

1979

On Palm Sunday, 1979, during the offertory Rev. Woody became weak and asked Rev. Adkins to preach. Rev. Woody would be in a service only once more, to present Vicki Brodie the license to preach on behalf of the church.

On May 20, 1979, a letter from Mr. Woody was read to the congregation at the close of the worship service. Mr. Woody wrote that because of irreparable damage to his heart it was necessary that he make plans



for disability retirement. He offered the church his resignation. The personnel committee instead recommended that the church consider him on sick leave and that his salary and allowance be continued from June 1, 1979 to November 30, 1979. Mr. Woody passed away Saturday, June 30, 1979 at age 49.

Earlier in the year, Mabel Stegall Richardson had given the church a pall for use in funerals. Made of wrinkle-resisting linen, the pall is marked by a cross embroidered with symbols of the Resurrection, which include lilies, pomegranates, a crown, butterflies, and the Messianic rose. It was used the first time on the coffin of Reverend John W. Woody.

The church approved the recommendation of the deacons that Rev. Woody's salary be continued to Mrs. Woody for the remainder of the time previously approved by the church.

In 1975 the church had suspended Sunday evening worship services. They

had been reinstated in 1977, but in June, 1979 the evening events were moved to Wednesday with only short-term studies or special worship services on Sunday evening.

The church was offered \$150 for two shares in the Southside Swimming Pool. The church discovered it had three shares, but after deciding to sell one, the buyer did not pursue the matter, leaving the church still owning the stock.

In 1979 the church sold its bus after several mechanical problems encountered by the youth group.

On one youth trip coming back from skiing at the Homestead, the alternator on the bus went bad. After 8:00 pm, on a Saturday evening in the middle of the rural mountain countryside the stranded riders providentially coasted into the parking lot of a diner where there happened to be someone who had access to a junk yard with an old bus. Some time later with the needed part installed the bus limped home. When they arrived, the driver, Jim Wagoner, offered a prayer of thanks. At the "Amen" the radiator erupted in a plume of steam, as if a sign from God, "I got you back home safely, but don't do this again." The church purchased its first van that spring.



Pete Compton headed up the van selection committee.

Bethlehem Baptist Church in Brosville, Virginia called Harold Draper as pastor and requested that Starling Avenue ordain him. The church called for an ordination council and upon their recommendation, ordained Mr. Draper Sunday, August 5, 1979, at Starling Avenue.



As the church began the search for a pastor, Rev. Adkins served as interim with an increase of \$100.00 to his salary to compensate for the extra work. In September the personnel committee brought a recommendation that the church call him as pastor.

On September 30, 1979 the church called Rev. David W. Adkins to be pastor. Rev. Adkins earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from Furman University and his Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School. He would later earn his Doctorate of Ministry from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He was ordained by First Baptist Church, Piedmont, South Carolina, in 1972. Dr. Adkins is married to the former Diane Sautter, and they have two daughters, Kristin and Katie.

1980

In early 1980 a new pictorial directory was made by Olan Mills.

In March the Deacons recommended that the church ordain Vicki Brodie, who had been called as minister of education at

Wake Forest University Baptist Church.

Vicki was ordained at Starling Avenue on Sunday, May 31, 1980, with Dr. Warren Carr



preaching the ordination sermon.

Having ordained a woman to pastoral ministry in the spring, the church elected the first women deacons in the church. Emma Washburn and Rhoda Lancaster were ordained to begin service in the fall.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY.

Despite early examples to the contrary, Southern Baptists as a whole were slow to recognize the gifts of women. One Baptist man cautioned in 1885 against hampering women's efforts to lead, "The good sisters have too much sense and are too much in earnest to be satisfied with flattering platitudes and empty compliments." When the women did organize three years later it was as an "auxilliary" to the convention. (Southern Baptist Sisters: in Search of Status, 1845-2000, by Daniel Morgan, Mercer, p. 117).

In the 70s as more women felt called into ministry, factions in the SBC sought to reverse the tide. There were efforts to bring the WMU under its control, and the revision of the Baptist Faith and Message in 2000 explicitly restricted the role of pastor to men. Our church, however, has long recognized the gifts of women and affirmed their exercise. Our WMU boasted strong leaders in the church, the association and the state. After serving Virginia Baptists on staff in the Training Union department, Marcella Winn Minter trained at the Carver School of Christian Social Work at a time when its partner Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was not accepting women as students for the ministry. Women served on search committees. There are many other examples in these pages of women leaders.

With this tradition it is no wonder that our church was prepared to become one of the first churches locally to ordain women as deacons and as of this writing the church has ordained three women to pastoral ministry and has called two others to serve on staff.

The deacons asked that the steeple fund be extended another year through October, 1981. The church was getting closer to the amount they needed.

The celebration of the church's forty-fifth anniversary in November was a grand affair. Having the anniversary every five years meant that more former members make the effort to be present.



Pictured above are charter members present for that 45th anniversary. 1st row: left to right: Dottie Donovan, Hazel Thornton, Lizzie Minter, Rae Wells; 2nd row: Ruby Jefferson, Ellis Thornton; 3rd row Minnie Woods; 4th row: Earl Woods, Elizabeth Newman, Janie Mason, Nannie Helms; 4th row: Clarence Donavant, Sherman Donovan, Jolene White.

The Rev. Julian Motley, whom the church had ordained in 1945, was the preacher for the homecoming service. Rev. Motley was the pastor of Gorman Baptist Church, Durham, NC.



The work that went into preparation for that homecoming in 1980 was the inspiration for creating an ongoing history committee. Patsy Roach, chairperson of the nominating committee, asked that a history committee be established. Its duties would be to collect and safeguard all records that can be found, insure the church make and keep adequate records of our progress, promote appreciation of the church through understanding the past. The following people were on the first committee: Cecelia Hundley, chair; Evelyn Elliott, Pat Wagoner, and Linda Moore.

1981

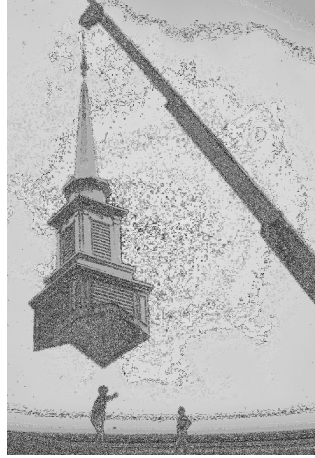
In March talks began concerning renovating the space under the sanctuary. Not finding the original blueprints, the church approved \$1,000.00 from the building improvement fund be used to have detailed drawings made of the sanctuary. These were done under the supervision of the renovation committee chairman, Fred Robertson, who had overseen several major construction projects for DuPont.

On August 14 the new aluminum steeple, constructed in Campbellsville, Kentucky arrived and was installed on the church.





The top of the cupola is at the home of Grady and Frances Monday on Forest St.



14th. Matters discussed included such issues as qualifications for deacon, duties of members, and reception of members.

To facilitate action on the document, it was decided to vote on them separately. Both were adopted by the church December 12.

1982

Our church became a supporter of the first local interdenominational Sunday School class for adults with developmental handicaps. The Open Arms Class began on Sunday, February 14 under the direction of Margaret Caldwell.

The series of renovations which would encompass the entire interior of the church began in 1982.

Phase one attended to the outdated bathrooms under the vestibule. New plumbing and fixtures, ceramic tile, hot water heaters, vapor proof walls, new toilet partitions, and lighting were improvements overseen by Fred Robertson and Quinton Ramsey. The cost was \$8,813.

In April at the recommendation of the worship planning committee the deacons proposed an organ fund be established towards the eventual purchase of a new organ, preferably a pipe organ. The organist, John Manson, explained the advantages of a pipe organ. It was proposed that memorials and other gifts could be made over and above regular tithes and offerings to achieve this goal. If after ten years there were not sufficient funds for the project, the money collected would be used towards the church debt retirement.

Also in April, the trustees brought a recommendation that the church purchase the Parcell property it had



The lifting of the steeple drew a crowd.

In December Harry Dalton presented the motion that the church call Rita Gibson Vermillion as minister of education. She was a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the mother of two daughters, Amy and Joy. Her duties would begin January 1, 1982.

In 1978 Rev. Woody had noted that the church was still lacking a constitution and by-laws. In 1979 a committee began work on a document which was brought to the church in September, 1980. Lively discussions were held at the regular September business meeting and at special meetings on October 7th and



been leasing for many years for a sum of \$18,000. The property had served for parking and for the access to our church from Memorial Boulevard. In addition, the property abutted the foundation of the educational building and the church already had invested in its upgrading.



In June that the pastor returned from the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans with disturbing reports about ominous developments in a political takeover of Southern Baptist institutions. It was decided that more messengers from the church should be in attendance in the future.

In June the church approved the personnel committee recommendation to grant Pastor Adkins time and funds for parish-based CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) through the School of Pastoral Care at the North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston Salem, North Carolina. The course required his absence on Mondays and Tuesdays, September through November.

In July the church approved a recommendation from the building and grounds committee and the deacons to replace the roofing, gutters, and downspouts, and to install ventilation on the roof of the sanctuary. Total cost would be approximately \$10,000 to be taken from the property improvement fund.

Albert Beane, who had served as interim minister of music since 1975, resigned because of ill health. In

September Rita Vermillion assumed the duties of minister of music and her title was changed to minister of music and education. In December, she led in the first "Hanging of the Greens", a tradition which has been observed annually ever since.



The personnel committee asked that, in view of the responsibilities of both the pastor's and the minister of music and education's jobs, their salaries be increased in the 1983 budget. Also, due to the heavy workload each had, they recommended a summer activities worker be employed.

1983

The church renovation committee with the approval of the deacons recommended the church proceed with renovation of the fellowship hall. Total cost of the renovation was \$14,958. In May the renovation committee asked for an additional \$2,605 to complete the work in the fellowship hall. The renovation included new lighting, replacing the dark tile floor with a lighter color tile floor, and updating the bathrooms.

In June, 1983, Rita Vermillion resigned as minister of music and education to accept a position as librarian at her alma mater, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

In July the air conditioning in the sanctuary was repaired. \$3,850 was transferred from the property

improvement fund to the repair and maintenance fund to pay for the air conditioning repair, and to replace money that was spent on painting and repairing the windows of the church building. Also the church approved paving the parking lot on what had been the Parcell property on the back side of the church.

In September Reverend Gerald Robinson was called as minister of music and education. Gerry received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Richmond in 1973. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1983. Gerry was joined by his wife Betty, and sons John and Brent.

On November 12, 1983 the recreation committee held an arts and crafts fair. Members displayed their hobbies and creations, including some wonderful baked goods. At a service preceding the fair, Warren Robertson was presented a plaque for his twenty years of service as Sunday School superintendent.



1984

In 1984 the building and grounds committee became aware that the roof of the church needed extensive attention. The shingles would need to be replaced and the roof repaired.

But the principal project that year was the extensive renovation of the floor beneath the sanctuary and the second floor of the education building, which was completed at a cost of \$93,589. Bill Adkins assumed chairmanship of the renovation committee to oversee the work. Small cubicle rooms were enlarged and reconfigured. The area which had been

the clothes closet became a new adult class. Radiators were removed. Heating was zoned throughout that floor and rooms were insulated as needed to provide noise barriers. All exterior walls would be insulated. The library was relocated from the third floor to the area which had been the choir room. The choir room was moved into what had been the youth department. The old oil furnace and boiler in the office building were replaced with a more efficient and economical gas furnace. Carlton Crenshaw, treasurer, stated that money to finance the renovation project was available in existing funds.

In June additional funds of \$800 were requested to cover the cost of health care insurance for the ministerial staff. After investigating other health plans, the personnel committee found



Warren Robertson and the secretary Milton Everett Elliott. Milton also was known for patrolling the education building for security during the worship service.

that coverage could not be found at a lower cost. The amount of increase was approved.

A nursery worker was hired to facilitate the participation of younger couples in Wednesday evening Bible study and adult choir rehearsal.

In May, Wade Lawrence, on behalf of the renovation committee and the deacons, asked that the vestibule from the church second level to the balcony level be renovated before the November homecoming celebration. This would include new electrical wiring and outlets, insulation of outer walls, extension of existing air conditioning, new floor covering, creation of a parlor by including the adjacent classroom in the vestibule, new banisters and pickets on stairways, and new ceiling surfaces. The estimated cost, \$12,000, would be taken from the property improvement fund. Creating the parlor necessitated moving the meeting room for our hearing impaired members.

Chairman of deacons **Wade Lawrence** asked that a special fund be set up to send ten messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention June 13, 1985, in Dallas, Texas. The report to the deacons from the pastor following the 1984 SBC in Kansas City had alerted the church to significant changes in this historic body. The funds would help defray expenses for the messengers' lodging and flights. These recommendations were approved.

In October the trustees, with the approval of the deacons, recommended that the house that the church owned next to the church office building be demolished at a cost of under \$1000. The

church had been renting the home to Russell and Winnie Thornton up to this time. The lot would later be fenced and used for a children's playground.

With all these expenditures, when the 1984-1985 budget was discussed at the November 14th business meeting there was great concern regarding the increases. In view of signs of an economic downturn an amendment was offered that the debt retirement/property improvement be reduced from \$20,000 to \$10,000. This was approved.

1985

Our fiftieth year was marked by a series of celebrations. All the living former pastors returned during the year for a special Sunday each. On May 19,

Dr. Charles Harmon was honored at a covered dish luncheon and spoke in the afternoon program about his years at the church and his ministry since then. October 20 saw the return of Dr. Charles Sanks to preach in a communion service. Dr. Thomas Fryer, the first pastor of the church, preached on October 27, and on Wednesday, October 30 he and his wife, Pauline, recalled the early years of our church.

Homecoming was November 3 with Dr. Walker Knight, editor of *SBC Today* and former editor of *Missions USA*, as preacher. November 17, Dr. Thomas Hall spoke to the Baptist Men and brought the morning message.

Two musical events were significant parts of the year's observance: the Virginia Baptist Male Chorale concert April 23; Dr. Milburn Price, chairman of the church music



department at Southern Seminary, was commissioned to compose an anthem in honor of our Jubilee year, *A Hymn of Unity*, with words by Fred Pratt Green.

The history committee updated the church history, created displays and began coordinating a project of videotaping oral histories.

As we began 1985, none of us foresaw that by the end of the year we would own the barbershop property. But in the course of the year the church came to the decision to move ahead with this important purchase, clearing the way for our present and future use of all the property we had previously purchased on the corner of Starling Avenue and Route 220. With no money in savings for such an undertaking, the church accepted the challenge and over \$28,000 was raised before the end of the year toward the \$60,000 purchase. A landscape architect from the Sunday School Board in Nashville was brought in to consult on the layout of all the property we now owned for parking, playground needs, new signs and lighting.

The church stewardship of gifts expresses our belief in missions. The church gave \$31,177.91 through the budget and in special gifts to ministries outside our church. Over \$17,000 of that amount went to SBC missions through the Cooperative Program. The three special SBC mission offerings totaled \$5,342. Our members gave \$1,349 to world hunger relief.

During 1985 our Sunday School continued to see growth, as did most of our organizations. It was the year we went from slide and reel projectors to a video tape player for missions programs, youth lock-ins, and Sunday School teacher training.

In June the church sent ten messengers to Dallas, Texas where fundamentalist forces won the presidency and succeeded by a narrow margin in sealing decisive majorities on boards of SBC agencies. On return our messengers gave a report to a business meeting on the tenor of the gathering and the significance of unfolding developments.

The fiftieth anniversary made us all more deeply aware of the dedication, the vision, and the labor of founding members. In rising to the challenge of the barbershop purchase some of those first members had inspired us to step out in faith again. We staked ourselves on God's future for us.

Below are three of the faithful members who in their retirement were always on hand to volunteer for building or maintenance projects that needed to be done: Charlie Biggs, Arthur Prillaman, Ed Huddle.



In January Ronnie Prillaman asked that some type of ventilation be installed in the rooms being used by the tellers to prevent smoke from escaping into the choir room or hallways. The result was that smoking was banned everywhere in the church building for all events.