

HISTORY OF
TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
Wilmington, North Carolina
1889 - 1966

In 1889 a few Methodists from Grace and Fifth Avenue Methodist Churches met at Grace Church to consider the advisability of establishing a Sunday School in the eastern section of Wilmington. It was the sense of that meeting that there was a distinct need for such an enterprise. Plans were set in motion that resulted in the organization of a Sunday School in August, 1889. It was known as the Market Street Methodist Sunday School, and R. H. Beery was the first Superintendent. For fifteen dollars a month they rented the Giblem Lodge, on the corner of Eighth and Princess Streets. Starting with only about twenty-five pupils, the school soon enrolled one hundred.

Not satisfied with this temporary organization, a small group met at a cottage on South Ninth Street in November, 1889, and organized the Market Street Methodist Mission. W. T. Newell was elected President of the Mission. The following were present at this organization meeting: W. J. Perry, Philip Thomas, L. B. Kingsbury, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Craig, Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Beery, Mr. and Mrs. T. T. Seeders, Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Bilbro, Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Sneeden and Mr. and Mrs. E. V. McKenzie. This group secured a house on South Ninth Street. They conducted a Sunday School, held class meetings and had prayer meetings.

The house on South Ninth Street was only used until a more suitable place could be found. In 1891 a lot across the same street in the same block was leased for three years. The following building committee was appointed: E. F. Johnson, W. J. Penny, F. A. Newberry, R. H. Beery and Rev. J. W. Craig. Within five weeks after the committee was appointed, a building thirty by forty-two feet was completed, at a cost of about eight hundred dollars (\$ 800.00) .

On May 28, 1891, Rev. F. D. Swindell, the Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District, organized the Market Street Methodist Church, this to take the place of the Mission. The new church started with twenty-eight (28) members, seven from Fifth Street, four from Bladen Street, and seventeen from Grace. Rev. J. W. Craig, a local preacher, was placed in charge until the meeting of the Annual Conference. Rev. E. C. Sell was appointed that Fall as the first regular preacher in charge.

In 1894, during the pastorate of Dr. M. T. Plyler, the lease on the church lot expired. The church, therefore, bought a lot on the northeast corner of Ninth and Market Streets. This lot was sixty-six by one hundred and sixty-five feet and was purchased for \$3,500.00 The members made a cash payment of \$1,000.00, sold the back part of the lot for \$500.00 and began paying on the balance of the debt. The church building was moved from the lot which had been leased to the new site. It was dedicated on May 28, 1899, exactly eight years after the church was organized. The congregation worshipped in this building until 1907.

A building committee was appointed during the pastorage of Rev. W. L. Rexford at the fourth quarterly conference in 1906, to build a new church to cost not less than \$12,000.00. The following were members of the committee: R. H. Beery, E. F. Johnson, J. W. Smith, L. P. Sneed and E. V. McKenzie. W. B. Cooper was later placed on the committee to take the place of E. F. Johnson, who had died in the meantime. At the same quarterly conference it was voted to change the name from Market Street to Trinity.

On Monday, July 29, 1907, after a sunrise prayer meeting, workmen began to tear down the old church building. By November of that same year they were able to hold their first service in the educational building, which had been completed. Their dream of completing the church auditorium was never realized.

In the meantime the city was expanding eastward. It soon became evident that a church farther out Market Street would be advisable. In 1915 a special committee was appointed at the fourth quarterly conference of Grace Church. This committee, charged with the responsibility of buying a suitable lot in the Carolina Heights section, was as follows: Robert Ruark, J. W. Brooks, E. L. Mathews, J. S. Williams, M. L. Stover, C. E. Bethea, E. L. Prince, A. L. Freeman, W. P. McGlaughon. Trinity Church appointed J. W. Smith, E. V. McKenzie and _____ to meet with the committee from Grace Church to discuss the advisability of moving Trinity farther east. The meeting was held in the home of E. L. Prince, on November 23, 1915. In 1916, under the pastorage of Rev. W. V. McRae, the present lot was purchased for \$8,000.00. A group of women had been working for some time and had succeeded in raising the sum of \$4,000.00, which they applied on the lot. During 1916 nearly all the committee appointed by Grace moved their membership to Trinity, along with some others. On account of the World War, plans for constructing a new building were held in abeyance.

Early in 1918, Rev. W. V. McRae, Pastor of Trinity, went as a chaplain with the Army. In May 1918, Rev. V. P. Scoville was appointed as Pastor. The following building committee was appointed: E. L. Mathews, chairman, J. W. Brooks, E. L. Prince, J. S. Williams, E. M. Dewey, E. V. McKenzie. The finance committee was composed of Robert Ruark, chairman, J. W. Brooks, E. Y. Davis, C. E. Bethea, E. L. Mathews, W. P. McGlaughon and H. E. O'Keef. During the pastorate of Mr. Scoville the building was largely completed. Rev. H. C. Smith began his ministry at Trinity by holding the first service in the new church on December 4, 1921, this service being conducted in the Sunday School Department. The pipe organ was installed and dedicated during the pastorage of Rev. H. C. Smith. In 1935, during the pastorage of Rev. A. P. Brantley, the stained glass windows were installed. During all this time the membership has steadily grown, in spite of having to struggle with a huge debt, which has not yet been liquidated. The church is at present making definite plans to build a much-needed educational building. Since the fiftieth anniversary of the church will be celebrated May 28, 1941, we hope we can have the educational building complete and the debt paid in full by that time.

REV. R. L. JEROME, PASTOR 1937-1941

The 50th Anniversary was celebrated on May 29, 1941. To begin the celebration a pageant, written by Mrs. D. R. Goodin, portraying the History of Methodism in America, and the History of Trinity Church to date was given - Many gifts were given to the Church at this time.

DR. FRED C. PASCHALL, PASTOR 1941-1945

World War II brought many responsibilities and opportunities to Trinity. The church ministered to the men and women in service by serving them breakfast and encouraging church attendance and participation in all activities. Among those serving in the choir were Lt. and Mrs. Richard Sawyer and Chaplain and Mrs. Fox. Chaplain Fox will be remembered as one of the two Protestant Chaplains with a Jewish Rabbi and Roman Catholic Priest who gave their lives by giving their life preservers to others in the sinking of the ship-Dorchester. Trinity gave 123 men and women to the Armed Services. Five of these made the supreme sacrifice. The Dedication of the Church Building was held Saturday, October 2, 1943 and Sunday October 3, 1943. The service Saturday consisted of the burning of the Mortgage - Sunday morning sermon by Bishop Clare Purcell and words of greeting by the Presiding Elder, Rev. A. S. Parker and two former Pastors, Dr. Walter Patten and Rev. R. L. Jerome. A service of Praise and Thanksgiving, led by the Pastor was held in the evening.

REV. E. B. FISHER, PASTOR 1945-1950

Ground was broken for the Educational Building with appropriate ceremony - The Building erected after several delays and the Cornerstone laid in 1948. A new Parsonage at 1915 Market Street was purchased and the Pastor and family moved in. Mr. Fisher was the first pastor in the history of Trinity to be returned for the 5th Year.

DR. H. I. GLASS, PASTOR 1950-1952

Trinity Church celebrated its 60th Anniversary June 10, 1951. Sermon by Dr. Gilbert T. Rowe - At the evening service greetings were given by Rev. J. W. Sneed, a charter member, and an historical sketch by W. D. Jones. Dr. Glass organized the Commissions as ordered by General Conference. Mrs. Glass was elected President of the Woman's Society of Christian Service of the North Carolina Conference.

REV. M. C. DUNN, PASTOR 1952-1959

Two Adult Classes were organized and the Unified Budget adopted- Plans were made for the renovation of the Sanctuary. The property in the rear of the church, fronting on Princess Street was purchased by the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Outstanding Evangelistic meetings were held by Dr. E. Stanley Jones and Dr. Purnell Bailey, as the Evangelists. A 9 o'clock morning worship service was begun to accommodate many who could not climb the steps. Trinity sponsored Riegelwood church and gave the pews; also gave many members to the organization of the following churches - Devon Park - Wesley Memorial - Wrightsville Beach and Wrightsboro. Rev. G. Robert McKenzie Jr. Rev. Robert Drew and Rev. Sam D. McMillan Jr. gave themselves to the ministry.

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" THE CONFERENCE YEAR WAS CHANGED FROM NOVEMBER
TO JUNE, MAKING A SHORT YEAR FROM OCTOBER 31,
1954 to JUNE 30, 1955 "

DR. C. FREEMAN HEATH, PASTOR 1959-1960

A Farewell Party was given for the 150 members who were leaving for Jacksonville, Florida, caused by the removal of the General Offices of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to that city. Mr. Heath served only 1 year as he was called by the Bishop to serve as the Conference Evangelistic Chairman.

REV. W. R. STEVENS, PASTOR 1960-1962

The renovation of the Sanctuary was completed and we occupied the beautifully decorated Sanctuary. The house on Princess Street was torn down and the ground cleared for a much needed parking lot.

REV. ALLEN C. LEE, PASTOR 1962 ----

The parking lot was stabilized and put to immediate use. Paraments of red, green and purple were given for the new alter by loving members. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association conducted Crusade services with participation by Trinity. An elevator was installed in 1964, the gift of the J. Earl Sneed, Sr. family.

" PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED TRINITY CHURCH "
1891 - 1966

Rev. J. W. Craig	1891
Rev. E. C. Sell	1892
Dr. M. T. Plyler	1892-1895
Rev. T. H. Sutton	1895-1897
Rev. A. S. Barnes	1897-1899
Rev. J. W. Potter	1899-1903
Rev. A. B. Haltom	1904
Rev. J. M. Culbreth	1905
Rev. H. J. Duryea	1906
Rev. W. L. Rexford	1906-1909
Rev. E. R. Welch	1910
Rev. E. C. Sell	1910-1912
Rev. C. T. Rogers	1913
Rev. W. L. Rexford	1914
Rev. W. V. McRae	1915-1918
Rev. V. P. Scoville	1918-1921
Dr. H. C. Smith	1921-1925
Rev. L. D. Hayman	1926
Rev. W. R. Royal	1926-1930
Rev. L. C. Larkin	1930-1933
Rev. A. P. Brantley	1933-1935
Dr. Walter Patten	1935-1937
Rev. R. L. Jerome	1937-1941
Dr. F. W. Paschall	1941-1945
Rev. E. B. Fisher	1945-1950
Dr. H. I. Glass	1950-1952
Rev. M. C. Dunn	1952-1959
Rev. C. Freeman Heath	1959-1960
Rev. W. R. Stevens	1960-1962
Rev. Allen C. Lee	1962-

" FULL TIME CHRISTIAN WORKERS WHO HAVE GONE OUT FROM TRINITY "

Rev. J. W. Sneed
Miss Elizabeth Sneed
Rev. W. C. Benson
Miss Ethel Sugg
Miss Rosa Sneed
Miss Jo Ann Sneed
Rev. G. Robert McKenzie Jr.
Rev. Robert Drew
Rev. Sam D. McMillan Jr.