

History of Asheboro United Church of Christ

Contributed by Administrator
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ASHEBORO UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – 1939-1999

In May 1939, Dr. F. C. Lester, Promotional Secretary of the Southern Convention, working with the Home Missions Committee the Western North Carolina Conference, made a survey of people living in or near Asheboro who might be interested in organizing a church of our own denomination here. These people, along with all interested people, were asked to meet in the Park Street School of Asheboro on Sunday, May 21, 1939, to consider the need and what could be done concerning organization of a church. Dr. Lester preached at the service and led a discussion following the sermon. 68 people were in attendance at this first service and were of the unanimous opinion that a church should be established here. A committee composed of Frank M. Wright, James S. Truitt, George T. Gunter, Mrs. Sybrant Pell, and Mrs. Paul Craven, were appointed to plan for other meetings and to make plans to survey for charter members.

On June 4, 1939, another meeting was held by the group. There were enthusiastic in the belief that a church should be formed here. While it did not seem opportune to organize at this time, it was deemed advisable to form a temporary organization to further the work. James S. Truitt was elected Chairman of the Planning Committee and other members were: Mrs. Orva Brown, Secretary; George T. Gunter, Treasurer; Sybrant Pell, Publicity; F. M. Wright, Place of Meeting; Mrs. Sybrant Pell, Music; Hubert L. Beane, Finance; and Mrs. Paul Craven, Membership.

This Planning Committee continued to hold meetings throughout the summer of 1939 on alternate Sunday evenings. On August 1, 1939, Rev. A. Lanson Granger, who had just graduated from Yale Divinity School, agreed to spend August and perhaps September working with our group. An evening of fellowship was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Beane so that we might get acquainted with Mr. Granger. A place for him to live was found in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Craven.

By the end of August, 1939, we had decided to organize the Church and October 29 was set as the date. A Committee was appointed to find a suitable lot on which to build. This committee included: Orva Brown, Mrs. Paul Craven and F. M. Wright.

A tentative budget was set up and adopted on September 10, 1939, and included: Purchase of lot, \$2,000; rent on school building where meetings were held, \$100; minister's salary, \$1,500; Church School supplies, \$50.00; music, \$10.00; printing and postage, \$25.00; miscellaneous, \$15.00; Conference Fund \$50.00. This made a total of \$3,750 for the first budget. The Mission Board of the Southern Convention prior to this had granted us a gift of \$900 for the year, making it necessary for us to raise \$2,850 of our first year's budget. We actually raised \$3,075.

On October 29, 1939, the Asheboro Congregational Christian Church was formally organized with 28 members, with the understanding that all members joining by December 25 would be classified as charter members. Five others joined in time to make the charter membership list of 33 members. Mr. Granger's sermon topic for this service was "What the Church Is For". Dr. F. C. Lester had charge of the Communion Service. Rev. J. T. Green and Rev. H. V. Cox, Sr. assisted in the service and Miss Rachel Burrow was pianist.

On November 8, 1939, a group of members from the new church attended the Western North Carolina Conference meeting at Brown's Chapel Church and at the time was admitted into the Conference. The elected delegates were: F. M. Wright and Mrs. J. M. Farlow.

The first officers elected after the organization of the Church were: Mrs. Orva Brown, Secretary; Paul Craven, Financial Secretary; F. M. Wright, Treasurer; Mrs. F. M. Wright, Raleigh Cagle, Mrs. Hattie Cox, Orva Brown, Hubert Beane and J. S. Truitt, Deacons and Deaconesses; F. M. Wright, Parks Dorsett, J.M. Farlow, and C. F. Craven, Trustees; Hubert L. Beane, Chairman of Finance; Mrs. Sybrant Pell, Chairman of Music; Miss Maedell Lambeth, Chairman of Publicity; Rev. A. Lanson Granger, Chairman of Church Council; Mrs. Claude Shelton, Chairman of Membership; Mrs. Sam Nance, Chairman of Church Care; Sybrant Pell, Chairman of Religious Education; Paul Craven, Chairman of Ushers. A Building committee was also appointed at this time consisting of: Rev. A. Lanson Granger, J. S. Truitt, Orva Brown, Mrs. Parks Dorsett, J. M. Farlow, Miss Thyra Wright and Miss Maedell Lambeth.

The first Sunday School was begun on November 5, 1939, under the leadership of Hubert L. Beane and Sybrant Pell as Co-Superintendents.

The Lot Committee, Frank Wright, Wilma Craven and Orva Brown recommended a lot on the corner of Sunset Avenue and Cherry Street, size 100' x 150', which could be bought for around \$2,000, and was done so. Part of the money for the purchase of this lot was raised by "selling" friends a foot of the land. To the first lot has been added 335 feet fronting on Sunset Avenue and 150 feet deep. The church now owns 435 feet fronting on Sunset Avenue. This will allow for future expansion and parking. We also own a 150 foot lot at 737 Lee Street where a modern brick parsonage is under construction.

From the very beginning, the Church has tried to seek good and efficient counsel in its building program. Dr. Elbert M. Conover, Director of the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture in New York City, met with us in August of 1939. He offered wise counsel on different aspects of good Church Architecture. In March of 1940, Drs. Ernest Holliday and Alfred M. Tripp, met her and conferred with church officials. Consultations were held with Wenner and Fink, Architects, with the final plans being drawn by J. J. Craft, local architect.

During the years we "borrowed" churches for various services, such as a special Christmas Vesper at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Episcopal; super meetings at St. John's Lutheran; and other churches. We kept growing in membership and were ever working toward a church building.

The budget for 1940-1941 was \$1,131.00

Finally in 1942, it seemed our goal was in sight and we could start building our church. We had plans almost ready, a sizeable building fund was on hand, and the lot for building was paid for when building materials were "frozen" except for essential war priorities. Our next disappointment came when banks began to refuse to carry more money on interest. We had to find places to parcel our \$11,000 in sums of \$1,000 to \$1,500.

During the time of waiting for material to build our church our first pastor, Rev. Lanson Granger, resigned to become effective September 1, 1943. Dr. F. C. Lester, then Superintendent of the Southern Convention, served as acting pastor - sometimes preaching and sometimes sending ministerial students from Elon College.

The first revival was held with Dr. W. E. Wisseman of Greensboro doing the preaching for a week and receiving payment of \$25.00.

First Christenings for Rev. Granger and first for the church were Glenda Ruth Phillips, daughter of Glenn and Ruth Phillips and James Orva Brown, son of Orva and Gertrude Brown, on September 13, 1942.

First death in the Church membership was Frank Wright on January 8, 1943.

On August 27, 1946, the house at 840 Sunset Avenue was bought for \$11,000 as a parsonage. We sold it for \$10,000 in 1955 to Dr. Lester.

Rev. Cecil C. Thomas accepted a call to become pastor on August 1, 1944. Rev. Thomas served the church until December 31, 1945. Dr. F. C. Lester again became the acting pastor of the church and on July 16, 1946, accepted the call to become regular pastor. He served the church until September 1, 1956.

The budget for the year 1946-1947 was \$5,225.00.

On October 1, 1947 groundbreaking for the Church was held.

On November 14, 1947, the Congregational Church Building Society with offices in New York City agreed to give us \$5,000 and loan \$10,000 to be paid back at \$250.00 quarterly at 3% if paid on time, 6% if late.

The first Easter Sunday was March 28, 1948 even though the windows were not yet installed. Boxes were covered with white sheets for chancel furniture. Chairs were used as pews.

By April 1948 we had spent \$49,519. and were out of money. More funds were raised immediately. The first cornerstone was laid on May 30, 1948.

Pews cost \$1,771.67 and were made from hackberry by Hickory Desk Co.

Plans were discussed to ask individuals to buy memorial stained glass windows at \$40 each as opposed to \$25 for plain glass, price to include sash, etc. Plans carried.

Max Vestal, a member of our church, entered the ministry in 1949 and was ordained here June 7, 1953.

A Hammond organ was donated December 1949 by Mrs. J. Rankin Parks, III, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. J. Rankin Parks, Sr.

30 people joined the church Easter 1951.

December 1951, chimes were given by Dr. and Mrs. F. C. Lester in memory and honor of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Carleton.

Mrs. Armeta Spivey was hired to teach Children's and Youth Choirs in 1954.

World's Fair was held by Sunday School June 12, 1954.

Talent dollars were given our November 1954.

New communion set was used April 1955.

Robert Hultman, who was entering the ministry, preached his first sermon here May 22, 1955 and was ordained in 1959.

Mrs. Spivey was appointed to serve as organist in October 1955.

The Rev. Clyde L. Fields accepted a call to become the fourth pastor of the church from November 1, 1956 to 1958.

A parsonage lot at 737 Lee Street was bought in 1957 for \$3,250. The parsonage was built in 1957 at a cost of \$21,062. An Open House was held February 1958 with Dr. Fields in residence. Dr. Fields stayed until August 1960.

The church bought more lots on Sunset Avenue, all lots adjoining Staley's Drive.

Chancel Furniture purchased June 1957 was made of hackberry by Hickory Desk Co.

A kneeling bench was purchased for \$159 in August 1959 in memory of E. P. Boroughs. Statement of Faith was ordered and put in front of hymnals in August 1959.

Walter Hall served as minister from January 1961-1963.

Rev. Bill Everhart came as minister in 1964, and left in 1967.

The name "Congregational Christian Church" was changed to "Asheboro United Church of Christ" June 1965.

The fellowship hall was built in 1967.

Ruth Davis resigned as choir director in January 1967.

Rev. Carl Dunker came September 1967 and left in 1973.

Air conditioning was installed in the church and fellowship hall in 1971.

Memorial Fund in lieu of flowers was started July 1971.

The budget for 1972 was \$17,554.

Dr. Banks Peeler came as supply pastor in the fall of 1973. Another supply pastor was sent while Dr. Peeler was out for surgery and his illness. Dr. Peeler died in the fall of 1973.

Rev. George Stowe was called in 1973 to begin serving in February 1974.

In 1975, the budget was \$22,995. We raised \$23,464.59.

In 1976 improvements made to our facilities included the installation of folding doors at \$350. The parking lot was graveled in 1976.

In June 1976 the Woman of the Year Award was presented to Lizzie Farlow.

The first baptism by immersion for our church was conducted for Homer Dawson by Rev. George Stowe on August 8, 1976 at Chester Branson's lake.

In 1976 our new Constitution was presented and included duties of each officer and chairman. (We still had deaconesses).

Three of our young people pass their bar exams in 1976: Jane Adams, Alan Pugh and Lacy Presnell.

The sanctuary was repainted for \$1,500 and a speaker system was installed in 1976.

We participated in six weeks of Lenten Bible studies with Evangelical and Reformed at their church in 1976.

Linda Ingold became our new office secretary in April 1977.

A revival was held the week of May 8, 1977, with the Rev. Don Leonard as guest minister.

At our 38th Anniversary in October 1977 we had 150 in attendance. Ten of the twelve living charter members were present.

In April 1978 we held a Strawberry Festival to raise money for carpeting the sanctuary. We raised over \$700.

In 1979 our budget was \$28,528.59.

In January 1979 the Women's Fellowship voted to take as their new project the refurbishing, painting, etc. of all restrooms.

Memorial gifts at Easter were made in the memory of Mrs. Nannie Brewer, George Lafforque, Mrs. C. L. Poole, Mrs. Worth Winslow, and Harold Powell.

In June 1979, Rev. George Stowe resigned.

June 10, 1979 an anonymous donor gave \$1,890.96 to pay off all church debts.

In August 1979 we adopted a new Constitution and Standing Rules.

In October 1979 we called Rev. Earl Roberts as pastor.

A new organ was purchased for \$14,000 from Moore Music Co., Greensboro.

On November 4, 1979, Dr. Clyde Fields agreed to fill our pulpit the rest of the year until Rev. Roberts could get here.

Rev. Earl Roberts arrived January 1980. The installation service was held on March 9 at 3 p.m. Rev. Don Leonard preached the installation service. He was assisted by Rev. Addie Luther, President of Western NC Association.

April-May 1980 the first church pictorial directory was distributed.

Church sanctuary renovation and installation of new blue carpet were completed in December 1980 and January 1981 at

an approximate cost of \$5,500. Seven people joined the church on the day of dedication, making a total of 251 members. Later we decided to extend the carpet all the way back in church at a cost of an extra \$998.

In January 1981 \$5,000 was willed to the church by Lizzie Farlow.

May 9, 1981 the Agape Circle sponsored a church wide Strawberry Festival with proceeds to start a fund for pew cushions.

May 1981 two roofs were replaced on the Fellowship Hall at a cost of \$1,716.43.

June 14, 1981 Woman of the Year was elected. Women receiving this honor so far include Lizzie Farlow, Ruth Flynt, Gertrude Dawson, Armeta Greeson, and Wilma Craven.

In October the parking lot was graveled and timbers to laid to mark parking places. Cost was \$1,154.58.

Budget for 1981 was \$36,657.

February 1982 the Agape Circle was given approval to purchase pew cushions in blue to match the carpet. Estimated cost was \$1,650.

In July 1982 a Time Capsule was sealed by Rev. Roberts and Dot Carter, not to be opened until the 50th Anniversary. The Choir planned to tape anthems and hymns to be placed in the capsule.

In August 1982 a bid of \$1,950 to replace the parsonage roof was accepted.

Proposed budget for 1993 was \$39,494.

In 1984 a new roof was put over the Sunday School rooms. Extra insurance was taken out for more coverage. Carpet was installed in most classrooms. New slate gray paint was applied to the trim and gutters, and the door was painted red, a liturgical color. Painting was paid for by Agape Circle.

Rev. Roberts left in 1985.

In 1986 Dr. F. C. Lester became the interim pastor from March to June.

Rev. John Dauernheim came June 1986. The installation and reception were held August 17, 1986.

In 1986 Lexan protective covering was put on all stained glass windows at a cost of \$3,365. This was paid for as a memorial to Ralph Smith by his family and for Mrs. Elizabeth Jane Lester by Dr. F. C. Lester.

In 1986 the parsonage was painted and the carpet was replaced in some rooms.

In 1986 a scheduled replacement of the church boiler was performed.

In 1986 the church decided that officers would serve two years from now on.

IN 1988 a budget of \$49,119.40 was adopted.

1989 we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the church on October 29, with dinner afterwards in the Fellowship Hall. An organized write-up of the church history was included.

In 1990, Dr. John Dauernheim's tenure as pastor terminated at the end of August after four years.

Rev. Lynwood Hubbard was our interim minister until August 1993.

In 1993 a new answering system for the pastor's study was bought as a gift from Mr. & Mrs. Wilson Garner.

On May 2, 1993 Rev. J. Nathan King was welcomed to the pulpit for the morning message. On May 23, 1993 Rev. Nathan King was voted to become our new minister and would begin full time in August 1993. Rev. King's ordination was held July 25, 1993 in Sanford, NC. He began his pastorate here on August 1, 1993. His installation was held Sunday, January 9, 1994 at AUCC. Rev. King and his family moved into the parsonage April 28, 1994 after it was updated.

June 13 the Church Council passed a motion from the House Committee to replace the carpet in the pastor's study and vestibule and also to have the desk in the pastor's study refinished.

In 1995 the new free-standing altar table was given to the Church by the Walter Coy Stout, Jr. family.

In 1996 the nursery renovation was completed.

Sunday, October 27, 1996 at 11:00 a.m. the History Room dedication was held. This date also marked the 57th Anniversary of AUCC.

In 1997 the family of Richard C. Benbow gave the Paschal Candle in Richard's memory.

The church steeple was installed in 1997 and was dedicated February 1, 1998. It was give by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lester in honor of Gertrude Brown Lester.

August 1998 Rev. King was given a surprise dinner and party by the entire church honoring his first five years as our pastor. Rev. Alan Miller, Conference Minister, was a special guest as were Rev. King's parents and families.

The parking lot was paved in March 1999.