

Nashville Methodist Church History

1858

According to records in the North Carolina Conference archives (Raleigh) the first pastor was assigned to a Nashville church in this year.

1871

Local history states that in October, Benjamin Sorsby sold land for a church and parsonage for the sum of \$13. The church lot was across the street from the present education building.

1876

Earliest Quarterly Conference minutes on file. Fourteen churches comprised Nashville Circuit.

1898-1900

The third church building was built. The old church had been destroyed when a large tree was blown down on it.

1902-1904

Bright Jewels organized.

1909-1910

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society was organized with seven charter members. The Society sponsored a Bible Woman (missionary) in Korea for many years.

1915-1916

A revival was held, and our leaders were inspired to improve the program of work for the church. This program would require a new building.

An exchange of property was arranged and a Court Order obtained. The parsonage was exchanged for the present church lot.

1917-1920

The current church sanctuary was built with the first service held on Easter Sunday 1918. The children and adult departments were organized. Envelope system for paying pledges began.

1921-1924

Sunday enrollment over 500 with weekly average attendance of 325.

1926

The N.B. Dozier home was purchased for a parsonage.

1944

M.Y.F (Methodist Youth Fellowship) organized with Mrs. Curtis Ellis as counselor.

1948-1951

The parsonage was repaired and redecorated.

1952-1956

An air conditioning system was installed in the church in 1952 at a cost of \$2,250.00.

Nashville was made a station church in 1954.

1956-1961

The basement was remodeled.

Central heating and air conditioning installed.

W.S.C.S. gave a \$200.00 scholarship to a college girl studying Christian Education.

1961-1969

In the fall of 1961, the new Long Range Planning Committee urged the Official Board to begin immediate steps to build a new Education Building for the Children's Department. The Parsonage Committee recommended a new parsonage to the Official Board.

Our church participated with the Nashville Baptist Church in the NC Conference "Knock on Every Door" religious census with forty workers participating. Seven hundred homes were visited and our church located 125 prospective members. The Lay Visitation Committee visited these individuals. Church membership in May 1961 was 386.

As of April 1962, our church started an outpost Sunday school at the Nashville Nursing Home with Bill Shackelford in charge. This project was sponsored by the Young Adult Class. In June of 1962, as an outgrowth of Vacation Bible School, a Junior Fellowship (elementary children) was organized. All during the summer these children were taken on tours of Methodist institutions in the NC Conference. They visited Camp Chestnut Ridge, Camp Don-Lee, Camp Rockfish, Duke University, Duke Hospital, the Methodist Retirement Home in Durham, Methodist Children's Home and the new Methodist Building, both in

Raleigh, NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, Methodist College in Fayetteville and Louisburg College in Louisburg. Mothers drove car loads of children on these trips. A new college-age class was started and met in the parsonage. Two new children's choirs were started; the Cherub Choir (kindergarten) and the Melody Choir (primary). Both choirs sang for morning church services several times during the summer of 1962. The Official Board voted to support the \$3,000,000 College Development Crusade. Our quota was \$8,000. The amount pledged by our church to this fund over a three year period was \$9241.00.

On February 14th, 1963, the Quarterly Conference granted permission to build a new parsonage as soon as \$5,000.00 was raised. The plan called for the old parsonage to be torn down and a new one built on the same location. At a called Quarterly Conference on March 28, 1963, a Building Committee for the new parsonage was elected with Bill Joyner as chairman. In November or December 1963, a new young couple's class, the Fellowship Class was organized.

A 1964, community-wide Easter Sunrise Service was held jointly with the Nashville Baptist Church on the lawn of the Nashville Boarding Home (a nursing home) with 200 attending. During the summer of 1963, the new parsonage was sufficiently completed for occupancy by the pastor and his family. Open House was held on Sunday, September 27th with 250 attending. The total cost of the parsonage was \$27,170.23. As of October 5, 1963, our church had the following active programs: Cub Scouts, Junior Fellowship, Junior High Fellowship, Senior High Fellowship, four circles of the Women's Society of Christian Service, an Out-post Sunday School, as well as our regular Sunday School classes. There were also seven Certified Lay Speakers who were qualified to preach and assist with church services. They were called by other churches to preach for several years.

During the summer of 1965, Danny Woodall, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Woodall, drowned at a Methodist Youth Fellowship beach trip. The Junior Choir and Men's Choir were both organized and Laymen's Sunday services were conducted in addition to Children's Day and College Day. There were twenty-six students in college and universities. The Methodist Youth Fellowship float won third place in the Nash County Harvest Festival. The Danny Woodall Memorial Prayer Room was established by the Methodist Youth Fellowship during the fall of 1965. The five different choirs enabled a different one to sing for church service each Sunday morning.

In 1966, a youth service was conducted one Sunday morning entirely by young people with 9 youth on the rostrum. The service included the youth choir, youth organist and youth serving as ushers. An interfaith (4 night) youth worship under Rev. and Mrs. Haywood Harrell on "Boy-Girl Relations" drew 60 Nashville young people to our church. In February of 1966, Rev. Harrell offered another one-night youth workshop with 50 young people attending. Six God and Country Scout Award candidates worked regularly with the pastor. Both the Methodist and Baptist congregations again came together for the annual Easter Sunrise Service at the Nashville Nursing Home. An old frame house behind the church building was rented (later purchased in 1968) as a Sunday School annex. Church

members painted and fixed up the old home. In October, the Baptist and Methodist young people completed a community UNICEF Halloween canvas, raising \$75.00.

In the spring of 1967, the Methodists and Baptists again held the annual Easter Sunrise Service. During the fall of that year, the church held what some old-timers claimed was the first Homecoming Day Celebration in the 155 year history of our church's organization. It was also the 50th anniversary of our present church building. Over 400 attended. Mayor Milton Strickland was general chairman of the Homecoming committee. Also that fall, George Nihart, III received his God and Country Scout Award presented at a church service. According to Boy Scout records, he was the first Nashville Boy Scout to ever receive this award.

Bishop Paul N. Garber preached in our church in the spring of 1968. Church officials planned to have a Lay Witness Mission in our church in the spring of 1969. During the spring Sunday night service on 1968, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes held a worship service in our church with the Baptist youth and their congregation in attendance. At another night service, a Japanese national student from NC Wesleyan College came to present a service about his homeland and the work of Christian missionaries there.

In the late winter of 1969, Dr. C. P. Morris, Executive Secretary of the Conference Board of Education visited our church and drew a sketch of a plan for a two-story education building, incorporating some earlier proposed plans drawn by the late Walter Burgess, member of the Bishop's Committee on Church Architecture. Three proposals were all studied by our own Education Building Committee, chaired by George I. Woodall. The committee decided to postpone any further action on any building project until further efforts were exerted to obtain the Douglas Batchelor property adjacent to our church property. Eight years of this effort were again put on hold, no doubt for good reason.

During the pastor's recuperation from surgery in September 1968, our own eight lay speakers filled the pulpit for three weekly worship services for three weeks. In January of 1969, sixty brand new Girl Scouts were received into three troops in an unusual formal Investiture Ceremony in our church. Five adult workers were also invested. A Junior Troop, a Brownie Troop and Cadet Troop were organized. Two other girls who were already scouts also joined. Our Men's Bible Class sponsored the organization. The class gave each girl her first sash and Girl Scout pin. Arrangements were made for them to use the basement of the sanctuary building for their meeting. Our church also continued to sponsor a Cub Scout Pack of 22 boys. They held their annual Blue and Gold Banquet in our refurbished Fellowship Hall. A second Homecoming service was held with nearly 400 in attendance. Another all-youth worship service was conducted with Cindy Griffin preaching and music offered by the Junior High Choir. Union Services with the Baptist and Methodist Churches at Thanksgiving and Easter continued. Ten adults were baptized during this year in addition to children and babies. Preparations for our first Lay Witness Mission began in January for the May 9-11 event which had sixteen adult and eight young people as guest witnesses.

In 1968, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, at a very large uniting conference, became the United Methodist Church. The old Quarterly Conference became the Annual Charge Conference (once a year). By this time, the new parsonage had been occupied for five years and church membership was 473 as of May 5, 1969. The pastor's salary for 1969-70 was \$7,000.00. During the eight years of this pastor's administration, there were three regularly held weekly worship services including Sunday morning, Sunday evening and a mid-week Prayer Meeting.

1969-1973

The Youth Council organized and church roll was updated.

A Prison ministry was begun at Nash Advancement Center and a part-time secretary was employed.

Two pieces of property were purchased, the house and lot behind the church and the lot at the corner of Hilliard and Church Streets.

Final payment was made on the parsonage loan and the parsonage was air-conditioned.

A new electric organ was given to the church.

Plans were made for a new education building.

1973-1978

Cockrell Educational Building was constructed.

An Annual Bazaar was begun.

The tape ministry for shut-ins was begun.

The weekday school (pre-school) was organized by Bettie Phillips.

The Methodist Men's Club was chartered.

The Food pantry and wood cutting project was begun.

Bettie Phillips initiated the creation of the Chrismons for the church. She and some of the wonderful women of the church met at Vessie Joyner's home once a week and created them.

Our church was Church of the Year in the North Carolina Annual Conference in 1978 for churches in the 300-1000 membership category.

1978-1982

Jane Braswell was sponsored as a missionary to Bolivia.

Several Duke Divinity School students were hired to assist the pastor and work with youth.

A sound system was installed in the sanctuary.

Mary Lib Davenport was first woman to be elected Chairperson of the Administrative Board.

A "Mother's Morning Out" program was started.

The Sallie Batchelor Scholarship Fund was established.

A used church bus was obtained by a group of people in the church.

1982-1984

The Cockrell Education Building was dedicated.

The Special People were organized.

Alfred Abernethy was honored as our "Lay Person of the Year".

A Community Easter Sunrise Service was established.

Faith Christian ministries was begun.

United Methodist Women made Bicentennial banner.

1984-1989

New pews for the balcony and choir were donated to the church.

A new church bus was purchased and a bus garage constructed.

Alfred Abernethy was honored as "District Lay Person of the Year".

Christmas Love Tree was started to help the needy in our community.

A blanket ministry for newly baptized infants was begun.

Good Friday Ecumenical Service was begun.

A job description for the position of Director of Christian Education for Children and Youth was developed.

The Dorsey Daniel Scholarship Fund was established.

Thelma Cooke was honored as "District Lay Person of the Year".

The Cockrell House was purchased and indebtedness on the Bus Garage was paid off.

A Family Night Meal Program was begun.

Ed Briggs as Director of Christian Education for Children and youth (1988-1991).

We began an After School Care Program.

1989-1991

Choir adorned in new robes.

W.C. Cooke was honored as "District Lay Person of they Year".

New United Methodist Hymnals purchased for the sanctuary.

The After School Program purchased a van.

Mark Reed was hired as Director of Christian Education (1991 - 1992).

1991-1994

The Church voted and purchased the Sallie E. Braswell property adjacent to the Church (1991 - 1993).

A dedication service was held for the Baldwin Grand Piano given by the Braswell family in loving memory of Ronald Braswell.

The church elected to become a part of the Vitalization Project out of which came a new Visitation Program to First Time Visitors.

Cindy Pike was hired as Director of Christian Education.

A new pictorial directory was completed.

A dedication service for the Bus Garage, church bus, and Cockrell House was presided over by Bishop C.P. Minnick.

The church voted to purchase the Boddie-Vick property adjacent to the Sallie Braswell property now owned by the church.

A "Habitat for Humanity" House was completed. Homecoming was held.

New acolyte Robes were donated by Lawrence Bass and a new Crucifix and Communion Chalice were donated by Belle Vaughan.

The entire sanctuary roof was replaced in 1994.

The first "Hanging of the Greens" Advent Service was held.

1995-1998

Disciple Bible Study was started and cottage meetings were held.

The Johnny Jones property was purchased for more parking spaces.

A long range planning committee was established to look at the possibility of building a larger fellowship hall with more Sunday school rooms.

The Cockrell House begins use as Sunday School rooms.

The Belarusian Mission Program was started.

The first pilgrim took the Walk to Emmaus.

The Prison Ministry was started.

A Marriage Enrichment Workshop was held.

In 1999 Building Committee Plan to start construction of new fellowship Hall by tearing down the Sallie Braswell house and Boddie Vick House.

Van Dorp property beside the church on Hilliard was purchased.

Two members of the congregation, Cindy Pike and Scott Smallwood, entered Duke Divinity School.

1999-2002

The church responded to the flooding caused by Hurricane Floyd by providing over \$60,000 and 3,000 volunteer hours of assistance to over 35 families in the Winwood and Westwood areas of Nashville.

The Shepard program was started to assist people coming and going from church.

In March of 2000 the New Beginnings worship celebration was launched with an immediate increase of 100+ persons in worship by the end of 2002.

Scott Smallwood and Tom Parker were hired to fill the position of minister of visitation and minister of music.

The church approved preliminary plans for construction of a new classrooms and a large multi-purpose room.

Construction began in October 2001 and was scheduled to be completed by Christmas of 2002.

2003-2008

The church received a bequest of over \$200,000 from long time church member, Helen Ricks Batchelor.

The Cockrell House was updated to include a receptionist office at the entrance, painting and the addition of new computers.

Other capital improvements made included the purchase of a new sound system for the sanctuary, and two new screens, a projector, portable staging and chairs for Braswell Hall.

Sheet rock was added to the ceiling in the sanctuary, two new chandeliers were purchased, the hardwood floors refinished and the inside and outside of the sanctuary were long time residents in the front wall of the sanctuary, 35,000 – 40,000 bees were removed.

A new, lighted church sign was installed in front of the church complex and \$200,000 was applied toward our building loan principle.

A baby grand piano was donated to the church and placed in Braswell Hall.

Annual Homecomings were begun in the spring of 2007 and a Homecoming and Celebration of Youth Ministries to honor Cindy Pike's fifteen years of service as Youth Director was held in July 2008. To honor her, a mural was painted in the basement by Alison Coggins, former youth member.

To insure the safety of all who attend worship, an Interaction Committee was formed to provide security and emergency medical attention.

The church web site was redesigned and updated to enable better Internet information and email capabilities.

Original Author: Louise Sills (to mid 1960s)

Revised and Updated:

M. W. Weaver (1982)

Ellen Ward (2008)