear a presentation by Mr. LeRoy Roberts, of American Funding, relative to the use of bonds as a means of raising funds for the remodeling project.
Following the adjournment of this meeting the Finance Committee met, and at this latter meeting Robert Poplin, Chairman of the Trustees, signed four copies of the contract with Blue Ridge Enterprises for the church. He signed the contract with Contaminant Control on February 4th.

The Trustees announced that they would sell, at public auction, property that the church would no longer wish to keep in the Old Sanctuary Building on Saturday, February 15th, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Volunteers moved classroom furnishings that were to be used from the Old Sanctuary Building to the new, temporary, classroom locations on Sunday afternoon, February 2nd, 1992.

On Monday, February 3rd, Robert Poplin, Bernie Slate, and Warren Simmons, Trustees, assisted by two Mexicans that were employed, moved furnishings that were to be sold into the Old Sanctuary, and put those furnishings that were to be stored in the trailer loaned to the church by Pike Electric Company. The Rev. David Clines, missionary of the Surry Baptist Association to Hispanics, helped communicate with the Mexicans, accompanied them to lunch, and assisted with the moving of a piano from the top floor in the afternoon.

Hymn books, pictures, teaching aids, maps, globes, easels, curtains, wastebaskets, etc., were moved from classrooms into the Old Sanctuary. The chairs and other furnishings stored in the attic were all removed. Solid-bottomed wooden chairs that were in good condition were placed in the trailer. The worn and damaged solid-bottomed wooden chairs, all the cane-bottomed chairs, a bunch of old parlor chairs, and one piano with stool were carried to the Old Sanctuary to be sold. A better piano from the upstairs assembly area was carried down the fire escape steps and taken to the New Sanctuary Building. Larry Keesler, Minister of Music, had a set of piano-moving rollers that were used in this operation.

Bernie Slate and Warren Simmons took down a number of doors, which were taken to the Old Sanctuary to be sold. Two mantels, from fireplaces in former front office rooms, were also taken loose and placed with the items for sale.

On Tuesday, February 4th, two Mexicans worked as helpers for the three Trustees. Maynard Beamer, a Trustee, worked part of the day, and suggested the taking down of some 27 sheets of paneling, which was done. These were left for use in the remodeling work. Items stored in the basement were brought out through the outside door and put with the items for sale. One or more window air conditioning units were taken down and placed with the items for sale. Jackie Houston, Custodian, carried off three loads of junk in a pickup truck to a landfill.
On Wednesday evening, February 5th, following the prayer service, persons present were invited to go over to the Old Sanctuary and see the things that were going to be sold. The onlookers seemed to approve of what they saw.

On Thursday, February 6, 1992, workmen from Contaminant Control closed the Old Sanctuary Building and began removing the asbestos covering from the heating system.

On Friday, February 7, 1992, a pre-construction meeting of the Building Committee and the contractors was held in the Fellowship Hall. The group was able to tour the Old Sanctuary Building. Jack Greenwood, President of Blue Ridge Enterprises, was present. Joe Edwards was named Construction Coordinator from the church, to serve as liaison between the church and the contractors. It was a very friendly group, and a pleasant meeting.

Advertisements telling of the items for sale at the auction to be held on Saturday, February 15th, 1992, were placed in the local newspaper, and announced over local radio stations WP AQ and WSYD. It was announced that the following items would be for sale (all numbers approximate): 140 cane-bottomed chairs, 80 solid-bottomed wooden chairs in assorted sizes, 40 antique parlor chairs, 8 folding tables, 1 primary table, 2 pedestal desks, 34 church pews, 2 upright pianos, 32 wooden doors with hinges, 27 sheets of paneling, items of playground equipment for a kindergarten, 1 electric water fountain, some electric fans and window air conditioning units, 200 old Baptist Hymnals, a lot of old inner tubes for truck tires suitable for river rafting, and numerous other items. People were invited to come view these items.

On Thursday, tags were placed on the items to be sold at the auction, and the items were better displayed.

As the heating plant had been deactivated, a space heater was rented from Coo ke Rentals for use on that Saturday.

On Saturday it was raining, but the auction sale proceeded as planned. The space heater was fired up, and then turned off promptly at 10:00 o’clock as a signal to Mark Rogers, the auctioneer, to begin the sale. Mrs. Deidre Rogers and Mrs. Sarah Houston served as clerks, recording the sales and receiving payments. Jackie Houston, Lynnette Young (a Trustee), Jack Blackmon, Sr., and Robert Poplin worked on the floor. Zack Blackmon, Sr., experienced in such sales, was very good at pushing items for sale and keeping the sale moving. Two Mexicans were employed as helpers.

Everything put up for sale was sold. The sale ended at about 12:30. Bidders were given numbers, and as each made a purchase it was charged to the bidder’s number.

The item bringing the most was the shortest pew in the back of the sanctuary, which sold for $375.00 to Maynard Reamer. A front pew brought $250.00, and a short
back pew brought $200.00, and other pews ranged down to $20.00 or $30.00. A piano that was sold brought $65.00, and the piano stool brought $150.00.

Mark and Deidre Rogers, of Rogers Realty and Auction Company, are experienced auction sale workers. They contributed their work, as did other church members who took part. Mark is the church’s moderator.

The total receipts were $5,163.50. The sale was a success. The last of the items sold were picked up on the following Tuesday.

A roll of heavy wire and some junk metal, left alongside the building on the north side, disappeared during the weekend following the auction sale of surplus property. Actually, there was very little pilferage while work on this project was in progress.

Though the sale of bonds to raise funds for the project was considered by the Finance Committee, it appeared to be better to borrow the needed funds from one local lending institution if it could be done at the same, or at a lower, rate of interest. Arrangements were made to borrow the needed funds from The Community Bank, at the current prime rate of 6 1/2% for the time being and probably through the construction period.

Here is a listing of significant actions taken in the remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building before work on the project began:

1. March 4, 1990 Zach Blackmon, Sr., moved in conference that the church accept the Building Committee’s recommendation that the church renovate the Old Sanctuary Building and the Education Building. The vote, by secret ballot, was 267 for and 38 against.

2. March 19, 1990 John Crane moved that the church adopt the spiritually-centered “Challenge To Build” program of the Southern Baptist Convention as our 1990 spring revival/fund-raising drive for the remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building and the Education Building, that the program be implement-ed immediately and end on June 3, 1990. The motion carried.

3. September 5, 1990 The church voted to build the parking lot as proposed in the area immediately north of the New Sanctuary, with a drive-through in front of the New Sanctuary. This was to be paid for from “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” funds.

4. May 1, 1991 The church was called into conference to consider the proposed renovation plans for the Old Sanctuary Building. Following a discussion period, Zack Blackmon, Sr., moved that the architect, Steve Wilber, be advised to proceed to draw up plans and specifications in detail for presentation to contractors for bids, the low bid to be brought back to the church for its consideration. The motion passed.

5. November 6, 1991 At a Wednesday evening meeting, held in the Old Sanctuary, Zack Blackmon, Sr., presented the low bid of $1,480,815.00 from Blue Ridge Enterprises for remodeling the Old Sanctuary Building. Members present were
permitted to comment freely. It was decided to vote on acceptance of this bid on Sunday morning, November 17, 1991. The contract bid was itemized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Enterprises</td>
<td>$1,386,779.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Seam Copper Roof</td>
<td>80,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tile Walls, Kitchen &amp; Toilets</td>
<td>6,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos Removal</td>
<td>7,736.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,480,815.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **November 17, 1991** The vote on accepting Blue Ridge Enterprises’ bid was postponed, pending the church’s getting together some necessary information needed to arrange proper financing.

7. **January 19, 1992** The church adopted Zack Blackmon, Sr.’s, motion to accept Blue Ridge Enterprise’s bid, and to proceed forthwith with the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building. The vote was by secret ballot, and was 171 for and 51 against.

The President of Blue Ridge Enterprises was Jack Greenwood. The Superintendent of Projects for Blue Ridge Enterprises was Mr. Charles Cahoon, who was at the site frequently. The Project Superintendent on the job for Blue Ridge Enterprises was Mr. Akers Hill, a most likeable and cooperative gentleman.

Joe Edwards was appointed to serve as Construction Coordinator, i.e. as liaison between church members and the contract superintendent. Joe was ill in the hospital when work began on the project, and John Brewington served temporarily in Joe’s stead. Joe was soon out of the hospital and on the job. He practically lived on the project, and did a fine job.

While Joe was ill, Robert Poplin, Chairman of the Trustees, placed six weekly reports on the progress of the work in the church’s Newsletters. These were labeled “Old Sanctuary Remodeling Update # _” and were placed in the church’s weekly Newsletters beginning on Wednesday, January 22, 1992, and ending with the issue of Wednesday, March 4th. In the second of these, dated January 29, 1992, it was announced that Sunday, February 2nd, would be the last day that Sunday School classes would meet in the building, that on that day these classes would be told where they were to meet on the next Sunday, and that each of these classes was asked to have one or more members present during the period 3:00- 5:00 o’clock on Sunday afternoon to move its furnishings to its new meeting site.

When Blue Ridge Enterprises began work on the project it moved a mobile office on to the old playground site, and this served as the on-the-site office throughout the period of the remodeling.

Workers from Blue Ridge Enterprises began working on the Old Sanctuary project on Monday morning, February 17, 1992, as scheduled. Their first work was the removal of the playground equipment, located on the hill behind the Old Sanctuary. All
of this equipment had parts stuck in the ground, which had to be pulled up with powered equipment. These, swings, climbing gym bars, a seesaw, a merry-go-round, were stored in the church’s parking lot west of Main Street, and later sold to the Rainbow Child Care Center, located nearby, for $125.00.

Builder’s Risk Insurance was taken out with the Cincinnati Insurance Company by the church, as per a stipulation in the contract. Pat Barfield, a member of the church’s Finance Committee and agent of this company, helped negotiate this contract. The premium on this policy was $8,364.25.

Blue Ridge Enterprises drove a tunnel under the east wall of the Old Sanctuary through which the dirt excavated for enlargement of the basement was removed. It had been feared that in the process of digging down to the tunnel entrance and in the excavation for the basement enlargement bedrock would be encountered and that this might require blasting to remove necessary portions of it. However, the rock encountered here proved to be in the form of large boulders, which were removed with the power machinery at hand.

By March 4, 1992, nearly all the flooring and the supporting joists had been removed from the Old Sanctuary. It was interesting to see how the flooring and sub-flooring boards had been laid on an area shaped like the side of a basin. The floor had been covered for years by a red carpet, which was one of the first things removed. Some of the floor joists, 2" x 12" in size, were sound, some had been damaged by dry rot, and some had been damaged by termites.

Loftis HVAC Company removed the radiators from the building. Church members were invited to take one for a souvenir if they wished it. These were very heavy and few, if any, were taken as souvenirs.

In the process of enlarging the basement area from a small space where the heating boiler had been located into an area large enough for several rooms, the outside walls of the Old Sanctuary were extended downward. Considering the nature of the stone walls and their great weight, this was a difficult undertaking. It was carried out by excavating to the required depth beneath a short segment of the wall, then filling this area in with new wall up to the bottom of the old wall, then leap-frogging ahead a few feet and repeating the process. And then the intervening spaces left between the new sections were replaced by lower new wall as the process continued. Work on this began in the vicinity of the southeast corner, and had progressed around to the north tower section in the northwest corner area on Monday, May 18, 1992.

Workmen working in the area at about 1:35 p.m. heard a cracking sound. Akers Hill, Project Superintendent, ordered all workers out of the area. They had hardly gotten out when the north tower and much of the adjacent front wall collapsed and fell into the area in front of the church. Stones covered the grass, the sidewalk, and much of the near lanes of Main Street, some stones rolling on farther. Miraculously, no one working inside
the building was injured, nor did stones falling into the street injure anyone. Traffic on the street was disturbed for a while, until debris could be moved.

Of course this accident was a newsworthy occurrence, and it brought many spectators to view the damage. There were those who now said the rest of the building should be torn down, and everyone wondered what would be done. Most fortunately, the church was fully insured against such calamities as this, and the Cincinnati Insurance Company met its obligations fully. The Building Committee soon announced that the building would be restored to its original appearance, and that the project would proceed with the expectation of completing it on schedule.

Workmen were found who could lay stone in the manner required for a full restoration. Stones were removed from the street. Using pictures that had been taken of the building’s front before the collapse as a guide, it was restored to its original appearance. Now the part that fell is much stronger than it was before. Pieces of steel were placed on other walls to strengthen them and to prevent their possible collapse. So far as the church is concerned it now has a stronger building than it would have had had this collapse not occurred.

More of the woodwork was found to have dry rot and termite damage than had been expected, and this wood had to be replaced. The wainscoting in the Old Sanctuary was replaced.

Some of the ceiling had gotten in deplorable condition. This ceiling was made of thin sheet metal into which had been stamped a decorative design. Unbelievably, a company was found in Missouri that had the necessary equipment to produce sheets of this ceiling material in the same design. Enough was procured from this company to replace the disfigured sheets, mostly located in the two western corner sections.

The stone walls of the Sunday School Annex were strengthened by the building of a block wall just inside them. The dormer windows that had been in the upstairs classrooms were now walled up, and a new roof support structure and roof were placed over this section. Concrete floors were poured in this building section. Walls were put in, forming a hallway on both floors along which were placed classrooms, with nursery rooms on the main floor. The kitchen was placed on the north side along the western section of the downstairs hall.

On Wednesday evening, June 24, 1992, at a specially called business meeting, a number of changes were recommended to the membership by the Building Committee. These were presented by Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, and by Joe Edwards, Construction Coordinator. All were approved unanimously, although there was some discussion about how the church was going to pay for the project. Though these changes were definitely needed and were not major ones, they required an extra expenditure of money the approval of the membership was needed.
Jackie Houston made many pictures as the work progressed. These were displayed on the large bulletin board in the hallway near the church’s offices so that members could see what was being done, and how the work was progressing.

Zack Blackmon, Jr., made videotapes of the remodeling work and Andy Hennis kept a pictorial account of the remodeling on slides.

The concrete floor for the Old Sanctuary was poured in early August 1992.

On Sunday, January 24, 1993, members of the Sunday School’s Adult Departments and a Young People’s group were scheduled to tour the Old Sanctuary Building during Sunday School to view the progress that had been made and to see what the new facilities looked like. Each group had a schedule to follow. All came in from the breezeway and then went into the Old Sanctuary/new dining hall, where Robert Poplin addressed the group briefly and sent them on their way to the next station. Members next visited the new kitchen, the nursery rooms, the upstairs rooms, and lastly the basement rooms. There were folks at each location to tell the members about what they were seeing. This was the first time most members had been in the building since the remodeling began. Most seemed to be very favorably impressed by what they saw.

A need developed to hold another fund-raising drive. Mr. Kenner Pharr, a professional fundraiser in churches, came and made a presentation to the Finance Committee, the Building Committee, and the Trustees. Following announcements and discussions on using Mr. Pharr, a vote was taken by secret ballot on Sunday, February 7, 1993, on employing him. Mark Rogers, Moderator, Mrs. Shirley Tillotson, Clerk, and Robert Poplin, Chairman of the Trustees, canvassed the ballots. The vote was 110 for and 92 against employing an outside fundraiser. Jack Loftis, Finance Committee Chairman, said that this vote was too close to justify employing Mr. Pharr. Plans were made forthwith to conduct a fundraising campaign using our own people.

On Sunday, March 28, 1993, a proposed listing of places memorials could be placed in the remodeled Old Sanctuary Building, together with the amount of donation required to place a memorial plaque at each, was routinely adopted by the church’s congregation. Mrs. Louise Hill had presented this to the congregation for adoption, as proposed by the Memorials Committee. Members of the committee were: Mrs. Louise Hill, Chairperson, Mrs. Nadine Bradley, and Zack Blackmon, Sr.

The work moved steadily forward. A new copper roof was put in place on the Sunday School Annex. Eventually, enough reconstruction of the collapsed front section was restored to permit the closing-in of the building, which allowed the workmen to work in comfort. The basement floor had been poured in early August 1992, and the walls for the rooms on that floor were built. At last the restoration of the collapsed section was completed. The new copper roof was placed over the Old Sanctuary; kitchen equipment was moved into the new kitchen; and the final, slow, finishing work got underway.
An oak parquet floor was laid in the Old Sanctuary, and a stage was built where the old choir loft and pulpit had been. Plumbing fixtures and lights were installed. Doors were hung. Carpets were laid. Areas were painted.

Architect Steve Wilber and another person climbed into the North Tower on an exploratory trip early in the work. They expected to find the church's old bell, long unused but believed to be still usable, but they did not find it. After the tower collapsed the bell was found in the ruins. It was retrieved, with its cradle damaged but otherwise relatively unharmed, and then repaired and replaced in the tower when it was rebuilt. The bell is now fully usable, its rope hanging down into a classroom beneath it, and it has been rung on some Sundays since the restoration.

The steps leading up into the front entrance from the sidewalk were rebuilt. This required some special stone cutting. Member Revel Young, who is with the North Carolina Granite Corporation, was helpful in getting some of this essential work done.

As the time drew near for the congregation to begin using the newly remodeled Old Sanctuary Building, Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, announced that a sales tax refund had been received for tax paid on building materials and that, using this money for payment, 35 round tables and 350 chairs had been ordered for use in the new dining hall.

These duly arrived, and on Friday and Saturday, April 30th and May 1st, some volunteers unloaded these from a tractor-trailer, moved them inside, unboxed them, set them up, and placed them for use at the covered-dish luncheon on Sunday. Carriers for the chairs were also assembled and placed in use.

The first time the Old Sanctuary Building was used by members of the congregation after the remodeling was on Sunday, May 2, 1993, when a covered-dish luncheon was enjoyed by all who attended. Mrs. Mae Joyce and her assistants accepted the food before Sunday School and before the worship service, and had it placed on tables, one for regular foods and the other for desserts, so that buffet serving lines went down both sides of the tables. Everyone seemed very pleased with the beauty of the hall. There were seats for everyone present. Several folks who were not members attended this special event.

A question arose as to what to call the remodeled Old Sanctuary Building. Members were invited to suggest names for it, and a name for the church's Newsletter. On Sunday, May 2, 1993, (the day members had their first covered-dish luncheon in the remodeled building), church members voted by secret ballot to continue calling the remodeled building the "Old Sanctuary Building."

On Saturday, May 22, 1993, volunteers moved furnishings of those Sunday School classes and the Nursery that were moving into rooms in the Old Sanctuary Building from the places they had occupied as temporary quarters, and from their storage in the trailer loaned the church by Pike Electric that was now placed between the
buildings for unloading. Most of the volunteers were teachers and workers directly concerned. This job was carried out quickly, and was completed before noon. Much of these furnishings, tables and chairs, etc., had to be carried down the stairs of the Education Building and up the stairs of the Old Sanctuary Building.

Kevin Wilson and the Sunday School Council had worked out the new room assignments in advance, both in the Old Sanctuary Building and in the Education Building. Classes met in the Old Sanctuary Building on Sunday, May 23, 1993, for the first time after the remodeling.

The Golden Wedding Anniversary celebration of Caleb and Louise Hill was observed in the new Fellowship Hall on Sunday afternoon, May 30, 1993. A large crowd of well-wishers was on hand to congratulate them, and to wish them well.

Mrs. Gail Josey, a member, made pictures of several of the groups that were involved in the remodeling, renovating, and repairing project. Times were set for the various groups to come to the Old Sanctuary Building for the making of the pictures. (Some persons did not show up to have their pictures taken with their groups). These group pictures were placed in a special edition of the church's Newsletter, #22, dated June 6, 1993.

Mrs. Sarah Lee McGee, a former Pastor's Assistant and Educational Director of the church, composed a poem in celebration of the completion of the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building, entitled "Dedication of Our Remodeled Old Sanctuary Building." The poem consisted of thirteen four-line verses. Copies of this poem were printed, and distributed to those attending the worship service on the morning of June 6, 1993, prior to the Dedication Service held that afternoon. This poem is part of the memorabilia of that occasion.

Finally the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building was essentially completed, and the anticipated Dedication Service was held on Sunday afternoon, June 6, 1993, beginning at 4:00 p.m. A great crowd was on hand in the Old Sanctuary for this celebration and dedication.

The program opened with a piano prelude by the Rev. Larry Keesler, Minister of Music. The Rev. Kevin Wilson, Minister of Education and Youth, gave a Call to Worship consisting of a responsive reading from the printed program and an invocation. The singing of the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation," by the congregation, followed this. Mark Rogers, Moderator, then welcomed those present. Then the keys for the building were presented by Jack Greenwood, president of Blue Ridge Enterprises, to Steve Wilber, architect, who in turn presented them to Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, who in turn presented them to Mark Rogers, Church Moderator. The pastor then led the congregation in a Litany of Dedication, especially of the Kitchen, of the Fellowship Hall, and of the Educational Area. Mrs. Louise Hill, Chairperson of the 1990 "Challenge To Build/Here's Hope" campaign, rendered the prayer of dedication. This was followed by a beautiful rendition of "Bless This House" by Mrs. Elizabeth
Martin, accompanied by Larry Keesler. Dr. Langford then presented plaques of appreciation to Zack Blackmon, Sr., Chairman of the Building Committee, and to Joe Edwards, Construction Coordinator, for their work and leadership throughout the project. The congregation sang “Amazing Grace.” Jack Loftis, Chairman of the Finance Committee, pronounced the benediction, and the Children’s Choir gave a choral response.

Persons present were invited to tour the new facilities, and to enjoy the refreshments that were being served in the Fellowship Hall Annex.

Many non-members from the community and former members from away attended. The Rev. Kenneth Wilson, a former pastor, and his wife, and Mrs. Dottie Bryson, wife of former pastor J. R. (Buddy) Bryson, with her daughter Vivian, were present. The Rev. Bill Pearson, Surry Baptist Association Director of Missions, also attended.

It was a memorable occasion.

It is well at this point to take a brief look at the financing of this project. There were two “Challenge To Build/Here's Hope” campaigns. The first was in 1990, chaired by Mrs. Louise Hill, with Robert Clegg as the outside consultant from the Baptist State Convention. This first campaign raised, with advance cash contributions of $103,047.42 and three-year commitments of $423,858.66, a total of $526,906.08. The actual receipts for the three-year period were $689,973.66, which exceeded pledges and original cash gifts by $163,067.58.

In the spring of 1993 it was decided not to employ an outside fundraiser, and to go with another “Challenge To Build/Here’s Hope” drive under the leadership of the church’s Finance Committee. Members of the Finance Committee were: Jack Loftis, Chairman, and members Pat Barfield, Claude Brinkley, Chris Cruseberry, Gene Garland, Sam Gentry, Jr., Wade Marion, Martha Morgan, Bill Vernon, Anne Webb, church Treasurer Ed McGee, and Assistant Treasurer Charles Atkins. This campaign ended with renewed pledges for 1993-1996 of $475,771.00.

The membership of the church has given very liberally for the construction of the parking lot immediately north of the main sanctuary, and for the remodeling, renovation, and repairing of the Old Sanctuary Building.

Of course, money had to be borrowed during the construction period to make payments to the contractors. This borrowing was from The Community Bank at 6 1/2%. The church’s six Trustees signed the document for this loan, which pledged the church’s property as collateral. On July 14, 1993, this construction loan was converted into a long-term loan, and a new agreement entered into with The Community Bank. At that time the loan was for $1,192,116.67, and under the new agreement, was to be paid off in 180 monthly payments of $10,386.68, beginning August 13, 1993, and with the final payment to be due on July 13, 2008. The interest rate was to be the prime rate as it fluctuates from
time to time, but which was guaranteed not to go below 6 1/20%/ or above 8 1/20%/ for a period of five years. The then current prime rate was 6 1/2%. The note was signed for the church by the six Trustees, namely: Robert 0. Poplin, Jr., W. Maynard Beamer, Frank Longest, Bernie R. Slate, Warren G. Simmons, and J. Lynnette Young.

The Community Bank has been most cooperative with the church, and has not required some of the harassing fees and agreements that some other institutions would have. For this it is due appreciation and gratitude from our members.

Our church members are certainly grateful to the Cincinnati Insurance Company for the way in which it fulfilled its obligations under the Builder's Risk Insurance policy carried by the church with it when the wall in the north tower area collapsed. Pat Barfield, a member of the church, was the agent through which the church purchased the policy. He, and Mr. Chris Meinberg, of the company were wonderfully cooperative. As a large sum of money was required to restore the collapsed walls, legal action would have been required to collect the full amount from some companies. As it was, with the fine cooperation of the Cincinnati Company, the contractors were able to finish the project on schedule. The total paid by the Cincinnati Company for the restoration of the collapsed walls was $492,080.52.

A brief résumé of significant actions and facts concerning the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building project might be appropriate here. The project grew out of recommendations of the Long Range Planning Committee, and a feeling of need by the church membership to remodel the Old Sanctuary Building.

The following is a listing of important actions and facts concerning the remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building:

1. A Building Committee was appointed, and began making concrete plans for the building of a new parking lot on the north side of the main sanctuary, for remodeling the Old Sanctuary Building, for remodeling the Education Building, and for placing covering over some of the church's walkways. It was announced that a church conference would be held on Sunday, March 4, 1990, at which a vote would be taken on proceeding with these projects. The vote then, by secret ballot, was 267 for and 38 against.

2. On Sunday, March 18, 1990, the church voted unanimously to adopt the "Challenge To Build" program for fund raising for the building projects.

3. On Sunday evening, May 20, 1990, a church-wide banquet was held in the Elk's Lodge to launch the "Challenge To Build" fund raising drive. Mrs. Louise Hill, Chairperson, presided, and at least ten persons spoke briefly. The drive got off to a good start.

4. On Wednesday, September 5, 1990, the church voted to build the parking lot immediately north of the main sanctuary, with a drive-through in front of the sanctuary. This was to be paid for from "Challenge To Build" funds.
5. On Wednesday, October 17, 1990, Zack Blackmon, Sr., signed a contract for the church with the J.G. Coram Company to construct the new parking lot at a cost of $65,350.00.

6. The new parking lot was first used on Sunday, December 2, 1990. The final cost of the lot's construction was $77,425.00 as there had been some change orders since the original contract was signed.

7. On Wednesday evening, May 1, 1991, at a conference called to consider proposed renovation plans for the Old Sanctuary Building, the group voted to have Steve Wilber, architect, to proceed to draw up plans and specifications in detail for contractors for bids. The low bid received was to be brought back to the church for its consideration.

8. On Wednesday evening, November 6, 1991, at a meeting held in the Old Sanctuary, the low bid of $1,480,815.00 received from Blue Ridge Enterprises for remodeling the Old Sanctuary Building was presented to the membership for consideration. Those present were permitted to comment freely. It was decided to vote on acceptance of this bid during the worship service on Sunday morning, November 17th.

9. On Sunday morning, November 17, 1991, the vote on accepting Blue Ridge Enterprises’ bid was postponed until information required by lending institutions before making loans could be gotten together.

10. On Sunday morning, January 19, 1992, the church adopted Zack Blackmon’s motion to accept Blue Ridge Enterprises’ bid, and to proceed forthwith with the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building. The vote was by secret ballot, and was 171 for and 51 against.

11. The contract with Blue Ridge Enterprises was signed for the church by Robert Poplin, Chairman of the Trustees, at a meeting of the Finance Committee on Thursday evening, January 30, 1992. He signed the contract with Contaminant Control, for the removal of asbestos from the Old Sanctuary Building's heating system, on February 4, 1992.

12. Sunday School classes met in the Old Sanctuary Building for the last time before remodeling began on Sunday, February 2, 1992. Volunteers moved classroom furnishings that were to be kept from the building to new, temporary, classroom locations on that afternoon.

13. Contaminant Control began removing asbestos from the Old Sanctuary Building on Thursday, February 6, 1992.
14. The Trustees held a sale of discarded equipment and materials in the Old Sanctuary on Saturday, February 15, 1992.


16. On Monday, May 18, 1992, the walls of the north tower and part of adjacent front wall collapsed.

17. A letter to the Trustees, (Attention: Joe Edwards), dated August 25, 1992, from C. J. Meinberg, Claims Representative of the Cincinnati Companies, the first paragraph of which read, "This letter is for the purpose of giving Blue Ridge Enterprises and Wilber Associates the authority to have general contract work proceed on the tower on a cost plus basis of payment," was joyfully received. The Cincinnati Company faithfully fulfilled its contract as carrier of our Builder's Risk Insurance.

18. On Sunday, January 24, 1993, Sunday School classes of the Adult Departments, plus a Youth Group, toured the Old Sanctuary Building during Sunday School.

19. On Sunday, March 28, 1993, the church adopted a proposed listing of places memorials could be placed in the remodeled Old Sanctuary Building, together with the amount of donation required to place a memorial plaque at each.

20. A covered-dish luncheon was held in the Old Sanctuary Building on Sunday, May 2, 1993, following the worship service, the first use of the remodeled building.

21. On Saturday, May 22, 1993, volunteers moved furnishings into new Sunday School rooms, and classes met in these rooms on the next day for the first time after the remodeling.

22. A Dedication Service was held in the Old Sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, June 6, 1993, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

23. Costs of the remodeling, renovation, and repair of the Old Sanctuary Building appear to have been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Enterprises, General Contractor</td>
<td>$1,559,386.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilber Associates, Architect's fee</td>
<td>99,911.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contaminant Control, asbestos removal</td>
<td>7,736.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly Heating &amp; Cooling, disassembling heat system</td>
<td>35.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant’s Hardware and others, building materials</td>
<td>1,245.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing around heat pump compressors</td>
<td>3,856.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deductible on rebuilding collapsed walls</td>
<td>250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,672,420.20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less sales tax refund on building materials 10,204.18

Net Direct Building Costs to First Baptist Church 1,662,216.02
Builder’s Risk Insurance, premium 8,364.25
Costs, fees, in obtaining loan 3,722.00
Challenge to Build/Here’s Hope, fund-raising drives 11,159.89
Total cost to First Baptist Church of Mount Airy 1,685,462.16
Cincinnati Insurance, rebuilding collapsed walls 492,080.52
Grand Total $2,177,542.68

Not included in the above is $46,050.83 in interest paid on the construction loan before the long-term loan was set up, and $331.42 for costs entailed in moving some materials and furnishings out of the Old Sanctuary Building and in conducting the sale of discarded items.

Too, it has been noted that the cost of the Builder’s Risk Insurance premium, and the payment for the rebuilding of the collapsed walls by the Cincinnati Insurance Company, probably would not normally be included in the costs of construction.

During the remodeling project, as negotiations for the borrowing of money were carried out, the need for the church to become incorporated was made clear. It was something that lending institutions clearly desired.

Several years earlier a move was begun to incorporate the church, but for some reason it was not carried through. Now interest in incorporating the church again developed as the church dealt with problems of financing the remodeling project.

On Tuesday evening, March 23, 1993, a joint meeting of the Church Council and the Board of Trustees was held in the church’s library to discuss incorporating the church, and to receive attorney P. M. Sharpe’s recommendations concerning this. All were in agreement that, for financial reasons and for any engagement in legal actions, the church should become incorporated.

After much discussion, more meetings, and the approval by the congregation of the Articles of Incorporation as finally worded, the church was duly incorporated on June 10, 1993. Necessary changes in the church bylaws because of the incorporation were adopted on July 18, 1993.

Committee to Prepare an Account of the Remodeling of the Old Sanctuary Building:

Robert 0. Poplin, Jr., Chairman
Mrs. Christine Beamer
Mrs. Sarah Lee McGee
Mrs. Mary Rowe
At the time of the celebration of our 110th anniversary and homecoming in October, 1989, Rev. James Langford had been our pastor for four months, and we were expectantly moving toward the era of the nineties at First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina.

Jim Langford based his sermon that homecoming Sunday on the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24) and entitled it “Yellow Ribbons.” It emphasized the delight with which the father received the prodigal home. Following is a quote:

“We need to celebrate the God who generously loves the sinner, throws coming home parties for him, and encourages the music and dancing. A few years back a popular song told of a young man about to be released from prison. He wasn’t sure that his lover still cared for him or would be waiting for him so he instructed her, ‘If you still love me, tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree.’

“We need to celebrate that no matter how big our sins and failures, whether they be sins of heated passion or sins of a sour spirit, the yellow ribbons are out for us. God stands with waiting arms, eager to run and embrace us and eager to forgive our lousy performances. I don’t understand how God can be so generous, but I thank Him that He is!’

With that forgiveness for lousy performances and the gracious spirit with which God embraces and encourages us, we have strived in the past five years to gain a new vision of what it is that we at First Baptist Church should be doing to honor a God who is always so generous.

In 1986, the Long Range Planning Committee, under David Rowe’s leadership, had been charged with the responsibility of determining a course of action to take us into the twenty-first century.

After three years of intense study, this committee, in 1989, challenged our church to a plan which included: 1) a charge to a building committee for developing needed space, 2) a family ministry to help preserve families, 3) an emphasis upon enhancing the quality of fellowship.

The accomplishments of First Baptist Church during the past five years have been focused upon these challenges as we move closer to the twenty-first century.

1990

The Better Home Group was initiated in 1990 and met monthly on Sunday nights to encourage stronger families through Christian parenting. Six couples served as
coordinators: B.E. and Cindy Coone, John and Helen Crane, Susan and Sam Gentry, Jackie and Sarah Houston, Roger and Carole Kerley, and David and Inglis Rowe.

When the Diaconate began its new term under the chairmanship of Ed McGee, two new ministries were begun. First, the Good Samaritan Ministry involved any church member who would volunteer to take those who needed assistance to doctor’s appointments or for treatments at various medical centers. Second, the Outreach Ministry offered rides (via the church van) to and from Sunday School or worship services. The chairman of the Diaconate also helped coordinate Meals on Wheels which provides meals on a daily basis for our shut-ins in the community. Other churches in Mount Airy are also involved in this ministry.

A series of discussions on January 7, 14, and 17, 1990, created quite a bit of excitement. Conducted by Zack Blackmon, Sr., chairman of the Building Committee, these discussions concerned the feasibility of proposals which had been made for renovation and remodeling. On March 4, the church, in a called conference, voted 267-38 to accept the Building Committee’s recommendation to renovate and remodel existing facilities.

On March 18, 1990, the church voted unanimously to accept a program sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention called “Challenge to Build” as a means of capital fundraising in the framework of spiritual values. Robert Clegg served as consultant for the three-year program, and Louise Hill (Mrs. Caleb) served as local coordinator. A suggestion was made by Sarah Houston (Mrs. Jackie) to add “Here’s Hope” to “Challenge to Build” as a part of the revival effort being sponsored in Baptist churches at that time.

During the initial thirteen-week campaign, each family was asked to consider: 1) a commitment over and above budget gifts, 2) not “equal gifts but equal sacrifice,” 3) commitments led by the Holy Spirit.

More than one hundred-fifty people became actively involved on various committees, and on Sunday night, May 20, the thirteen-week campaign culminated with a churchwide banquet and victory celebration at the Mount Airy Elk’s Lodge. One of the highlights of the celebration was an oral history presented by Mr. Robert Poplin who had gleaned some interesting and amazing facts from the past. Much enthusiasm was generated, and it was felt that the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy had caught a vision and was willing, on faith, to see it through.

In the meantime, our church held its first Lay Renewal weekend from March 30 through April 1, under the leadership of Coordinator Don Taft, a member of Prichard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte. A lay renewal is “a spiritual journey inward” and serves as a type of revival for those who participate. The members responded well to this event, and the spiritual outcomes were rewarding.
On April 8, 1990, the Personnel Committee recommended extending a call to Troy Kevin Wilson as full-time Minister of Education and Youth. A native of Durham, North Carolina, a summa cum laude graduate of Campbell University, and an honor graduate of Southeastern Seminary, Kevin came to us from Spillman Baptist Church, Kinston, North Carolina. His wife Anna, a native of Lenoir, has a degree from Campbell University and Master's degree from the University of South Carolina. At the time they arrived, they had an eighteen-month-old daughter, Kellan. A reception on May 27, 1990, officially welcomed the Wilsons to Mount Airy as a part of our staff.

On April 15, 1990, Mary Rowe was commissioned as a short-term missionary to Poland. Mary went to lend her expertise in the culinary arts for a team of twenty North Carolina Baptists, in partnership with the people of eastern Europe, helping to construct a seminary in Poland. Later on June 6, Mary shared her experiences in eastern Europe with us, and at this writing (1994), Mary is in Poland to attend the dedication of the completed seminary and to participate in other mission work in the Ukraine.

Our church was indeed proud of our pastor, Jim Langford, when he received his Doctor of Ministry degree at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey in May of 1990.

First Baptist Church sent ten messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana in June, 1990. They were: Amy and Bill Edwards, Louise Hill, Sue Mason, Sarah Lee and Ed McGee, Larry and Becky Keesler, and Jim and Sandra Langford.

Since 1990, our sanctuary has been adorned with some splendid banners. Three sets are seasonal and based on themes of Lent and Easter, the Great Fifty Days, and Advent. One set is non-seasonal and based on the themes of Praise, Love, and Faith. The seasonal banners were rescaled by Betty Jones (Mrs. David) from commercial designs. Mary Rowe designed and made the non-seasonal banners and was assisted in making the seasonal banners by several ladies in the church. These banners have enhanced the beauty of the sanctuary as well as contributed to a more worshipful atmosphere.

Members of First Baptist who had known Rev. Albert S. Hale as pastor (1938-1942) were saddened by the news of his death in August, 1990.

The first part of the renovation project to be realized was the new parking lot on the north side of the sanctuary building, providing sixty-one additional parking spaces at the cost of $89,000. It was ready for use Sunday, November 25, 1990.

A new standing committee was voted into the constitution in October, 1990. The Bereavement Committee, organized by Sarah Lee McGee (Mrs. Ed), provides a meal to any family within the church when a death occurs in the immediate family unless the person who died is a member of another local church providing the meal. Almost all of the ladies and some of the men have participated in the preparation and/or serving of these meals unless extenuating circumstances prevent them from doing so. In that case,
some have donated money. This committee has been well received, and the committee reports that the gracious and loving spirit of those who have helped with this service has been truly gratifying and is another way for our church to express a caring attitude.

Lottie Moon, famous missionary to China of long ago, appeared at First Baptist Church on December 9, 1990, in the bodily form of nationally-known dramatist Freddie Neel. Freddie brought to her presentation a commitment to Christ that becomes evident to all who see and hear her. In her realistic portrayal of Lottie Moon, Freddie related events up to the receiving of the first Christmas offering for foreign missions.

Kevin Wilson was ordained into the ministry by our church on December 5, 1990. A reception honoring Rev. Wilson was held following the service.

A first-time community Christmas concert was held in our church in December, 1990, and involved choirs from First Presbyterian, Flat Rock Baptist, Trinity Episcopal, First Baptist, and North Surry High School’s Mixed Chorale and Men’s Chorus. It also included the Bell Ringers from Central Methodist Church and Lynne Booth, visiting artist at Surry Community College. Rev. Dick Howerton, a member of the Surry Arts Council, was the motivator for this program.

The year 1990 was indeed a year of rich blessings brought about by the tremendous combined efforts of committed church members and dedication of Pastor Jim Langford. Financially, a total of $625,846.04 was contributed to all causes, with $214,991.07 going to “Challenge to Build—Here’s Hope.”

1991

A new tradition was begun in February, 1991. All the adults were invited to a Valentine banquet where the youth served the meal, and the guests were treated to a delicious dinner and royally entertained. An abundance of creative talent was displayed through entertainment as well as atmosphere. This yearly event has truly been a festive occasion where adults feel “loved” in a very special way.

Architect Steve Wilbur was present on April 10, 1991, to make known the latest plans for renovations, and at this point several sub-committees (i.e. kitchen) became involved.

On April 28, 1991, Larry Keesler was commissioned to serve on the mission field in Brazil as accompanist for the North Carolina Singing Churchmen. The purpose of the trip was to witness to the lost through music and testimony.

The by-laws were amended on September 23, 1991, to include the following on the church council: vice-moderator, chairman of the Finance Committee, chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, and chairman of the Personnel Committee.
The Sunday School held its annual pig pickin’ in October, 1991, and as usual, it was a huge success. Mae Joyce (Mrs. Joe) reported that the Fellowship Committee served more than four hundred eighty people.

The church brought Freddie Neel back October 13-16, 1991, for a series of dramatic portrayals which were evangelistic in nature. They included the Samaritan woman; Mary, the mother of Jesus; an angel who told of Christ’s life from birth to the cross and resurrection; Marcy, a 5 ½ year old, who told Bible stories from a child’s perspective; and Precious, the clown, who admonished us that we must die to ourselves and be ready when Christ returns.

The budget preparation for the fall of 1991 used a unique approach. It emphasized “We Are Family.” A committee chaired by Cindy Wilson prepared a historical album which graphically displayed First Baptist’s past, present, and projected future. The albums were in each family’s home for a twenty-four hour period when it was passed on to the next family on a particular Diaconate list for perusal and for making a pledge to the budget. On Sunday morning, October 27, Robert Poplin again gave a brilliant oral presentation of the church’s history as a part of the emphasis on “Past, Present, and Projected Future.”

The church was the grateful recipient of a very generous gift in 1991 from the estate of Lucille Haynes. An amount of $41,876.91 was given to “Challenge to Build/Here’s Hope” in memory of Mrs. Haynes’ parents, Caleb and Lizzy Haynes.

As the year 1991 came to a close, the sanctuary was filled with the “sound of music” as the chancel choir brought the majesty of Christmas to us when they presented “Christmas Oratorio,” under the direction of Larry Keesler. Also, the children’s choir under the direction of Carole Kerley, Susan Gentry, Cindy Coone, and Helen Crane, presented “Wise Guys and Starry Skies” on Family Night. These outstanding musical events not only put us in the right “spiritual frame of mind” for the holidays, but created a great deal of pride in the accomplishments of some very talented musicians.

1992

The church voted by secret ballot (170-51) on January 19, 1992, to accept the bid of Blue Ridge Enterprises to award them a contract of $1,386,779 to remodel the old sanctuary building. The work was to begin immediately and was to be completed in fifteen to eighteen months. Mr. Akers Hill was project superintendent for Blue Ridge Enterprises, and Mr. Joe Edwards was appointed by the Building Committee to serve as liaison between the congregation and the contractors. The relocation of all Sunday School classrooms became effective February 9, 1992.

Various furnishings and materials were prepared by the trustees for an auction conducted by Rogers’ Realty on February 15. The proceeds of the auction amounted to $5,303.50. The renovation officially got under way on Monday, February 17.
An adult ensemble was formed under the direction of Sandra Wimbish (Mrs. John) to perform contemporary Christian music at various times during morning worship and on special occasions.

During the summer of '92, the “Spectacular Six Fellowships” provided a way for church members to get to know each other better and to give new families and prospects a chance to get involved in a fellowship group. Five FBC couples formed a group and invited a sixth prospective couple to join. The groups were purposely designed to be intergenerational. All groups met for dinner at the church on April 26, and then each was to plan one fellowship each month for three months.

Since the fall of 1992, the creative Ministries Group has ministered in our church and community. Mark and Linda Donnell and Terri Ingalls have been active leaders of this group dedicated to spreading the gospel through their special gifts of drama, clowning, and dance.

Another impressive presentation by the Chancel Choir was the musical drama, *The Acts*, performed on May 14, 15, 16. *Calvary's Mountain*, an Easter cantata, was also presented. Both were stellar performances. Ending the Wednesday night family activities for 1991, the Children’s Choir delighted those present with their “cool” performance of *Cool in the Furnace*, based on Daniel and his three friends.

Haywood Jordan was chairman of the Diaconate when members of the Diaconate began taking the Lord’s Supper to those homebound who requested it. Several of the homebound found this a special way to feel a part of the church services.

It happened on May 17, 1991—“The wall came tumbling down!” The north tower of the Old Sanctuary Building fell to the ground. It was a miracle that there were no injuries inside or outside although large chunks of granite rolled across the street. It was determined that what happened was not preventable and in the end, would prove to be a blessing in disguise as it revealed some areas that needed to be reinforced that would otherwise have been unnoticed. The church was properly insured and allowed the stones in the tower to be replaced to its original appearance without causing a delay in the completion date.

Another FBC member, Alice Faye Brannock (Mrs. Benny), was commissioned to go on a mission trip called “Operation Smile” to Panama. This mission involved seventy doctors and nurses from the United States with a goal of operating on 150 children with cleft lips/palates and orthopedic problems.

Rev. Keesler directed a children’s choir camp July 27-31, 1992, which included children from the Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches. At the close of the camp they presented the musical 100% Chance of Rain.

*Christian Caregiving—A Way of Life* was a ten-week course sponsored by the Diaconate under the chairmanship of Gene Garland. It was taught by Jim Langford to
any members of the church who were interested in learning to be better caregivers. This course was repeated at a later date.

After hearing tapes by Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and John Hewitt, president of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the church held a discussion on September 23, 1992, on the issues related to the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention. A vote taken gave each FBC member an option of using the SBC plan or the FBC plan for the 1993 missions offerings. The FBC plan would direct the SBC percentage of the Cooperative Program budget to go to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionaries, and the Annie Armstrong Home Missions Offering to be recommended annually by a FBC Missions committee. The options would be printed on the '91 pledge cards. A Missions Committee included John Wimbish, chairman, Nadine Bradley, and Mary Rowe. Martha Morgan (WMU) and Jackie Houston (Baptist Men) were ex-officio members.

A significant event for the choir was on December 13, 1992, when our choir joined with the choirs of Becks Baptist Church and Old Town Baptist Church of Winston-Salem to present The Majesty and the Glory of Christmas. Over one hundred voices singing with orchestra gave a masterful performance in Wait Chapel on the Wake Forest University campus as well as a second presentation in our sanctuary. This musical event was so well received that it led to our choir presenting a concert at Becks and Old Town, and yet another joint concert at Becks and First Baptist in 1994 entitled Alleluia! The Praise Continues.

Ministry was the keynote to sum up events in 1992.
1) The Good Samaritan Ministry continued its services of getting people to doctors and treatment centers.
2) Homebound communion was accepted and enjoyed by some of the shut-ins.
3) Ministry to families, especially during a crisis, was continued by the Diaconate.
4) The Bereavement committee offered unique fellowship and caring through meals for families during the loss of a loved one.
5) The Migrant Ministry was guided by the WMU under the direction of Surry Baptist Association. Multiple other mission actions were carried out by the Woman’s Missionary Union with Martha Morgan serving as director.
6) Through work begun by Doug Bingman (director, 1991) and Jackie Houston (director, 1992) our Baptist Men helped Mount Airy become known as the “Sock Capital of the World” as boxes loaded with socks were sent to East Seventh Street Baptist Ministry in New York. Clothes were also collected for this project.
7) The youth, under Kevin Wilson’s leadership, were performing chores for the elderly, participating in Habit for Humanity, hosting fellowship activities for Senior Adults, helping with activities for children (Easter Egg hunts), and sponsoring meals after Sunday worship.
8) Under Juanita Tucker’s expert planning and organization, the Senior Adults enjoyed many excellent trips and activities.
A Memorials Committee was named to study the question of memorials that would relate to the newly renovated building. Louise Hill (Mrs. Caleb), chairperson, Zack Blackmon, Sr., and Nadine Bradley (Mrs. Oren) composed the committee. If a person wished to memorialize or honor someone, items suggested by the Memorials Committee could be paid for through pledges or cash. A plaque bearing the name of the donor or group would be placed on the area within thirty days after intentions were made known.

A business conference was held on Sunday morning February 7, 1993, for the purpose of recommending a capital-funds campaign directed by professional fund-raisers. With only fifty-four per cent of the church voting for the proposal, it was felt unwise to proceed with this plan. Instead, a second pledge campaign for "Challenge to Build" without outside help did begin on March 28. A packet of materials was distributed to all families by the Diaconate and were to be returned by April 25, along with renewed pledges for "Challenge to Build." This packet contained a beautiful brochure designed by Anne Webb (Mrs. Tom), Cindy Coone, (Mrs. B.E.), and Inglis Rowe (Mrs. David). The pledge campaign concluded with a church-wide covered-dish meal in the newly remodeled fellowship hall. Zack Blackmon, Jr. was on hand to make videos which he had kept up-to-date, and Gail Josey (Mrs. Bob) made photographs of almost everyone present. Andy Webb kept up-to-date slides also.

Jack Loftis chaired the Finance Committee during the years when the renovation project was begun and completed. The Finance Committee led the pledge renewal campaign and worked out the details for the permanent financing of the renovation through Community Bank.

At a called business meeting on May 2, 1993, the church voted on a recommendation from the trustees that the church be incorporated. P.M. Sharpe drew up the articles of incorporation which included the following:

"The government of this church shall be congregational in nature, and the final authority for the operation and management of the affairs of the corporation—spiritual and temporal—shall be vested in its membership. Members alone shall have the authority to adopt and amend by-laws, approve budgets, receive members, and govern and conduct the affairs of said corporation. The corporation shall have a board of directors and all active members shall be eligible for election as directors. The Board of Directors shall have the responsibility and power to represent the church in any litigation and make recommendations to the church membership."

To fulfill legal requirements for the incorporation, several changes in the constitution were required and voted into effect on Sunday, July 18.
Two Saturdays in early May were set aside to prepare Sunday School furniture and equipment for moving into the new building on May 23.

The formal dedication of the Old Sanctuary Building, including an open house, was held on June 6, 1993. A reception and tours of the building followed. Among the guests were former pastors, former members, and many interested local people from other churches. The architect, Steve Wilbur, in his remarks said: “As an architectural statement of Mount Airy in 1907, this building is most outstanding. The willingness of the congregation to preserve this building in recognition of its historical significance, as well as its place in the spiritual growth of the First Baptist Church, is to be commended.”

A more detailed account of the remodeling and renovation of the Old Sanctuary Building is given in a separate history written by Mr. Robert Poplin with the assistance of Mary Rowe, Chris Beamer, and Sarah Lee McGee.

The sound of the bells was brought back in July of 1993, after thirteen years of silence. Mrs. Opal Pike donated a Schulmerich Embassy Digital Carillon in memory of her husband, Floyd S. Pike. This system is capable of playing English bells, cast bells, harp bells, chimes, swinging bells, a three bell peal, and a bell toll from the tower and from the pipe organ. Once again hymns are heard from the tower each day.

The First Baptist Church was recognized by the Mount Airy Appearance Commission on July 14, 1993, as the “Most Improved Property.”

Rev. Keesler directed another ecumenical children’s choir camp in the summer of 1993. At the close of the camp they presented the musical 50th Annual Polk County Picnic, complete with live pig!

On August 22, 1993, Dot and Ben Brannock were honored for their more than thirty years of ministry with the youth. They were presented a plaque and a book of memories. Every church should be blessed with a Dot and Ben.

Bill Clemmons, widely known for his work in lay renewal, led us in an in-depth look at our daily ministry as God’s people, September 17-19, 1993. Dr Clemmons is the director of the Center for the Renewal of Churches at the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary outside of Chicago and is a former teacher at Southeastern Seminary.

A change in the structure of the Diaconate ministry became effective on October 7, 1993. Each adult Sunday School class became the primary care-giving system for its membership. Each class is to be responsible for its active and inactive members. Each class will have at least one member to serve as a contact person—not to function as a deacon—but to notify the class in the event of hospitalization, death, birth, etc. The class should take appropriate caring action. The entire class would minister to the one in need and keep in touch on all occasions of happiness. Those who teach in a non-adult situation would be assigned to an appropriate class or deacon. The Diaconate would be responsible for caring for the remaining 125-130 members who do not come under the
care of another group or organization. It was suggested that the Chancel Choir and mission groups also serve as caring groups to those not enrolled in Sunday School.

The year 1993 will be remembered as the year of new "things." We were all amazed at the beautiful and spacious 19,000 square feet of new space in our renovated Old Sanctuary Building. The facilities for education, recreation, and fellowship gave our church one of the most modern and well-equipped buildings in Mount Airy and left us with a new desire to get on with the business of being "the church" God would have us to be.

The magnificent new peals of the bells resounding from the tower each day brought new beauty to the hearts of all who hear them.

Newness of spirit came through lay renewal, new members, new methods, and new ideas for care-giving.

A new member, Gail Josey (Mrs Bob), a skilled photographer, kept our hall bulletin board replete with new pictures of all the activities going on.

The newsletter gained a new image and a new name to keep us more In Touch with each other, our church, our mission, and our Savior.

Thank God for new "things" to challenge us and fill our lives with joy.

1994

Linda Denney (Mrs. Joe) was added to the music staff on January 1, 1994, although she had been active at all levels of the music program since she and her family came to First Baptist Church in 1992.

In February, a new Long Range Planning Committee was elected composed of the following: Convener Bob Demcio, David Jones, Dot Brannock (Mrs. Ben), Buffy Fussell (Mrs. Steve), Becky Sumner (Mrs. Mac), Maynard Beamer, Zack Blackmon, Sr., Mary Etta Young (Mrs. Leonard), and the ministerial staff (ex-officio). Our church became a pilot program created by the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. The long range planning process will focus on formulating our church's unique strengths, and studying weaknesses so that we can improve our Christian witness to our community.

"First Thursday Luncheons" began in March and continued through May of 1994. They were held strictly between 12:00 and 1:00 pm with a theme of "Celebrating Daily Ministry." Speakers shared their Christian faith as it relates to their daily activity. The speakers were: Phil Ginn, an attorney and former judge from Boone; David Swann Director of Crossroads Mental Health in Mount Airy; and Martha Wood, mayor of Winston-Salem. These luncheons will resume on October 6.
A special sub-committee was selected by the House and Grounds Committee to study the need of a new sound system for the sanctuary and to make a recommendation. Appointed were: Richard Loftis, chairman; Ralph Epperson; Larry Keesler; Chris Ingalls, and Steve Fussell. The new system will cost $25,000 and will be installed in the near future.

In early spring, the choir had a unique experience when they journeyed to Bristol, Tennessee, and sang in a sacred concert at the restored Paramount, an old silent-movie theater. They were accompanied by the theater organ and two concert grand pianos as they sang old favorites and selections from the Easter cantata His Name Is Wonderful.

A vote on the favorite hymns of our congregation resulted in the following order:

#1—Amazing Grace
#2—Blessed Assurance
#3—in the Garden
#4—How Great Thou Art
#5—Standing on the Promises

Recent worship services have featured these and other old-time favorites.

The Acteens, under the leadership of Sara Lynn Miller, held a recognition service on May 18, 1994, in which the following girls were crowned queen: Laura Brewington, Emily Kerley, Lauren Tucker, Melissa Greene, and Catherine Perkins. This was the first time girls in our church have reached this step since 1976 when Cindy Tillotson Wilson and Paula Brannock Brinkley were crowned queen under the leadership of Mrs. J.L. Bryson, Jr.

On Wednesday, July 27, 1994, a covered-dish supper provided an opportunity for our church to wish the John Wimbish family Godspeed in their return to work with the Wycliffe Bible Translators. John and Sandra became very active members of FBC upon their return from Indonesia. Sandra was director of the Adult Ensemble and a co-director with Paula Brinkley of Vacation Bible School. John led an adult Bible study and was active in choir.

Our church held a commissioning service for John and Sandra on Sunday, August 1, which duly set them apart as servants of Jesus Christ for service with the Wycliffe Translators. The commissioning service was indicative of the church's affirmation and qualified them for certain benefits such as housing.

As area schools resumed for the '94-'95 school year, First Baptist honored all school related personnel during the worship service on Sunday, August 28. A special presentation of a children's Bible was made to each first grader with this comment by Dr. Langford: "We love you, care for you, and as you grow, may this Book be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path that eventually will lead you to Him who is the light of the world."
On September 19, the Surry Baptist Association welcomed the new Director of Missions, Wayne Trexler, pastor of Southport Baptist Church Southport, North Carolina. Rev. Trexler has served on both the General Board and Executive Committee of the Baptist State Convention and pastored churches in Salisbury, Reidsville, Wrightsville Beach, and Greensboro. His missionary experiences were in Frankfort and Schweinfurt, West Germany, and Treasure Bay, Bahamas. A native of Salisbury, he graduated from Catawba College and Southeastern Seminary. Rev. Trexler replaces Rev. Bill Pearson who retired in April after serving Surry Association for eleven years.

Josh Martin, son of Gregg and Elizabeth Martin, achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and received this award on September 18, 1994, during morning worship. Scouting has been important in our church since 1926 when Scout Troup 538 was formed. Present leaders of this troop are Phillip Hart and Gregg Martin. A host of other FBC members are involved in both Boy and Girl Scouts in our city. During the past five years, seven other young men from FBC have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. They are: Paul and Derek Young, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Revel Young; Matthew and Josh Royster, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Royster; Brandon Hiatt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Hiatt; Scott Sanders, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Sanders; and Lee Sloan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Les Sloan.

We have been in our newly renovated Old Sanctuary Building since May 23, 1993, and as we prepare for homecoming on October 2, 1994, we look forward to having former pastors, their wives, and some of the children with us as well as many former members. Dr. Alfred Miller will deliver the homecoming sermon. During the past five years, we have continued to feel the empowering of the Holy Spirit as we have strived to be the church—seeking to share with others the love of God. Our total giving during these five years of renovation and preparation for the future has been in excess of $2.5 million for all causes. As we realize that “without new vision the people perish,” we pray that the Lord will continue to give us new vision and will give us power, vitality, and peace as tools to carry this church into the twenty-first century. May we be a church of open doors, carrying our Christian witness into the community and throughout the world.

--Thoughts from Jim Langford’s sermon, September 18, 1994
First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina
A Homecoming History Update, 1995-1999
Written by Christine Beamer and Ettice Short

In this year 2000 at our homecoming, we pause to briefly look at the past and more in detail at our immediate past five years. Other written histories bring us to this date: 50 Year History by Mrs. A.G. Webb, 75 Year History by Edward Lovill, 100 Year History by Mary Rowe, A Decade History 1979-1989 and a Homecoming History Update by Sarah Lee McGee.


At this time our church is without a full-time pastor, but we hope to fill that position in the near future. Presently we have as our interim pastor, Amis Daniel and his wife, Frances, to minister to us. We have been most fortunate to have such capable leaders who serve so lovingly.

Other persons playing viable roles in the making of this church secured as Education Directors or Pastor’s Assistants were David Mashburn, Sarah Lee Hegler (now Mrs. Ed McGee), Mel Anderson, Alfred Stanley, Herschel Adams, Stan Howell, Jerry Meeks, Myron Kidd, and presently the Rev. T. Kevin Wilson.

Our church owes much to the leadership and direction that these people provided. We have grown from a wooden structure (that occupied the upper parking lot) through stages of growth and changes to the present three granite buildings.

For the period of time on which we are to concentrate, the church staff consisted of Dr. James Langford, Pastor; Rev. Troy Kevin Wilson, Education and Youth; Rev. Lawrence B. Keesler, Music; Ms. Linda Denney, accompanist; Ms. Annie McBride, Financial Administrative Secretary; Ms. Janice Demcio, Office Secretary. These have continued as a part of the church staff with a few exceptions: Dr. Langford resigned in 1999; Annie McBride retired in 1996 (Janice Demcio becoming the Financial Secretary, 1996), and Shannon Messer was a short-time secretary replaced by Ann Honeycutt who has served as a part-time Church Secretary since 1997.
This year began appropriately by observing the Lord's Supper on Sunday, January 1, with Dr. Langford presiding. Portions of the service had college students Paul Young, Sharon Andrews, and Sarah Knott participating.

It was a busy January. The Youth in our church sponsored a Pancake Supper the first Saturday night. They also held a "Fun with Clown Ministry" Workshop, engaging a professional clown, Susan Strickland, assisted by Terri Ingalls and Mark Donnell. Baptist Men's Day was observed beginning with breakfast. The invited guest minister was our own FBC product, Dr. Richard Wynne, son of E.G. and Mary Nell Wynne, now pastor of St. John's Church in Raleigh.

"First Thursday" Luncheons began with Ron Niland, a member of our church who is Manager for the City of Mount Airy, as the featured speaker. These luncheons were held in the Small Dining Room for anyone, but especially catered to business people to come together from 12 noon to one, have a simple meal, and hear a Christian witness from a business or professional person. The featured speakers for the remaining spring months were as follows: Ray Benefield, a missionary to English-speaking European Baptist churches; Dr. Roger Kerley, our church member in the medical profession; David Diamont, a former legislator, teacher, coach; and Jack Horne, Senior Vice-President City Executive of Community Bank.

Mark Fore, a magician and comedian from Fletcher, NC, came to entertain for the Adult Valentine Banquet.

February is WMU Focus Week with this year's theme: Time to Grow. An all-out-effort was made through The Announcer to spot-light each mission group, explaining the purpose and meeting times of each, and to encourage the women of the church to join in and become "mission-minded." The culmination of this effort was a luncheon at which several women in our church shared their Christian mission experiences.

A part of our church's community responsibility since the 30's has been Boy Scout Troop 538. February 19 was Boy Scout Recognition Sunday. Later that month Josh Martin was selected Boy Scout of the Year by the Dogwood District, and another church member, Andy Webb, was given the Silver Beaver Award.

The Long Range Planning Committee headed by Bob Demcio presented in March a completed study that was adopted in the April Quarterly Business meeting.

Also in April, Barbara Joyner, a well-known WMU worker, speaker, and author came to our church to speak on a Tuesday morning. Invitations to hear her were issued to the Surry Baptist Association.

That Easter the Chancel Choir presented Easter Celebration. The spring production by the Children's Choir was the musical We Like Sheep.
Seaside with the Savior was the 1995 theme for Vacation Bible School under the direction of two very dedicated and talented leaders, Paula Brinkley and Cindy Wilson. The adult teacher was Dr. J.L. Wilson, Pastor of Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem.

In May 1995, David Rowe went to Albania, representing NC Baptist Men, to plan for building a road to inaccessible parts of that country. August found Mary Rowe in Switzerland teaching Bible School and crafts to children of missionaries in Europe who had come together for a week long study and workshop. In October, Alice Faye Brannock joined with a team of medical professionals in the project “Operation Smile,” visiting other countries, operating to improve oral or facial obstructions and/or disfigurements.

The Youth had a most interesting service in August during which was shared verbally and with slides their many activities such as Winter Retreat, Snowshoe Ski Trip, Children’s Easter Egg Hunt, Spring Retreat, Lake Norman Outing, Sunday Night Live, Fort Caswell, and their mission trip to Charleston, SC.

Throughout the summer and fall, the pulpit was at times occupied by various visiting ministers: Sam O’Neal; Wayne Trexler, Surry Baptist Association Director of Missions; Dr. Michael Blackwell, President of NC Baptist Children’s Homes; Bill Bailey, a product of our church serving as pastor of Crete United Methodist Church in Crete, Illinois; and Daylon Green, ordained minister and member of Calvary Baptist Church. Also Kevin Rutledge, a missionary to the Czech Republic and a native of Charlotte spoke at the Missions Breakfast jointly sponsored by the WMU and Baptist Men.

“Catch the Vision Sunday” in October had Albert Long, a well-known athlete who in his words has become a “salesman for Jesus,” to speak. This special day began with a Baptist Men’s Breakfast and ended at noon with a church-wide “pig-pickin’.”

Doug Bingman, a very active member of our church and Director of the Brotherhood for the Surry Baptist Association, became licensed to preach October 24, 1995. (His ordination service was held in our church September 14, 1996.)

In November, Chaplain Supervisor Sharon Englebretson was the featured speaker at an informal dinner and seminar on “The Spiritual Care of Children.”

Just before Christmas Operation Shoe Box and the Angel Tree gave all the church members a chance to share at home and abroad. The Chancel Choir presented Alfred Burt Carols. And the children’s choir featured the musical, “Wise Guys and Starry Skies.”

An “after Christmas” gift was the church-sponsored Bloodmobile, December 28. The year ended with a service led by our college students.
1996

A faithful member of the church staff, Annie McBride, who retired after having served twenty-three years, was honored the last Sunday in January with an "Annie McBride Sunday." Annie was not a member of our church while she worked, but after her retirement she chose to become a member.

Some other events that took place in 1996 include the following: the dentists and medical doctors in our church shared their involvement in the Surry Medical Ministries; Alice Fay Brannock spoke at the WMU Brunch telling her experiences from her medical mission trips to Panama (1992), Russia (1994), and Kenya (1995); Larry Keesler took part in an evangelistic effort in Cuba; Betsy Beamer Reeves, a former member of this church, and her friends (Moving Liturgy) from Burlington churches performed a visual worship service; World Mission Conference was observed for four days in our church and in the home of Kent and Martha Morgan; WMU, Baptist Men and our Youth prepared lunches for the Salvation Army; and Baptist Men's Day took place with Bill James, Woody Jordan, and Scott Wilson as speakers.

At Easter the Chancel Choir presented a Saturday night concert, "No Other Lamb." The Children's Choir gave a concert later in May entitled, "100% Chance of Rain." Still another concert by the Living Miracles, a singing group from south central Pennsylvania, was presented.

In April, the church adopted a three-year renewal plan for "Challenge to Build/Here's Hope" pledges to defray the cost of our loan on the Old Sanctuary Building.

Also in April, a reception honoring Nadine Bradley was held. Nadine and her husband, Oren, came to this community when Oren became Director of Missions for the Surry Baptist Association. They both joined our church, and while he was busy serving many churches, she became a most valuable member in our church, serving on many committees, teaching, speaking and leading; our church greatly benefited by their memberships. Nadine moved to Brookridge Baptist Retirement Home in Winston-Salem.


The Youth as always found many kinds of life-changing experience at Fort Caswell; the mission trip to Circleville, WV; cooking out at Joy Ranch Children's Home in Hillsville, VA; directing Backyard Bible Club and various other activities and outings. All of this was shared on Sunday, August 18, with the church congregation in a Youth-Led Worship.

Fourth – sixth graders participated in a July Children's Discipleship Week on "Sports and Competition;" Senior High students had a "Back to School Getaway" weekend for fellowship, worship and whitewater rafting in West Virginia. The Baptist Men held a golf tournament in Old Mill Golf Club that they nicknamed SWIT.
Our church voted to have a love offering for short term missionaries from our church. Alice Faye Brannock, the first to benefit from this decision, went to Ecuador in the fall.

Seven local churches sponsored “The Happening” with Albert Long and his team of committed Christians. Our church was host church for this event that lasted four days in November.

With Christmas approaching many activities occurred. The WMU’s Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions centered on the theme, “Missionaries: From Churches with Love.” Everyone began filling shoeboxes for “Operation Christmas Child” and buying gifts for the Angel Tree. The Creative Ministries gave three performances of “Catacombs.” The Emmanuel Class provided meals for the needy families. Baptist Men adopted the Salvation Army kettle one Saturday. The choirs all joined together this year to present the musical, “Emmanuel, God with Us.” A progressive dinner with caroling to shut-ins and a gift exchange were enjoyed by the youth. Then the Church-wide Christmas Party was held and a Christmas Eve Service.

1997

The Diaconate initiated a new team ministry with each team serving a different purpose in order to better serve the church. (Families would no longer be assigned to the deacons for watchcare.) These teams are new member ministry, homebound ministry, hospital and bereavement ministry, visitation and evangelism ministry, prayer ministry, and inactive member ministry. The Diaconate also began to have an active part in the worship service and in speaking to departing worshipers. The prayer ministry under the leadership of Shirley Brinkley challenged the church to become Prayer Warriors, and this led to the Prayer Chain.

Kevin Wilson, our Minister of Youth and Education, was on a mission trip to South Africa at the end of February and into March. The mission team held workshops and seminars on “Strengthening the Family” in a Baptist Church near Cape Town. Groundwork for a possible future trip for our Youth was made.

Ann Honeycutt became a part-time secretary replacing Shannon Messer who resumed being a full-time college student.

Judy Reif prepared the Adult Valentine Banquet, and the youth were the servers. Mark Fore, the entertainer, made a return visit.

February was also time for WMU Focus Week. At their Brunch, Larry Keesler shared his mission experiences in Cuba most interestingly. The WMU study course was entitled “New Beginnings.”
The Baptist Men attended the first Surry Association Baptist Men’s Rally with Steve Fussell from our church being a part of the program. This group has been quite busy painting Sunday School rooms, tending to needful jobs, and fixing breakfast at the Salvation Army, feeding hundreds. Later the Salvation Army recognized them for this deed. At the same time recognition was given to Kevin Wilson for the many ministries for underprivileged youths performed by the youth of our church.

George Bullard, a well-known South Carolina Baptist, held a seminar at our church in March, “The Changing Church.”

The 7th and 8th grade youth were privileged to go on the Junior High Beach Retreat to Ocean Isle Beach. Their retreat theme was “Handling Peer Pressure.”

“People Count Day” was again observed in May. Also that month we had a youth led worship service of Telling through Music, Personal sharing, Dance, and Giving. Fourteen youth participated in addition to the Youth Ensemble.

Surry Baptist Association voted to build new facilities adding to the present office structure. It was recommended that each resident member give at least sixteen dollars with the funds to be received between May to October, 1997.

Clyde Dupin, an international crusade evangelist, held a city-wide revival at the Mount Airy High School stadium. Our church nursery facilities were made available for the night meetings and the daytime activities were held in our Fellowship Hall (June 8-15).

In July, the Vacation Bible School attendants found themselves out west on the “Circle of Friends Ranch” for a wonderful time being transported by those superb leaders, Paula Brinkley and Cindy Wilson.

A “Blitz-Build” Habitat for Humanity took place for ten days in mid-July with many members from our church taking part by supplying food, materials, or manpower.

The youth were responsible for one of the August worship services using the theme “The Gift Goes On.” Sixteen participated with slide presentations and personal reflections of their summer experiences on their retreat to Fort Caswell, mission trip to Crystal Coast Habitat in Morehead City, the Mount Airy Habitat “Blitz-Build”, and numerous other activities in which they were involved.

Our church became involved in putting together a new pictorial directory in the fall.

Keith Carter of Marietta, Georgia was our guest speaker for the “I’ll Be There” Sunday. He said because of events in his own life, he tries to make a difference in other’s lives. He also spoke at a youth-parent meeting in the afternoon.
More of the fall events included the WMU held their Fall Brunch; youth and parents attended a Wake Forest football game; Pony Express was chaired by Bill Johnson; “Autumn Leaves Dress Down Sunday” was held to accommodate festival workers; GA’s distributed a bulletin on “Ways to Create Mission Giving”; the Rev. Ginny Britt, an outspoken advocate for the less fortunate, spoke on a Wednesday night; The Rev. Tom Ogburn, missionary to Thailand, gave a first-hand report of how missions must operate today; and the eighth annual Angel Tree was again sponsored by the youth.

Again the Week of Prayer was observed in the WMU groups, Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were delivered, Church-wide Christmas Party was enjoyed, special music from all the choirs added to our Christmas joy, and the Christmas Eve Service made us mindful of the true celebration of Christmas. The Rev. Wayne Trexler came as guest minister for the last Sunday with a sermon titled “Endings and Beginnings” and appropriately it was followed with the hymn “Go Tell It on the Mountains” – thus closing 1997.

1998

Beginning a New Year 1998, Dr. Langford’s sermon was “Destined to be a Great Year”. A prayer that Dr. Langford offered in 1998 was “Renew Thy Church (O, God!). Renew thy church through reconciliation, ministry through gifts, and missions.”

Bishop Wellington Boone of Atlanta was at First Baptist Church for renewal services on Friday night, January 30, and Saturday morning, January 31. The theme of these sessions was “Renew Thy Church: Reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Sunday morning, February 1, 1998, a group of young adults from First Baptist Church, Reidsville presented “Make Us One” in our worship service. “Make Us One” is a musical drama that invites us to recognize our unity in the family of God.

The Diaconate sponsored a workshop on “Care-Giving” conducted by Maurice Briggs of the School of Pastoral Care at Baptist Hospital.

Both Robert Poplin and Mary Rowe went on mission trips in early 1998. Mr. Poplin went to South Africa for two weeks of ministry with a team from Surry Baptist Association while Ms. Rowe went to Mexico.

Doug Bingman was awarded his “Diploma in Ministry Training” from the Boyce Bible School of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in December of last year.

Each Thursday morning during February and March, our pastor, Dr. Langford, led a one hour Bible Study on gifts: “Serving God, Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts.”
On February 15, Surry Baptist Association held an Open House-Dedication of the completed new facilities on Welch Road with two duplicate services at 2:30 and 4:00 pm.

Just before her death, February 24, Emily Hiatt contributed an album of great historical significance to our church—It was compiled by her grandmother, Emma Boyd, and will be kept at the church for future viewing and reference.

On March 8, the following church members shared in the sermon, “Every Christian a Minister,” Mary Rowe, Amy Demcio, Steve Fussell, Kate Refvem, and Cherie Acker.

Larry Keesler celebrated his 18th anniversary at FBC as Minister of Music on April 1.

Holy Week Schedule
Sunday, April 5 at 11:00 am—“Look to Calvary’s Mountain,” a cantata by Lanny Allen on the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, was performed by our Chancel Choir. On Thursday, April 5 at 7:00 pm, we had our Maundy Thursday Service with the Lord’s Supper. Easter Sunday Worship was at 11:00 am followed by the Church Children’s Easter Egg Hunt.

The Senior Adult Choir from FBC, Stanley, NC (Al Miller is the pastor), directed by Tim Beam, gave concert on Monday morning, April 20 at 11:00, followed by lunch.

“People Count Day” was Saturday, May 2 and involves
- a day devoted to helping people at their point of need
- Acknowledging the mission field in one’s own back yard.
- Strengthening church fellowship.
- Reaching out to others with Christian love and understanding.
Volunteers were needed for these projects: Stoneville tornado clean-up, roof repair for a family of six in Mount Airy, yard work and painting for a lady with chronic health problems.

During June, twenty-five youth and adults went to Puerto Rica along with members from four other NC Baptist churches to renovate homes and churches in the Juana Diaz area.

The Church Council agreed to form three committees to implement its top three challenges: adult discipleship, inter-generational, and an additional praise and worship service opportunity. These challenges are a result of the church assessment done in September, 1997.

The Discipleship Committee sponsored an interactive study “Thine Is the Kingdom.” The sessions began on Wednesday evening, June 3,
Both Kevin Wilson and Dr. Langford had staff anniversaries. Dr. Langford’s was June 15 – nine years of ministry at First Baptist Church while Kevin Wilson completed eight years on May 15.

An early morning worship service with a varied format was started in June in the Fellowship Hall. This service came into being as a result of the church assessment.

Vacation Bible School was held July 12-16 with the theme “God’s Champions.” First Place, a Christ-centered health program focusing on weight control, began in January and resumed a session to run August 26 – November 18 on Wednesday nights.

Third annual “I’ll Be There” Sunday was Sunday, October 4. Guest speaker for both services was Christian singer, Kyle Matthews. A BBQ lunch followed the 11:00 worship service.

South African pastor, Rev. Francis Moses will preach October 18. He is the pastor of Paarl Baptist Church, Cape Town, South Africa. The Surry Baptist Association is in a five-year partnership with Baptist churches in the Cape Town area. Rev. Moses is part of a team of fifteen Christians from Cape Town who concluded their ministry among us on October 28.

Stephen Foss began his work among us in Surry County on November 3. He is available for counseling each Tuesday from 3-8 pm at the Surry Associational Resource Center on Welch Road. He holds licensure as a North Carolina Marriage and Family Therapist. This ministry is another exciting work sponsored by our association.

The Emmanuel Class led our church in providing and delivering hot Thanksgiving meals for less fortunate families for the fifth year. Each year the number of meals delivered has grown, and this year 157 families (545 children and adults) were recipients of these meals.

To help our church family prepare for the coming of Jesus’ birth, an Advent Devotional Booklet was printed. This booklet had a devotional thought for each day during Advent written by our own church members – of all ages! Also the RA’s began delivering Christmas cards to the church family to raise money for world missions.

The Church-wide Christmas Party was December 16. The program included singing favorite Christmas songs and presentations by the Preschool Choir, Music Makers, Young Musician Handbells, and Women’s Ensemble. Terri and Chris Ingalls read “The Littlest Angel” which was followed by the Preschool Christmas Pageant.

The Chancel Choir presented “The Promised Messiah” which is based on the traditional service held each Christmas Eve in the chapel of Kings College, Cambridge, England.
The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion was held in the sanctuary on December 24 at 7:00 pm.

1999

In January Rev. Charles Allard led our church in a weekend Bible Study on “The Sermon on the Mount.” Dr. Allard is the pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church in Raleigh. The 5th and 6th Grade Girls Sunday School Class led our church family in participating in the “Souper Bowl of Caring.” Over $270.00 and 200 cans of food were donated to the Surry Medical Ministries.

The annual Valentine’s Banquet was held on February 14 in the Fellowship Hall. Along with delicious food, those attending enjoyed entertainment provided by The Potluck Players featuring Terri Ingalls and friends.

Also in February, the House and Grounds Committee published a list of badly needed repairs and maintenance items that need to be done to our facilities. March was set aside as the month in which the church family was to give over and above other church commitments to the Facility Repair Fund. Outside steps and handrails were worked on first in March.

The Week of Prayer for Home Missions was March 7-14. The theme for the week was “God at Work” and our goal was $4000.00.

Sadly, the church family received on March 15 a letter of resignation from Dr. Jim Langford to become Intentional Interim Pastor at First Baptist, Concord. A reception was held honoring Jim and Sandra for their ten years of ministry with us on their last Sunday, April 11. They will be greatly missed.

The Bereavement Committee Chair Sarah Lee McGee wrote in the newsletter, “The willingness of all our members to help with meals for our bereaved families is overwhelming and your dedication is always heartwarming and very much appreciated.” The Bereavement Committee continues their very effective ministry to those in our congregation who lose loved ones.

Special Holy Week activities included the following:
1) Sunday, March 28 the Chancel Choir presented “Calvary’s Mountain”
2) Thursday, April 1, we held our annual Maundy Thursday Service with The Lord’s Supper.
3) Friday, April 2 from noon to 3:00 pm area ministers spoke at Trinity Episcopal Church on the Seven Last Words of Christ.
4) Sunday, April 4 a Sunrise Service was held at 6:45 am. and our Easter Worship was at 11:00.

In April the long awaited “Walking with Christ” cookbooks arrived. Shirley Brinkley had spent countless hours putting together this cookbook/devotional that
contains over 650 recipes and 650 thoughts of inspiration. It met with rave reviews! Proceeds from the cookbook sales will go to offset the loan on the Old Sanctuary Building.

“People Count Day” was held on Saturday, May 1. Different Sunday School classes and mission groups planned projects to help those in need. The Bradley Mission Group sponsored a Bloodmobile on Monday, May 3.

The church family prayed for the James family as Bill, Terry, and Rebekah left for Russia to finalize their adoption of 2 ½ year old Boris, a Russian orphan.

On Sunday, June 6, at the close of the worship service, the Deacons submitted for church action a recommendation to license Bob Josey to preach. The church voted to do so.

Summer events included VBS and the Youth Mission Trip. This year’s VBS theme was “Under Construction: A Habitat for Humanity Vacation Bible School.” The youth traveled to Circleville, WV to minister with Almost Heaven Habitat for Humanity. Also Alice Brannock went to Peru on another mission trip with “Operation Smile.”

Adult Bible studies during the summer on Wednesday nights were “Lord, Teach Us to Pray” and “Passion, Promise and Praise” which is based on the book of Psalms. Various church members led the sessions each week.

The Highway Class elected to change its name to the Jim Bray Class to honor the memory of their long-time teacher and good friend.

The church voted yes to use the Intention Interim Ministry during the transitional period before looking for a new pastor. The Personnel Committee received and interviewed candidates for the position. In August they recommended that Rev. James H. Fox, Jr. of Front Royal, VA be called to lead us. He brought the sermon “The Face of Jesus” at the 11:00 worship service on August 22. The following Sunday the church voted on whether to call Rev. Fox. We had 83% vote in favor of calling Rev. Fox, but he declined the call because it was not 90% or better.

The House and Grounds Committee had numerous evening work sessions throughout the fall and winter, and their efforts were very noticeable, particularly in the Education Building!

Rev. Amis Daniel and his wife, Francis, joined us in mid-October to bring our messages on Sunday mornings. Prior to their coming, we enjoyed the sermons of Rev. Edgar Whitlock, Dr. Jack Noffsinger, Dr. Lynn Buzzard, and Rev. C.F. McDowell.

Annual mission projects continued. The Emmanuel Sunday School Class again delivered hot turkey meals to 160 needy families in our area. Members bought gifts for the names on the Angel Tree. The Youth led us once more in participating in “Operation
Christmas Child.” This is a project of the international Christian relief and evangelism organization, Samaritan’s Purse. It sends a message of hope to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoeboxes, relief aid and Christian literature. In addition to these yearly projects, our church participated in several ways to help with Hurricane Floyd Relief. Some of our men went down east twice during the fall to work, our Mission Friends gathered almost 600 books to send to the Korean Mission in Goldsboro that lost everything, we accepted contributions early in the fall for flood relief, and at Christmas we sent over $1200 to help buy Christmas gifts for flood victims in the Rocky Mount area.

On Monday, December 13 we were treated to a concert by harpist extraordinaire, Greg Buchanan. His program included electrifying and aggressive improvisations on familiar hymns and carols.

Other Christmas events included the Church-wide Christmas Party and Preschool Pageant on December 15, the Chancel Choir’s presentation of “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly,” and the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. The church once again had an Advent Devotional Guide written by various members of all ages to use through the Advent season.

Conclusion

During the past five years, the Senior Adult group, through the splendid planning of Juanita Tucker and Dot Boyles, was offered more than forty trips or events.

The Youth under the leadership of Kevin Wilson also maintained an active ministry. Many activities have become traditions. Each year they have offered the January “All You Can Eat” Pancake supper; a Winter Retreat including skiing; helping at the Valentine Banquet; hosting the Youth/Senior Adult Bingo Brunch; going on mission trips in and out of state, and even off-shore; sponsoring Easter Egg Hunts, Backyard Bible Clubs, and food collections -- all for the underprivileged; attending inspirational Fort Caswell retreats; square dancing with parents, friends, and even siblings; tailgating with parents at Wake Forest football games; working alongside parents to make a difference in someone’s life by painting, repairing, or yard work; holding an annual Christmas Party for Hispanic children; sponsoring Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes and the Angel Tree; and preparing their worship services. (They have offered more than twelve “After Church Luncheons.) This list does not include the many different ministries or outings that have been squeezed in between.

Several of our young men have received their Boy Scout Eagle Awards during the past five years. These include John Brewington III, Daniel Crane, Jonathan Crane, John Kerley, Lock Rowe, and Ben Webb.

Expected are the seasonal mission offerings as promoted by the WMU along with their Focus Week, Weeks of Prayer and Spring and Fall Brunches. The directors for this
time period have been Martha Morgan and Lillie Douglas. The organization has eight adult groups, and Acteens, GA’s, and Mission Friends are also a part of WMU.

The Baptist Men have been actively serving not only our church and community, but joined with the NC Baptist Men to work in the flood areas of the state. Joe Denney, Steve Fussell, and Bill James have been the directors. RA’s and Challengers are sponsored by this group.

Cindy Wilson has served most faithfully as the leader for the Children’s Moment in the worship service. She has been and continues to be a blessing to our church.

The Diaconate made up of thirty-six men and women serve on a three-year rotating plan. It is now a service-oriented group to assist the minister and the membership at large. Gene Garland, Tom Douglas and Clark Bledsoe have been the chairman during this five year period.

Yes, God has richly blessed us in our past, and so we look forward to continuing our walk with Him into a very challenging future.
First Baptist Church History Update
Covering the years 2000-2004
By Martha Morgan

There are many new beginnings in any life, but the coming of a new minister in a church marks a new phase. It makes possible a time of examining the ways things have been done in the past and the possibilities of ways to grow in the future. The years 2000-2004 reflect an exciting time in the life of First Baptist Church. Under the leadership of Dr. Roger Gilbert and a strong laity, we renovated facilities, undertook a financial campaign to pay for the Building Fund debt, increased our missions awareness and participation, and, in the process, grew closer to God and each other.

2000

As the millennium began, Rev. W. Amis Daniel from Kernersville was preaching on Sunday mornings. On Sunday, February 6, the church voted to call Rev. Daniel to become our interim pastor. He served us well, both in pulling us closer together as a congregation and in leading us to worship God. His counsel to the Pastor Search Committee, which began its work in March, was invaluable, as was his work with many other committees in the church. Both Rev. Daniel and his wife Frances left very positive marks of love on our church family.

Even though the church was without a full-time minister, the laity continued to plan and organize and minister. Organizations functioned as usual, and the work of the Lord in our church moved forward.

The House and Grounds Committee, under the leadership of chairman Bob Demcio, continued renovations as it included church members in painting and making much needed repairs to the church building. Though the snow slowed down the work, several faithful men finally completed the Tuesday night painting sessions on March 7. Then in the spring, the committee organized two "Exterior Workdays," engaging a small but dedicated group of volunteers in improving the grounds. Later in November, House and Grounds sponsored "Planting Day," a time for planting 200 tulip and daffodil bulbs and pruning trees. Their work was a wonderful reminder of the verse that says, "Whatever your task, put yourself into it as done for the Lord..." Colossians 3:23.

The church family was excited to acquire a shiny, white van proudly bearing the name of First Baptist Church. The van was used for several years, mostly for youth and senior adult trips.
February 13 brought a very special occasion in the ordination of church member Bob Josey as a minister of the gospel. The ordination service was conducted by Diaconate Chair Clark Bledsoe, Gene Garland, Rev. Cecil Hill, and Rev. Dan Merritt.

On the day of the Super Bowl, our Sunday School class of fifth and sixth grade girls again led our congregation in the Souper Bowl of Caring. This year our girls chose the Children’s Center of Surry County to be the recipient of their collection.

The Adult Valentine Banquet provided fellowship and fun through a wonderful meal. Entertainment was provided by New Jerusalem, a group made up of local musicians, including our own church member Tony Dalton.

On February 13 as a part of WMU Focus Week, our ladies led in Sunday morning worship. During that week they hosted a lunch for the Mount Airy Police Department, the Emergency Medical technicians, and the local Fire Department, agencies that serve our community in crisis situations.

Women also found ways to minister and worship God through handwork. Mary Rowe, who made the beautiful banners that grace our sanctuary, taught a session on Bannermaking at the WMU Annual Session at Ridgecrest Conference Center. Women from the church donated scraps of felt for the occasion. Also, a new craft group became a part of the WMU. Among other things, they made gowns, blankets, and bed sacks for Brenner Children’s Hospital. A major project of the group was making Chrismons, used to decorate the annual church Christmas tree.

The Walking with Christ devotional cookbooks, with recipes and devotional thoughts from our church family and edited and published by Shirley Brinkley, continued to be sold with all profits going toward the debt on the Old Sanctuary Building. Oxmoor House publishers planned to recognize the book in their America’s Best Recipes by including selected recipes from our book in theirs.

The Diaconate Prayer Team prepared prayer calendars for each week of Lent and sponsored a prayer vigil, beginning at the close of the Maundy Thursday Communion Service and continuing until Friday morning. Throughout the year the Prayer Team was responsible for activating the prayer chain when requests were made for immediate prayer needs.

WMU, under the leadership of director Sarah Lee McGee, led the church in its observation of the Week of Prayer for Home Missions, with its theme being How Shall They Hear? By All Means! Our churchwide goal for the Home Missions Offering was $4,444.44, a creative amount designed to catch attention and be remembered.

On July 16, our own Lauren Tucker was commissioned in Falls Creek, Oklahoma, by the North American Mission Board to serve as a US C2 missionary for two years. She served on the house staff at Day Springs Villa, a shelter for homeless and battered women and children.

Members of all ages were involved in numerous mission projects. For example, the fifth and sixth grade GA’s collected items (pens, pencils, shampoo, deodorant, etc.) for the Christian Woman’s Job Corps in California. Throughout the year the WMU
included the church family in the collection of food for Yokefellow Cooperative Ministries and Surry Medical Ministries. In addition, the WMU collected items including toilet tissue, paper towels, laundry detergent and monetary gifts for the Women’s Shelter; receiving blankets for the SBA Layette Ministry; and teddy bears for the Highway Patrol to give to children who were accident victims. The Bradley Mission Group of the WMU sponsored their annual Bloodmobile in May at the Red Cross Building.

Several other annual mission projects were churchwide. The Emmanuel Sunday School Class continued to include church members in feeding a Thanksgiving meal to less fortunate families. Another churchwide project was “Operation Christmas Child,” sponsored by Samaritan’s Purse. Individuals and families filled shoe boxes for children to be delivered throughout the world. Also, for the eleventh year all church members were encouraged to prepare gifts for an “angel,” chosen from the Youth sponsored Angel Tree in the breezeway.

The children of the church had many experiences for growth. Middle Schoolers (seventh and eighth graders) enjoyed the annual “Middle School Beach Retreat” at Ocean Isle Beach in April. Their topic was What’s Love Got to Do with It? Also Rebecca James, Amanda James, and Meghan Tilley participated in Bible Drills in both the association and state. The Vacation Bible School theme in June was Outback Games: Hope of Glory—Jesus in You! The offering the children collected, $735.61, was given to the North Carolina Baptist Children’s Homes. Cindy Wilson and Paula Brinkley were directors of VBS. The Children’s Sunday School Department sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt for preschoolers and K-3 children of our church. Members donated candy and small prizes for the event.

The Youth of the church, led by Minister of Youth Kevin Wilson, were very active. They had numerous fundraisers, which helped pay for many projects, including their Winter Retreat, a trip to Fort Caswell in June, their summer mission trip to Rocky Mount to help with Hurricane Floyd recovery efforts, a Youth sponsored Children’s Easter Egg Hunt for children at Bailey’s Trailer Park in Westfield, and a skiing trip to Snowshoe Ski Resort in West Virginia. In addition, they hosted their annual Senior Adult/Youth Bingo Brunch, which gave them and the senior adults a chance to get to know each other better, and had their annual Youth and Family Western Dinner and Square Dance. In November they held their eleventh Annual Youth and Family Workday, a time in which they helped senior adults with tasks such as raking leaves, cutting firewood, and cleaning house. They led in an annual Hispanic children’s Christmas party at First Baptist Church in Dobson at which they shared the Christmas story, played games, and provided a snack supper. “Saturday Night Live” continued during summer months, allowing host families in the church to provide a place and a meal for Sunday night youth meetings. Our Youth ministry worked with the Youth ministry of Central United Methodist Church to provide a “Prom Breakfast” in our fellowship hall, which was open to all local juniors and seniors after the Prom. Students in our church and community benefited from these experiences.
Another active group was the Senior Adults. They attended an associational hamburger/hot dog lunch at Mount Carmel Baptist Church, toured Pike Electric and then had lunch at Dot and Ben Brannock’s mountain home, saw *My Fair Lady* at Barter Theater, went to Boone to visit the Hickory Ridge Homestead Museum where they saw the outdoor drama *Horn in the West*, traveled to the Blue Ridge Parkway and had lunch at Chateau Morrisette, and saw the Christmas lights at Mc Adenville in December. Dorothy Boyles served as chairman of the Senior Adult Committee.

On October 8, we celebrated our 121st Anniversary and Homecoming with a special morning worship service and a covered dish luncheon. Dr. Al Miller, former pastor, preached in the worship service and *New Jerusalem* provided special music. An addition to the event was the sale of First Baptist Church afghans, designed with a picture of one of our beautiful stained glass windows from the old sanctuary. The proceeds from the sale helped reduce the debt of the Building Fund. In addition, a special offering was collected for the same purpose.

Another event which made the fall a meaningful time was our Revival, held October 29 - November 1. Rev. Tom Stocks was guest minister, and Rev. Cyrus Bush and Rev. Larry Keesler led the music. The WMU held a Prayer Breakfast at Ridgecrest with special emphasis on the upcoming revival.

Easter and Christmas brought times for special music, including Sunday School Socials and Carol Sings and music presented by our choirs. The Chancel Choir presented *No Other Lamb* on Palm Sunday under the able direction of Rev. Larry Keesler, Minister of Music. At Christmas the Preschool Choir, Music Makers and Young Musicians presented a varied program of music and pageantry after the churchwide Wednesday night Christmas Party meal. The Chancel Choir presented *A Festival of Lessons and Carols* by Hal Hopson during Sunday morning worship. All of these events, including the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in our sanctuary, helped prepare our hearts and minds for the true meanings of these two holidays.

The culminating event of the year was the special trial sermon weekend at which the church family first met Dr. Roger Gilbert and his wife Deidra. The much anticipated weekend of December 1-3 included a Friday evening meal with Diaconate members and their spouses; a Saturday luncheon with members of the Church Council, Personnel and Finance Committees and their spouses; and a Saturday afternoon reception with all members of the church family. Though a deep snow was forecast for the area, in fact, most of the state, for Saturday night and Sunday morning, and church leaders were concerned that roads and the church parking lots would not be usable, concerns proved to be unfounded. There was no snow in Mount Airy, and the church was full of people who wanted to hear Dr. Gilbert preach. The vote in the sanctuary after the sermon was unanimous to call him as our minister, and he accepted our call, giving our church family great hope and enthusiasm for the future.
2001

On Sunday, January 28, the church held a covered dish luncheon honoring Rev. and Mrs. Amis Daniel, who had been a part of our family for seventeen months. They were dedicated Christians with wonderfully warm personalities who helped us smooth the rough places and prepare ourselves for new beginnings.

As we anticipated Sunday, February 4, which was to be the first Sunday that Dr. Roger Gilbert and his wife Deidra would be with us, we found in The Announcer an article from the News/Times in Fair Bluff, North Carolina, written by Dr. Ray L. Lundy. The article had been sent to us by Rev. Harold Shirley. Following is an excerpt from that article, speaking of Dr. Gilbert:

He has been an example of Christian leadership and discipleship to many of us who have watched him as he has gone about his ministry as an unobtrusive servant. Roger has not made much noise, but he has gotten many jobs done, and he has done them extremely well...Often he has served with the weight of the world on his shoulders, but he served the Lord Jesus with all the might and strength he could muster. Some preach louder. Some sing better. Some have larger churches, but none outshine the boy from Huntsville, Alabama in his love for the Lord and his commitment to Him.

Those words about Dr. Gilbert proved themselves true. He wisely informed us that he would observe our ways and listen to us before making any changes. At the same time he ministered to us through his strong, biblical sermons and moved about us with friendship and ministry. During the year he held what he called “N & N Meetings” (Names and Needs). Each member was invited to a gathering in someone’s home. The purpose of the meetings was for our minister and his wife to get to know people and to learn members’ ideas about the needs of the church. During the year Dr. Gilbert laid the groundwork for an Outreach Program and a New Member Orientation Class. Through his weekly article in The Announcer, Pastor to People, he shared bits of wisdom and inspiration, spoke out on issues of importance, and encouraged us to be better Christians. Having Dr. Gilbert as our minister was worth the long wait.

Under the leadership of Kevin Wilson, our youth were active in all their annual events, this year taking a mission trip to Anchorage, Alaska in June. The Middle School students had a retreat at Garden City Beach, South Carolina, in April, and the sixth grade girls’ Sunday School Class surpassed their goals in both money and cans of food in their annual Souper Bowl of Caring. Kellan Wilson, one of our young people, worked with Wendy Harmon, a member who was also a social worker for Social Services, in collecting school supplies from the church family for twenty children who needed assistance. And Seth Greene, Jeff Martin, Dustin Rogers, and Alex Tilley became Eagle Scouts.

Our church library, under the direction of Holley Ramsey, experienced a wonderful growth in the material available to our members. Almost weekly, notice was
given in The Announcer that books, videos, and audiocassettes had been donated by members, allowing the Library Committee to stretch its budget and the members of the church to have much more material available to them.

During WMU Focus Week in February, the ladies, under the leadership of WMU Director Sarah Lee McGee, led the Sunday morning worship service. Also that week, WMU held an appreciation luncheon for city emergency workers. At their Enlistment Brunch in the spring, WMU held a shower for Life Line Crisis Pregnancy Center, with members bringing baby items that could be placed in gift baskets for new mothers at the hospital. Mission Action Chairman Shirley Brinkley continued to lead the church family in giving to the community, including Pampers and baby wipes for the Children’s Center of Surry County, needed items for the Battered Women’s Shelter and Baby Ministry, and items to be used at Camp Mundo Vista. The Bradley Mission Group surpassed by fifteen pints its goal for the annual Bloodmobile in May.

The Diaconate Prayer Team began sponsoring time in the Prayer Room at 9:15 each Sunday morning, praying for God’s guidance and blessing for the Sunday School hour and worship service. The church family was invited to participate. The Prayer Team also placed in The Announcer each week suggestions for prayer by church members collectively.

During the Easter season our church hosted the community Lenten Services. Rev. Larry Keesler, our Minister of Music for 21 years, led the chancel choir in presenting Tenebrae, a Service of Darkness on Maundy Thursday. The Sunday School sponsored a church-wide Easter Fellowship on Easter Sunday morning. Later in the month the church held its annual Mother’s Day Parent-Child Dedication in the morning worship hour. Throughout the year, Rev. Keesler blessed our congregation with the beauty and inspiration of his musical arrangements.

Vacation Bible School in July had as its theme Courageous Kids Stepping Out for Jesus. Under the direction of Cindy Wilson, the school of three-year-olds through fifth graders studied, played, crafted, and gave their mission offering to the North Carolina Children’s Homes. There were classes for Middle Schoolers and adults as well.

Our Sunday School began a new class for young married couples which blossomed rapidly and came to call itself the Kudzu Class because kudzu is known for its rapid growth. The members of the class were also rapidly adding new children to our church family.

The Sunday School Council led each class to appoint an outreach leader. In addition, the new Outreach Committee and the Diaconate Visitation Team launched a church-wide visitation program. Their efforts were designed to target newcomers to town, recent visitors to church, and inactive members. Their work included visitation in the homes, telephone calls, and letters. Visitors took homemade bread to the homes they visited. All church members were encouraged to participate.
The Boggs Memorial Scholarship was established in memory of Paul and Pauline Boggs, long-time and faithful members of the church. Applicants for the scholarship were to be limited to the geographical area of First Baptist Church, and the scholarships were to be awarded on the basis of grades, moral character, service to the community, dedication to the church, and need. The scholarship was awarded for the first time in 2001. There were two recipients in 2002 and none in 2003 because there was not enough interest that year, but available income in 2004 allowed three scholarships to be awarded.

April 29 brought Baptist Men’s Day with our men leading the worship service. Highlights were a wonderful men’s chorus and readings from Scott Wilson, Tom Mc Cluskey, Ralph Epperson, and Benny Brannock. In May the men participated in a Baptist Men’s Missions Rally at Miller’s Creek Baptist Church with an emphasis on worship and fellowship, lay revival ministry, Floyd recovery efforts, and other mission opportunities. In November the organization held a Baptist Men’s breakfast, and in December they sponsored the Salvation Army bell-ringing in front of K-Mart for a day.

Senior Adults joined SBA for a picnic at Groundhog Mountain in May. In July they saw Eleanor: An American Love Story at Barter Theater, and in November they toured Biltmore Estate.

Two of our men were given outstanding recognition for their service to young people. Coach Wallace Shelton was one of seven individuals selected for induction into the North Carolina High School Athletic Association’s Hall of Fame. Coach Shelton led the Mount Airy Granite Bears football team to a 163-63-11 record and five state championships in a career that spanned from 1931 to 1974. Ben Brannock was presented with the Good Shepherd Award, one of the top honors of the Boy Scouts of America. Its purpose was to acknowledge distinguished service by laypersons and pastors leading toward spiritual, physical, mental, and moral development. These two men touched many lives with their talents and concern for young people.

Beginning in September during the usual Wednesday evening Bible Study time, Dr Gilbert shared sessions that focused on orientation to membership. They were designed for new members, but at the request of the Diaconate and the Church Council, the sessions were made available for everyone. The four sessions included (1) Basic Christian Doctrine, (2) A History of the Church with Emphasis on Baptist History, (3) The History and Programs of First Baptist, Mount Airy, and (4) Responsible Church Membership. This was a good opportunity for members to review things they already knew, become acquainted with new information, and put it all in perspective as Baptists.

September 16 brought a Sunday afternoon of good fellowship, ice cream, and singing. Some members brought containers of homemade ice cream, some brought cookies, and everyone enjoyed the Singspiration.

The September 13 Announcer informed us that our thirty-three-year-old sanctuary pipe organ had undergone some much needed repair. Minister of Music Larry Keesler assisted the workers in some of their work, and he and his wife Becky housed the
workers in their home, resulting in a savings in the repair bill. Originally purchased for around $50,000, the organ had appreciated to a current replacement value in excess of $325,000.

In October, the Sunday School, under the direction of Bob Josey, continued its tradition of hosting High Attendance Day on the first Sunday of the new church year. With a theme of Great Day in the Morning, we had 279 in Sunday School, 286 in worship, and fed 345 at the barbeque meal.

Some people were still in the Fellowship Hall after the barbeque lunch when a call came informing them that United States attacks in Afghanistan had begun in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. The group paused for prayer. In The Announcer the next week, Dr. Gilbert wrote, "What can we do? Pray! Out of the bad God can make good... Now is the time for Americans to clean up our own act and pray, not just for America, but for the world." The news continued to be full of war. As the year wound down, Dr. Gilbert's Thanksgiving comments in Pastor to People included: "The terrorist attacks on September 11 remind us that we sometimes take for granted the everyday blessings such as life, safety, family, resources, and freedom. I suspect that this year Thanksgiving will be more meaningful for many. Let us not forget those for whom the holidays will be sadder this year, either because of the absence or passing of family members."

Church members continued to support needs that arose. For World Hunger Day, in addition to showing our support through the World Hunger Offering, members were asked to bring cans of food to the church. The food was given to local food agencies. The GAs and Acteens hosted a Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show in the Fellowship Hall. The proceeds were given to the Children's Home Society. A youth Scavenger Hunt produced more than 2000 cans of food for the needy. Shoe boxes were filled for less fortunate children through Operation Christmas Child. The continuing effort to provide Thanksgiving meals for less fortunate families in our area, renamed the Joanne Jordan Memorial Meal Project, delivered to 175 needy families. And some men in the church replaced the roof on an elderly lady's home.

The November 21 Announcer brought the news that a member who chose to remain anonymous was issuing a challenge to the members of the church by pledging to contribute $10,000 to the building debt principle if nine more individuals or families would match the donation by giving $10,000. By the end of the year, six families had responded to the challenge, providing a total of $70,000 to apply to the debt principle.

Then the November 29 Announcer informed the church that the Building and Grounds Committee planned to introduce for consideration a renovation of the middle building. The current heating and air conditioning system was unpredictable, inefficient, and expensive. The electrical and plumbing work were antique. The many steps in the building made it difficult for some and impossible for others to attend Sunday School. With the endorsement of the Finance Committee, the Church Council scheduled meetings
for members to hear and discuss the proposal, and then to vote in January on the plan to proceed with the renovation.

Even though the church was still rather deeply in debt from the previous renovation project, renovation of the middle building was badly needed, and the timing for improvement was good because of lowered interest rates and construction costs. Members Bob Demcio, a builder, and Richard Loftis, a heating and air conditioning dealer, had put hundreds of hours into the study at no cost to the church.

With the Christmas season came our Angel Tree, allowing members to sponsor needy children by donating gifts. A beautiful fifteen-foot Chrismon tree was decorated at a church-wide Tree Decorating and Carol Sing, followed by a meal prepared by the Fellowship Committee. On Sunday, December 16, under the direction of Larry Keesler, the chancel choir presented A Service of Lessons and Carols. The Wednesday night before Christmas brought the Christmas Party with the Preschool Pageant and Children’s Music, and on Christmas Eve, Dr. Gilbert lead us in a Vespers and Communion Service.

So the year was coming to an end with mixed feelings. There was concern over the September 11 terrorist attack and the war effort since. And there was excitement in the air over the possibilities and difficulties of a new renovation project. We had spent a year with our new minister, and in the experiences of this year we had grown closer together. In spite of the concerns of the times, in our hearts we knew the words of the Psalmist to be true: “The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” Psalm 126:3

2002

The big event of this year was the renovation of the middle building. The favorable vote for the renovation took place on January 27. Bob Demcio and Richard Loftis volunteered to be general contractors, and George Speight agreed to be the daily onsite supervisor. We were able to combine our existing debt with the new one without increasing the amount of our payments. The vote to renovate the middle building included making several other repairs to the church property.

Renovations began almost immediately. They included the installation of ramps and an elevator, which made the entire building accessible to everyone. The new interior design eliminated wasted space and provided more and larger rooms, and the entire building became bright and cheerful. Bob led us through every step of the way, from the initial idea to the completion of the project. Richard and George gave many hours of leadership and service. Throughout the project Sunday School classes met in nearly every corner, but there was a cooperative spirit and a great anticipation for what was to come. Members were thrilled at what they saw during a Walk-Through Tour on April 24, and the Dedication of the building took place on June 30. In the end, the work was done so efficiently that the actual cost of the project was about $30,000 below budget.
After much investigation, the Finance Committee and Church Council proposed that we conduct a capital fund campaign to help pay for our indebtedness and that we employ Resource Services, Inc. (RSI) to help us develop the campaign. One hundred sixty-eight members were involved in some phase of the preparation work. The *Adventuring in Faith Capital Campaign* goal was $900,000 to be paid over a three-year period. At the close of the worship service on November 10, Campaign Leader Merle Andrews announced that the pledges at that point were $971,480.

In the new year our pastor and minister of education began terms on committees with the Baptist State Convention. Dr. Gilbert became Chair of the Committee on Nominations, while Kevin Wilson became a member of the Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs as well as Missions Coordinator for the North Carolina Baptist Youth Minister Association.

Baptist Men’s Day was January 27. The men began the day with a breakfast. In the worship service they provided a men’s chorus and led throughout the service. Later in the year they assisted the SBA Baptist Men in renovating a house to be used as the Surry Children’s Center Thrift Store. Also, Baptist Men’s Director Ryan Parker coordinated our church’s effort to assist in the Greater Mount Airy area Habitat for Humanity Build in September. The Baptist Men held another breakfast in November. The program for the meeting dealt with the FBC Habitat project, which was scheduled for the summer of 2003.

The Adult Valentine Banquet provided an evening of fun. The youth served the meal, and guest speaker Martha McDowell, with a little help from her husband C.F., entertained, informed and inspired us with a program called *Love Language*.

The WMU provided a Sunday afternoon event in February called *Have a Heart for Missions*. While children assembled hygiene bags for people in need and created hospital tray favors for our local hospital, the adults attended sessions on missions and then heard Kim Wyatt, an international missionary in Toronto, speak on her work with refugees from all over the world. Those attending gave a love offering to aid the street kids of Kiev. During the worship service earlier in the day, the WMU provided a choir, and WMU Director Carole Kerley led in a Woman’s Missionary Moment.

As always, Minister of Education Kevin Wilson led the young people in many worthwhile experiences. Some of the highlights of the year were their summer mission trip to Smyrna, Tennessee, to help with housing renovations, Backyard Bible Clubs, and soup kitchen ministries; collecting needed items for the Surry County Women’s Shelter; a thirty-hour famine to fight world hunger; and their Thursday night home Bible Study. Sixty youth and adults went to Caswell, and the youth collected 1500+ food items through their annual Food Scavenger Hunt.

Under the direction of Cindy Wilson, Vacation Bible School used as its theme *Cruisin’ the Amazing AMAZON: A Jungle Journey to Discover Jesus*. The offering was sent to the North Carolina Children’s Homes.
Individual young people found ways to minister in our church. Kellan Wilson coordinated a churchwide collection of bottled water, mops, paper towels, and other cleaning supplies for victims of severe flooding in several Virginia and West Virginia counties. She also gave church members the opportunity to become sponsors for children all over the world through Compassion International. Rebekah James traveled with 600 other teens and adults on a Focus on the Family Brio Missions Trip to Quito, Ecuador, in July. Rebekah and her mother, Terry James, led the church in collecting items for a mother in need and her new twins. Erin Blackmon collected items through the church for the Children’s Center for her Girl Scout Gold Award project, and Sammy Gentry, Michael Kerley, and Jeff Martin became Eagle Scouts.

Groups of young people gained recognition. This year Gene Garland’s fifth and sixth grade Sunday School class was pictured in *The Souper Bowl of Caring Newsletter*. The Mount Airy High School Varsity basketball team won the 1-A High School State Championship, and that team was made up mostly of FBC youth: Matthew Blood, Ryan Denney, Sammy Gentry, Brian Hayes, and Matthew Jordan.

At the quarterly business meeting in January, the church voted to create the Willard Benevolent Committee to administer proceeds from the estate of Ada Ruth Willard. Mrs. Willard, who had no surviving immediate family, had been “adopted” by members of the Upper Room Class about three years before her death. She lived in a house on Galloway Street and was getting $13.00 in food stamps and around $500 a month in Social Security. Members of the class ran errands for her, made repairs on her house, and called or went by at least once a week. About a month before her death, she changed her will, leaving her estate to FBC, to be used to help people in need. She had quietly saved $49,515 in her freezer. Her house was sold with benefits going to the Habitat house, which our church later built. The proceeds from the benevolent fund were set up to continue to provide rent, utilities, and medicine for people in need.

The Senior Adult Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Dorothy Boyles, took a number of interesting trips including the Easter Music at Calvary Baptist in Winston-Salem; the SBA luncheon cruise at Lake Norman; the dinner theater in Wytheville, Virginia; Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia; and the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. They also had lunch at Midkiff’s Restaurant, afterward hearing a program by Dr. and Mrs. Dale Simmons on their Elder Hostel experiences, and at Christmas ate dinner out and toured the local Christmas lights.

Easter music by the chancel choir included *Tenebrae, A Service of Darkness* on Maundy Thursday, and *No Other Lamb* on Easter morning. Larry Keesler, Minister of Music, organized a new adult handbell choir in March.

In April the church recognized ninety people who had been members of FBC for fifty or more years. A group picture was made, and those present were recognized and presented certificates to honor the heritage they created and the contributions they continued to make in the life of our church.
Also in April, the Diaconate Visitation and Outreach Team, along with the Outreach Committee, began a monthly Outreach Night. They asked church members to provide names of newcomers to town and co-workers who are not in church. The group also directed attention to inactive members.

September 8 brought a Singin’ on the Grounds and Ice Cream Social. Those attending sang favorite hymns, led by Cyrus Bush and Larry Keesler. Cyrus and the choir presented special music, which added to the festivities.

Wednesday, September 11, one year after the day America was attacked by terrorists, the WMU led us to meditate and pray as we remembered victims and their families. In addition, the program focused on North Carolina State Missions and the continuing need to minister around us. The WMU also led us in a Harvest for Hunger, through which the church collected food items for Salvation Army, Yokefellow, and Foothills Food Pantry. Our goal was to collect 1000 items, and when all was counted, we had 1069.

Individuals and groups met needs as they saw them. Alice Brannock went to Brazil on a mission trip with Operation Smile. Under the leadership of Kevin Wilson, our church provided a team for the Mount Airy Relay for Life Walkathon, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, to raise funds to fight cancer. The Emmanuel Sunday School Class provided meals for one hundred seventy families at Thanksgiving, and the church family provided shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Families and groups sponsored angels from the youth-sponsored angel tree, and the church provided volunteers to help bag toys for children through the Salvation Army.

Our revival in October was held during our Adventuring in Faith Capital Fund Campaign. The guest minister was Dr. Jack Causey, and the guest musician was Cyrus Bush. The revival services helped us to increase and deepen our sense of excitement about the future of our church.

As the Christmas season came upon us, we were grateful for a year of accomplishment. We had moved into our newly renovated middle building and had organized a way to help pay for it. In addition, we had shared together another year of learning and serving together, and we looked forward to the future. With the Psalmist, we had every reason to say, “Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.” Psalm 67:3

2003

Even as the year began, plans were underway for the major mission opportunity of the year, the youth-sponsored building of a Habitat for Humanity house in Mount Airy. The youth of our church were joined by thirty-eight young people from FBC, Raleigh, for the actual build in July, but our entire church became involved in planning, construction, food preparation, and transportation. Bob Demcio supervised every detail, and the actual build was completed in only nine days. At a Dedication Service on September 28, church
members gave an old-fashioned pounding to new owners Ray and Dougina Hill and their children.

There were many efforts during the year to raise money for our Habitat Build. One was the sale of Christmas cards made from a Gail Josey photograph of our sanctuary. The children participated by giving their VBS offering to the Build. The fifth and sixth grade Sunday School Class donated the money they received from The Souper Bowl of Caring. Baptist Men held a spaghetti lunch and dessert contest. Mary Etta Young led us in one of her wonderful ham luncheons and a baked goods auction. We even had a Habitat Benefit Golf Tournament with proceeds going to the Habitat Build. Also the profits from the sale of the Willard property were used for the Build. When all bills for the house were paid, we were actually in the black.

Ben Brannock, Wade Johnson, and their crew began the year by preparing a delicious home-cooked breakfast For Ladies Only. All the ladies of the church were invited to this much appreciated event before Sunday School on January 12.

The men had their own breakfast on Baptist Men’s Day later in January. Under the leadership of Director Ryan Parker, they also led in worship with the theme Mission Possible, based on Philippians 4:13—“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Dr. Ken Peavy led in the Children’s Moment, and Meditations were presented by Jack Loftis, Tom McCluskey, and Dr. Mac Sumner. The men held another breakfast in November and supplied bell ringers for a day for the Salvation Army at Christmas.

A video produced during the Adventuring in Faith campaign called Join Us on Our Joyful Journey was designed to introduce our church to newcomers. The video was shown at the January Quarterly Business meeting, and twenty-one copies were placed in the library to be checked out by members and shared with prospects.

The House and Grounds Committee added a new handicap ramp at the back parking lot, making the office and the rest of the building handicapped accessible from the center lot.

At the Adult Valentine Banquet, Magician Matt Fore presented a magical comedy show. He made us laugh and then shared the message of Christ’s love.

The theme of WMU Focus Week in February was Living the Call. WMU Director Carole Kerley presided in the worship service, and speakers were Becky Keesler, Shirley Tillotson, Fonda Dalton, Betty Jones, Melba Jean Umstead, and Terry James. Women and children made up the chorus. In March the WMU hosted a salad and sandwich luncheon for all ladies with Linda Parks, former missionary, as guest speaker. Berta Glen Springthorpe reported on the progress of the new Shepherd’s House and provided opportunities of service for our church family.

Dr. Gilbert continued to challenge and inspire us, both through sermons and his column, Pastor to People in The Announcer. His view of the world always gave us
pause for reflection. In addition to serving us well, he also reached out to Baptist interests in the state by becoming Moderator Elect of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. During 2004 he served as Moderator.

As war in Iraq began, the Diaconate Prayer Team continually urged members to pray fervently for leaders of our country and world as decisions were made. Our members joined the Associational WMU in a Prayer Walk in May, praying for troops serving our country and for the children of our community.

The Discipleship Committee began offering short-term Sunday School classes in the Spring and Fall. Members of existing classes could take advantage of six to eight week sessions on varied topics and then return to their own classes at the end of the period. The Discipleship Committee also sponsored a fall Marriage Enrichment Seminar.

The Senior Adults, led by Dorothy Boyles, again proved themselves to be one of our most active groups. They joined SBA in a covered dish luncheon and program by Art Peters. Trips included touring the toy museum at Old Salem, attending the Easter Celebration at Calvary Baptist in Winston-Salem, and seeing plays at the Barter Theater and Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theater. They had a picnic at Stone Mountain and a cookout at Hanging Rock State Park. In October they traveled to Peaks of Otter to see the fall colors and enjoy lunch, and in December they went to the Morehead Planetarium to see *The Star of Bethlehem*. During Senior Adult Day in May, the entire church acknowledged the past and present contributions of this group and the important role they continue to have in our church. Seniors led in various parts of the worship service.

Our youth, led by Kevin Wilson, had fundraisers and participated in their usual annual events. In addition to leading the whole church in building our Habitat House, they held a Thirty-Hour Famine to raise funds to help feed the hungry around the world. At their annual Youth and Parent Banquet, Martha McDowell led a dialogue on *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers*.

Individual teenagers demonstrated their love for the Lord in numerous ways. Kellan Wilson collected loose change to benefit abandoned babies in Johannesburg, South Africa. Amy Demcio participated in a mission project in Sarajivo, Bosnia, with Campus Crusade for Christ. Katie Demcio and Anderson Rowe traveled to Mexico on a Young Life sponsored mission trip.

Our church continued to grow in our understanding of being a missional church, one that not only sends money to missionaries, but also participates by doing missions in a hands-on way, both locally and globally. On October 29, CBF Missions Coordinator Rev. Jim Fowler, planted seeds by sharing mission opportunities around the world. Kellan Wilson and her father Kevin had already traveled to Cape Town, South Africa in April with an SBC mission group. Alice Faye Brannock worked again with *Operation Smile* in Brazil in August. We continued our work at home by preparing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, donating coats for women and children who were in need, contributing to the Joanne Jordan Memorial Meal Project, and helping with the youth-
sponsored Angel Tree. Our WMU again led in our October *Harvest for Hunger* food drive. We surpassed our goal of 1200 food items in three weeks. And the Rebekah Sunday School Class began a new project of gathering non-perishable and canned food items all year long, periodically distributing them to the needy and to helping organizations. They invited others in the church to join them.

Dr. Gilbert began a new activity called *Pastor’s Pals* in May. For four Thursday afternoons during the month, he met with third and fourth graders. They spent time in recreation, had refreshments, and then enjoyed time studying and discussing what it means to be a Christian and church member. Later, Dr. Gilbert took the children on a trip to Stone Mountain State Park.

Minnie Loflen’s co-workers placed the picture *Jesus with the Children* in the nursery in honor of her thirty years of service. She had been rocking little ones during the Sunday School hour since 1973.

The Kudzu Sunday School Class included in their study a twelve-week parenting class called *Making Your Kids Mind without Losing Yours*. On September 14, Dr. Michael Blackwell, President of the Baptist Children’s Homes was our guest speaker in morning worship. His topic was *The Spirit of the American Family*. Just days before Dr. Blackwell spoke, Rev. Bill Yates led a marriage enrichment seminar which considered personality and gender differences and healthy ways to handle conflict. All of these experiences were beneficial to the families of our church.

Dr. Frank Hawkins from Wilmington was the guest speaker for the Fall Revival in October. Bob Chilton and The Vessels of Clay provided special music. In preparation for the week, the Diaconate sponsored Cottage Prayer Meetings in people’s homes and a Prayer Vigil at the church.

Dr. Gilbert became the moderator of Surry Baptist Association during the fall associational meeting. His leadership proved invaluable, especially after the resignation of Director of Missions Dr. Jack Long.

As the year drew to a close, we enjoyed our traditional celebrations as a church family. The music by the children’s choir on Wednesday night, the selections from the Messiah by the chancel choir during morning worship, and our Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service brought us closer as we celebrated our Lord’s birth and prepared ourselves for a new year of working together in His name.

2004

In the January 8 *Announcer*, Dr. Gilbert reported that in the first thirteen months of our three year designated giving period, we had reduced our building fund debt by forty-four per cent, saving an enormous amount of interest and putting us in a much stronger position to move forward in missions and ministry. He reminded us that we
built a Habitat House and gave generously to the Shepherd’s House, Yoikfellow, Surry Medical Ministries, the Salvation Army, and a variety of other local, state and world mission efforts. Dr. Gilbert wrote, “It should...be pointed out that our financial stewardship is a spiritual matter when our giving is directed toward the support of ministries that share the love of God with people.” Indeed, 2004 became a year of increased missions and ministry awareness and activity throughout the congregation.

The young people, under the direction of Minister of Youth Kevin Wilson, planned and executed an extensive summer mission trip to Cape Town, South Africa. It was an ambitious undertaking that necessitated many fundraisers and endless hours of study and preparation. The theme for the trip was *Answering the Call: Celebrating the Possibilities*. The effort was churchwide in financial and prayer support, and the following youth and adults represented us by going to South Africa from June 22-July 9:

Andrew Blood    Nancy Gentry    Cole Pike
Sarah Brannock  Sam Gentry    J.T. Turner
Mary Kate Brinkley Jan Hudson Laura Varnier
Paula Brinkley  Rebekah James Amanda Wilson
Preston Calloway Nicole Jordan Anna Wilson
Bethany Donnell Jennie Niland Kellan Wilson
Mark Donnell    Marie Niland Kevin Wilson
Jamie Dowell    Ryan Niland Kellye York

A group of our women answered God’s call to spend a week in Helena, Arkansas, a community included in CBF’s Rural Poverty Initiative. This was an effort to help children who are among the poorest in our nation. Our team included Becky Keesler who organized the group, Nancy Belton, Carol Dunning, Patsy Garrett (Carol’s friend from Texas), Elizabeth Martin, Inglis Rowe, and Cindy Wilson. They assisted in working in VBS and teaching children how to swim. They also helped prepare a children’s library to be used by children who otherwise would have no books. These ladies worked in a very hot and difficult environment, and they plan to go back again.

Baptist Men and WMU organized a churchwide soup kitchen called *Feeding Friends*, designed to help serve the hungry in our community. The program, which began in October, served simple but nutritious meals in our small dining room on the second and fourth Thursday nights of each month. It involved all church members who wished to participate, from cooking and serving the meals at the church to helping with dessert preparation, organizing, and calling at home.

Many groups and individuals saw needs and worked to fill them. Alice Brannock traveled to Minsk, Belarus, in Russia in early May to work with *Operation Smile*. Members from our church aided others in the community in creating a *Build a Dream* playground at Riverside Park in May. In addition to individual work, Baptist Men assisted in construction, and groups of Baptist Women provided a meal for the workers.
The GA’s sponsored a *Mothers Matter Food Drive*. The idea originated from Keightley Dalton as she worked on her *World Adventures* in GAs. Collected food was delivered to Yokefellow for mothers who were having difficulty providing healthy meals for their children. The fourth, fifth, and sixth grade Sunday School Class collected 315 cans of food and $723.10 for Surry Medical Ministries in their *Souper Bowl of Caring*.

Terry James continued to request needed items from church members for a mother and her children. Nancy Gentry collected items to help abandoned babies in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Audra Hodges collected 500 pounds of clothing and other household items to aid the Children’s Center. Both girls were working on their Girl Scout Gold Awards. The Acteens asked adult Sunday School classes to contribute pencils and money to buy paper and crayons for the ladies who ministered to the squatter camps in South Africa.

In addition to these missions activities, ministry in our church family grew as well. The Discipleship Committee continued to offer alternative Sunday School classes in an effort to facilitate growth in discipleship. They also worked with the Diaconate New Member Team to begin a Mentoring Program for new members.

*Vacation Bible School*, led by director Cathy McCluskey, used as its theme *Circle of Friends Ranch: Being Friends with Jesus*. Church members were asked to donate money to buy children’s Bibles for children attending Bible School who did not have one. The children’s offering was given to Shepherd’s House.

Though delayed a week because of bad weather, the Baptist Men led the church in worship for Baptist Men’s Day. Bob Demcio, Jim Crossingham, and Wade Armstrong were speakers for the service and Carroll Hooker sang a solo. The Baptist Men took care of numerous ministries as they arose during the year.

*WMU* led in worship during *WMU Focus Week*. Lauren Tucker, who grew up in our church, came back home to share her mission work with us. The service also included a film about NC WMU ministry to the state Women’s Prison. As a part of Focus Week, the WMU hosted a Brunch which honored all widows of the church. Phyllis Elvington, a noted speaker and writer, led the group.

The WMU again prepared a soup and sandwich luncheon for the city emergency workers. They also sponsored *Mission EGGstravaganza!!* by placing an Egg Tree in the breezeway with the names of missionaries in each egg. Church members and families were encouraged to pray for and send notes of encouragement to the missionaries whose names they found in the eggs. The goal for the spring missions offering was $4,000; the amount received was $4,805.

Cindy Coone, Assistant Sunday School Director, led us in celebrating our Sunday School classes. Each week an article in *The Announcer* focused on a particular class, including a picture of the class made by Gail Josey. Copies of the pictures and articles
were placed on classroom doors, helping each person to know more about other classes and aiding newcomers in deciding which class to choose.

Senior Adult Day was celebrated Sunday, May 30, with seniors leading in various parts of the service. Two highlights of the day were the children’s moment led by special guest “Miss Hattie” (Dean Brown) and “Mature Musings,” written and presented by Sarah Lee McGee. Our oldest member, Anna Cockerham, was honored. Senior adults were active throughout the year with trips to the Wycliffe Bible Translators’ Center; New River Bridge and Tamarack, West Virginia; a concert by the North Carolina Baptist Singers; a tour of the State Capitol; an excursion to The Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs; and a play at Abingdon. Melba Jean and Norfleet Umstead co-chaired the Senior Adult Committee.

Sunday afternoon, March 28, brought an Arts and Crafts Fair in the Fellowship Hall sponsored by the Church Council. The event was designed to celebrate the God-given talents of church members. Many members displayed their work, showing a variety of talents and abilities. On a different date the GAs sponsored a *Paint Your Own Pottery* event for girls grades 1-6 and their mothers.

During Lent season, our church hosted community worship services in the sanctuary each Wednesday at noon, followed by light lunches in the Fellowship Hall prepared by our Fellowship Committee. Dr. Gilbert was the first speaker, with other ministers from Mount Airy churches leading on following Wednesdays.

The Chancel Choir, under the direction of Minister of Music Larry Keesler, led the church in worship through music each Sunday morning. During the Easter season, the choir sang *All We Like Sheep* and *Worthy Is the Lamb* from Handel’s *Messiah*. A cantata was presented at Christmas. Accompanists Linda Denney and Joyce Simmons played the organ and piano.

In July nursery workers presented a picture of Jesus with a child at his knee to hang in the nursery in memory of James Tillotson. Lovingly known to the children as *Mr. T.*, James was the only male worker in the nursery. When children were unhappy, especially boys, they went to him. It was not at all unusual to see him rocking two little ones at a time.

Rev. Keesler conducted a Handbell Festival for the adult handbell choir in August. The Friday evening and Saturday morning workshop provided knowledge and inspiration for the group and also served as a recruitment opportunity. This outstanding group added much to worship services.

As our 125th Anniversary arrived, we found ourselves being led by a wonderful staff. We were in a facility that was much more usable than it had been in the past. In the May 20 *Announcer*, Dr. Gilbert wrote that at our half-way mark in the *Adventuring in Faith* financial campaign, sixty-five per cent of our pledges were already contributed. The renovations to the building, including ramps and elevator, were allowing us to
minister in even greater ways. There was a spirit of unity, and church members were volunteering for missions opportunities, both in groups and as individuals, more often than before. We were growing together in the Lord and had every reason to look forward to the future. Dr. Gilbert wrote, *We are seeking to take seriously the teaching of Jesus, who instructed us, “in as much as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.”*

First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina
Church Staff:

Dr. Roger Gilbert, Pastor
Rev. Larry Keesler, Minister of Music
Rev. Kevin Wilson, Minister of Education and Youth
Janice Demcio, Financial Secretary
Ann Honeycutt, Church Secretary
Linda Denney, Accompanist
First Baptist Church
Old Sanctuary Stained Glass Windows
By Liz Solters

Most of us grew up looking at the stained glass windows in the First Baptist Church Old Sanctuary, admiring the colors and the way the sunlight, or lack thereof, changed their appearance. We all know that there are names of people on the windows, but what do we know about those people? The following tries to give some information about the people whose names we saw every week. Most of the information comes from obituaries in the local newspaper (Note that Reverend C. C. Haymore wrote two of those obituaries), and some from local or distant historians. Where appropriate, the author’s name follows the section. First, some information about the windows themselves:

The windows were made by Von Gerichten Art Glass Company. Theodore Von Gerichten and his brother Ludwig were born in Offenbach, Germany and came to America in the late 1800's. When the Von Gerichten brothers died at elderly ages there was no one to take over the business, so the business folded.

The Von Gerichten company reused patterns but did it in such a way that each window is unique. The archives contain glass plates of patterns and they had drawings of windows and patterns. For example, in the photos you sent me of your church stained glass there is a circular pattern around the John the Baptist window. A Von Gerichten representative would have brought that pattern along with others to members of your congregation and the members of your congregation would have chosen that pattern over others they brought. Then they would have chosen something to go inside that pattern - in the case of your church they have chosen the John the Baptist picture. Another church might have chosen that pattern but something else inside it. Or they may have chosen the John the Baptist picture without any pattern at all.

Marilyn Miller, Gahanna, Ohio, from a letter written to Janice Demcio

Installation of the windows was a newsworthy event as evidenced by the following newspaper article:

WORK ON NEW BAPTIST CHURCH - Mount Airy News, January 11, 1912

Contractor J. L. Belton has a force of men at work finishing the new Baptist church in this city, and if nothing prevents the work, such as extremely bad weather, the job will be completed in a few weeks. The men are now putting up the steel ceiling and it is of a beautiful pattern. The walls are ready for the plasterer, and, as soon as the weather
moderates so they can risk it, the plastering will be commenced. A workman was here this week and put in place the three large circular windows. To undertake to describe them we would be sure to fail. They are beauties and cost about four hundred dollars each. They are of tinted glass of beautiful design and are made of a thousand pieces so placed together that it is a real work of art. While there are many colors one is made to thing that amber, green and blue predominate. The window in the west is a reproduction of a famous painting that represents John in the act of baptizing Jesus. The window in the east side of the building is a memorial to Mr. Richard Turner Nutt and his wife Elizabeth and his daughter, Mrs. Maggie Nutt Herring. The window in the South is a memorial to the late Robert Richard Gallaway and his wife Lucy. The windows are circular in form and appear to be ten feet in diameter. They were made in Columbus, Ohio, and a workman came here from Atlanta, Georgia to put them in position.

The following section gives information about the people memorialized in the windows:

DEATH OF MR. R. T. NUTT - Yadkin Valley News, September 20, 1894

On the evening of September 17, 1894, at forty-five minutes past nine o'clock, Mr. R. T. Nutt (born December 30, 1821) died at his home in this place, aged seventy-three years. After a short conflict with the grim monster, his glorified spirit took its departure to its home in the paradise of God. While the summons came suddenly, yet we feel assured he was ready. He joined the Baptist church about thirty years ago, and at the same time took his stand close by the post of duty, which position he honorably held until his death. He was a man of high Christian character, and his life from the time he gave himself to the church, was a living illustration of true Godliness. Though gentle and reserved in manner, yet he was strong in faith, and a strong defender of the truth. His religion was felt rather than seen and in this way he gained the confidence of all who knew him. He was a kind husband, a kind father, a generous friend, a kind neighbor, an upright citizen, ever ready to help those who were in need. His dear wife will miss him, his loving children will miss him, his neighbors will miss him, his church will miss him, and last but not least his preacher will miss him. May divine grace rest upon the bereaved home. The writer will ever cherish his memory. - C. C. Haymore

ELIZABETH L. NUTT

Elizabeth L. Nutt (Mrs. R. T. Nutt) was born in 1833 and was a member of the Ladies Aid Society of the First Baptist Church which was organized March 25, 1887. She served at least one term as President of the Society.

MAGGIE L. NUTT, 1864-1892

Maggie Nutt was born December 17, 1864, in Alamance County, the second daughter among six children, of Richard Turner Nutt and Elizabeth L. Nutt. When Maggie was ten years old, probably in 1875, the Nutt family moved to Neuse River Township in North Wake County.
Maggie was converted and on September 18, 1877, at the age of twelve, she joined the Mt. Vernon Baptist Church which had been founded in 1848.

In 1880, the family had moved again to Alamance County where Mr. Nutt was a millwright at the river, at the site of the Cotton Mill Village. At about this time, at the age of fifteen, Maggie left home. She studied in Raleigh for at least five months. It is likely that during this period she met her future husband, David Wells Herring, a ministerial student from January 1879, to June 1882, at Wake Forest College six miles north of Neuse.

Maggie completed her formal education at Oxford Baptist Female Seminary, Oxford, NC and graduated June, 1883, at the age of eighteen. By that time, her parents had moved to Mt. Airy in Surry County in Western North Carolina, and Maggie taught in a private home for fifteen months. Also, in the meantime, David Herring had entered Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, September, 1882. He graduated June, 1885.

Maggie Nutt and David Herring were married in Surry County August 26, 1885. At the time he was twenty-seven, and she was twenty years old. Four months later (December 9, 1885) they set sail from San Francisco for the mission field in China.

After one term in China, in 1891, the family returned. They had been so careful to avoid sickness in China. Alas, while staying with family in Mt. Airy, they were stricken with typhoid fever. Eventually, Maggie and three children, Manly, baby David, and little Margaret, all died with the infection. They were buried together in Mt. Airy (Oakdale) Cemetery.

Father, David, and one son, George, survived the tragic infection. George, having become aware of the needs of the sick and suffering, became a physician and practiced many years in Indiana. David, compelled by duty to God’s call to China, remarried, fathered six more children, and served on the mission field until 1928 at his retirement.

Though her life was short, Maggie had gladly gone around the world with David Herring to share the Gospel story. She had no guarantee except for God’s love. - Gordon K. Middleton, Jr., October 1989, Raleigh, NC

DEATH OF MRS. D. W. HERRING - Yadkin Valley News, August 11, 1892

Mrs. D. W. Herring, nee Maggie Nutt, fell asleep in Jesus at the home of her parents in this city on last Sunday evening about sunset. In the twilight she passed over the river of death to meet the little angel that had preceded her only one week before. These lines will pierce the hearts of hundreds of her friends here, and will strike a chord of sadness in the hearts of those in that dark land of sorrow to which she carried the message of liberty and light. Mrs. Herring was born December 17, 1864. She was, in her childhood, always interested in the affairs of her church, and was a born missionary, having the true soul of one willing to sacrifice all for her Savior. Long before she ever became engaged to her husband she had signified her desire to engage in the work among
the heathen. She entered Oxford Female Seminary in January, 1880, and graduated therefrom in 1883. In August, 1885, she was wedded to Rev. D. W. Herring, and their union has been blest with four children. Previous to her school days when she was but thirteen years old, she was baptized and connected herself with the Missionary Baptist Church. In company with her husband, who had entered the mission field, she sailed for China. After several years of unceasing labor in the Master’s vineyard she accompanied her husband back to her native home, arriving in Mount Airy last April. God had brought her home to die. She expired August 7th, after a short illness.

The funeral services, which were exceedingly sad and impressive, were conducted by Rev. L. R. Pruett and C. C. Haymore at the Baptist Church in this city. A tremendous crowd paid their last respects and followed her to the grave. She was the first one to be laid to rest in Oakdale, the new city cemetery, and the procession was considered to be as large as any that has been seen in the city.

The writer was never honored by a personal acquaintance with the deceased, but has known her by reputation ever since she stepped off the rostrum at Oxford with her diploma and entered life’s battle. She has been a most enthusiastic assistant in the cause in which her husband was enlisted; she wore the white flower of a blameless life and when she died a model mother, wife and daughter passes beyond, that the stars which she had placed in her own heavenly crown might beam for her brow tired of earth’s toils and cares. In the brightest years of her young womanhood she has gone home to rest, and has left behind her many seeds of kindness, which she has scattered that will bear fruit abundantly. But words are poor consolation for the devoted husband, children, brothers and sisters left behind. She leaves them a precious legacy of a life well spent. Farewell sweet tenant spirit of this earthly house of clay.

ROBERT RICHARD GALLAWAY

Robert Richard Gallaway was born August 10, 1830 in Rockingham County and died May 14, 1901, at the age of 71. He was known, at least by his family, as Bob Dick. He married Caroline Smith on August 21, 1849, but Caroline died in August 1854. Mr. Gallaway came to Mount Airy in 1856 and married Mary V. Cardwell on February 13, 1856. Mary Cardwell Gallaway died in 1869, and in 1874, Robert Richard married Lucy A. Blackwell. Together, they had five children, two girls and three boys. Mr. Gallaway was converted by Dr. A. C. Dixon in 1878 and united with the White Plains Baptist Church. The next year, he moved his membership and helped organize First Baptist Church.

Mr. Gallaway farmed, operated the tan-yard and had a store in town. Approximately in 1880, Bob Dick and Mary Gallaway built the house across the street from First Baptist Church (next to what is now a parking lot), which faces Galloway Street. After Mary’s death, and his marriage to Lucy Blackwell, he built the house next
door to the original house, moved into it, and gave the first house to his son.

When Mount Airy incorporated, Mr. Gallaway was one of the Board of Commissioners. He built the Blue Ridge Inn and the Opera House. He had inherited family property in Rockingham County, and Mary Gallaway had inherited acreage on the north of Mount Airy. It is believed, but not verified, that Mr. Gallaway donated the land to the city for Oakdale Cemetery.

The above information was summarized from materials supplied by Sallie Vaughn and the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History, and The Journal of Rockingham County History and Genealogy.

DEATH OF MRS. LUCY A. GALLAWAY - Yadkin Valley News, September 20, 1894

On the 16th day of September, 1894, the angel of God’s perfect love, the angel that men call death, entered the home of Mr. R. R. Gallaway, of this place, and took there from Mrs. Lucy A. Gallaway, (born February 5, 1852) the devoted wife, affectionate mother, and faithful child of God, leaving the bereaved husband, and five children to fight the stern battle of life unsupported by her whose presence, prayers, and counsels had hitherto been such inspiration to them. Yet we should not sorrow as those who have no hope, for she left behind her the most conclusive evidence of her preparation for the sweet rest that remaineth for the people of God. She joined the Baptist church in this place, and was baptized with her husband, the second Sunday in May, 1879. She was one of the noble women whom the Lord has given to his church here, whose example and influence have been far-reaching in their effects. She was indeed a consistent Christian, a lover of the truth, but the angel of death has taken our dear sister from us, but she has left a light burning that will never grow dim. It is not dying when our friends in Jesus fall asleep; their better being never ends - Then why dejected weep? C. C. Haymore

Note: The spelling of Mrs. Gallaway’s first name on her tombstone is Lucie.

Although Reverend Haymore and his wife, Ada, are not memorialized on the windows, their obituaries were located, and have been included here.

REV. C. C. HAYMORE DIES IN THIS CITY - Mount Airy News, December 4, 1927

Sorrowing friends and relatives from all parts of the country gathered at the First Baptist Church last Sunday afternoon to pay their last respects to the late Rev. C. C. Haymore (born August 31, 1847), who passed away quietly at his home in this city Friday night after a brief illness. It was recalled by many that he was in his usual health as he visited the many places of business on the streets Monday and Tuesday and when word was sent out that he had passed away the meaning of it could not at first be grasped.

Ministers who had labored in the Master’s cause with him for a half century came from distant points to pay respect to his memory, among them being Rev. S. F. Conrad, of Charlotte, and Dr. H. A. Brown, of Winston-Salem, both of whom have passed their
80th mile-stone, yet gathered together strength to attend the funeral of their departed co-worker. Mr. Haymore was 80 years old last August and had spent his entire life in and about this community, devoting his energy to the cause of the ministry at all times. As soon as he reached manhood he started in his chosen mission and one of the first fruits of his work was the organization and establishment of the First Baptist Church, of this city. When he grew up Mount Airy had no Baptist Church, and he secured the help of Dr. A.C. Dixon in a meeting here, resulting in the present Baptist organization, Mr. Haymore being selected as the first pastor, filling the pulpit for a number of years thereafter.

As the years went by Mr. Haymore found work to do in the country districts and wherever he went and found no place of worship his work meant the establishment and building of a church. His work as a minister was unique in the fact that such a large number of the young men who were converted in his meetings became in later years some of the best preachers in the denomination. His messages seemed to leave an impression in the hearts of his converts which led them to better and higher things, and during his life's work it is said that his meetings resulted in the calling of more than 25 young men to the ministry.

In this immediate section he was instrumental in the building of the Flat Rock Baptist Church, remaining its pastor until his health would not permit regular appointments on his part. It was also through his work that the Haymore Memorial Church in this city was organized and now worshiping in such a splendid building.

He is survived by his wife, who was formerly Miss Ada Blackwell, of Yadkin County, there being no children. His death marks the passing of the last member of the large family of the late German Haymore. One nephew, Nathan G. Haymore, a son of the late Dr. R. D. Haymore, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, arrived here to attend the funeral.

MRS. C. C. HAYMORE DIES IN GEORGIA - Mount Airy News, December 3, 1948

Mrs. Ada Blackwell Haymore (born November 19, 1860), 88, widow of the late Rev. C. C. Haymore, passed away Thursday, December 2 at 7 a.m. in the home of her nieces at Montezuma, Ga., where she has made her home for the past 5 years.

She was born in Yadkin County and spent her childhood there until she was married to Rev. C. C. Haymore and made her home here in this city until her health failed. She then went to Winston-Salem to live for a while and later moved to Montezuma to make her home.

Mrs. Haymore was a member of the First Baptist Church since she first came to Mount Airy and was very active in all of its organizations.

The body will arrive in Mount Airy today and will lie in state at the First Baptist Church Saturday from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. Rev. R. Carrington Paulette will conduct the funeral and interment will be in Oakdale Cemetery.
Pastors

Rev. C. C. Haymore
1879-1889

Dr. L. R. Pruette
1889-1895

Dr. R. Dan Haymore
1897-1900

Rev. A. R. Love
1900-1901

Rev. J. E. Smith
1905-1908

Rev. T. H. King
1911-1920
Rev. Eugene I. Olive 1921-1922

Rev. E. Gibson Davis 1923-1928

Dr. I. T. Jacobs 1928-1932

Rev. Joe R. Johnson 1932-1934

Rev. Walter L. Johnson 1934-1938

Rev. Albert G. Hale 1939-1942
Dr. Alfred L. Miller 1979-1989

Dr. James Langford 1990-1999

Dr. Roger Gilbert 2001-

Not Pictured

Rev. J. H. Lambeth 1895-1896

Rev. A.L. Betts 1903-1904

Rev. J. M. Hamrick 1901-1902

Rev. E.T. Carter 1909-1911