GREETINGS FROM THE NC CONFERENCE COMMISSION OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE NC CONFERENCE!

The NC Conference Commission on Archives & History:
Visit the website: www.nccumc.org/defaultarchives.htm

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THANK YOU
MURFRESSBORO
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
FOR HOSTING THE FALL 2007 MEETING

SPRING MEETING OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY - APRIL 5, 2008

Two-Thousand Seven marks eighty-four years since a group of families gathered around a community known as Evans Hill to begin our church. In 1923, the church began meeting at the home of Mrs. Bell Thompson McCallum. In that same year, the membership grew so rapidly that the congregation had to move to a larger house on the corner of Evans Avenue and McLean Street. Later a house one block away on Frolic Street was purchased as a permanent place for worship.

The first minister was Rev. Lloyd McQueen. The first church structure was erected in 1928 under the leadership of Rev. J. B. Meekins. The building on Vann Street burned and the membership relocated to a standing structure on Herring Street which had been vacated by a group of the Holiness Faith. Reverends L. W. Henderick and M. M. Patrick were the pastors who served the congregation at the new location.

Rev. Robert B. McRae, 1954-1961, led the congregation in purchasing the site and building for the new church. In 1958, the Wesley Chapel Congregation held its first worship service in the new church on the corner of Frolic Street and Cumberland Street. It was at this time that the name was changed to John Wesley.

Many pastors have served the John Wesley congregation since its meager beginning. We give thanks to God for each of these ministers who made John Wesley what it is today.

Church Historians:
Oxygenia Hughley
Frances Thomas

Directions to John Wesley United Methodist Church
616 Cumberland Road, Fayetteville 28301
From I-40 East Raleigh area, merge onto I-95 S Via Exit 328A toward Benson/Fayetteville; Merge onto I-95 BR S/US-301 South via Exit 56 toward Fayetteville/ft Bragg/Pope AFB; Turn Right onto Grove St/NC-210/NC-24; Turn right on Ramsey Street; Turn left on Cumberland Street; to 616 Cumberland Street. Church phone number: 910.483.5052.

Para gave a devotional based on II Chronicles 3-5:4, a description of Solomon’s temple. It was about the building and the process of building. A reminder of where we come from is critical; it gives us a sense of rootedness. Solomon took what belonged to the Lord and put to the service of the Lord. It all belongs to God. What we are preserving today is not just the edifice but the story of Methodists, of people of God. Preservation is for our future. If you come up with the name of someone you think might be good for the president of the NCCHS, give it to Arthur Warren or Para Drake. Any names submitted will be given to the nominating committee. Officers are elected for a two-year term.

Everyone introduced themselves. The minutes of the April 14, 2007 meeting were approved as printed in the Saddlebags newsletter on a motion by Arthur Warren. The minutes of the April 14, 2007 meeting were approved as printed in the Saddlebags newsletter on a motion by Arthur Warren. The minutes of the April 14, 2007 meeting were approved as printed in the Saddlebags newsletter on a motion by Arthur Warren. The minutes of the April 14, 2007 meeting were approved as printed in the Saddlebags newsletter on a motion by Arthur Warren. The minutes of the April 14, 2007 meeting were approved as printed in the Saddlebags newsletter on a motion by Arthur Warren.


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Within a church history of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church written by Rev. Denny Wise in 1976 appears a chapter of notes from the memory of Miss Margaret Dowdy. This history is found in one of the county conference archives, 800-849-4433 ext 264 or archives-history@ncumc.org. You may find out more about the work of the Pan Methodist Commission on the website: www.gcucumc.org/panmeth/index.htm.

**Clergy**

Herman Fred Davis  
November 7, 1926 – August 23, 2007  
Widower of Prudence (Polly) Cobb Davis  
Luther Martin Peele, Jr.  
January 20, 1929 – November 16, 2007  
Husband of Myra Miller Peele  
Daniel Mercer Forbes, Jr.  
May 27, 1928 – October 15, 2007  
Husband of Louise Dawson Forbes  
Paul Cecil Millwood  
May 27, 1934 – December 6, 2007  
Husband of Patricia Nash Millwood  
Ralph Isaac Epps  
Husband of Pinear Windley Epps  
Haywood Linwood Harrell  
April 4, 1913 – February 11, 2008  
Widower of Dorothy Stallings Harrell

**Spouses:**

Edith Mangum Fowlkes Berry  
November 7, 1927 – November 7, 2007  
Widow of Ralph Eugene Fowlkes  
Dorothy Anita Thompson Dillon  
March 29, 1927 – November 10, 2007  
Widow of Frederick Fairfield Dillon  
Roberta Fields Carruth  
January 6, 1919 – November 10, 2007  
Widow of Paul Carruth  
Etolia Stribling Vale  
February 28, 1920 – November 14, 2007  
Widow of Charles Edward Vale  
Susan Waller Miller  
April 8, 1921 – January 8, 2008  
Wife of James Herbert Miller, Jr.  
Alice Blanche Houser Crew  
April 29, 1912 – February 21, 2008  
Widow of John Rogers Crew, Jr.  
Elma Bundy Fuford  
August 15, 1928 – February 16, 2008  
Widow of William Nelson Fuford

**DECEASED CLERGY AND SPOUSES**

**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

Within a church history of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church written by Rev. Denny Wise in 1976 appears a chapter of notes from the memory of Miss Margaret Dowdy. This history is found in one of the county files in the archives with information about local churches that has been sent in and collected through the years. Miss Dowdy mentions such milestones as the gift of a communion set 100 years ago, the original pump organ replacement in 1920, people being leery of the addition of an “unchurchly” piano, electricity coming in 1937 and various additions and repairs through the years. Her last entry is: “Tragedy struck the evening of Ash Wednesday, March 3, 1976. A fire of undetermined source completely demolished our church building. Yet over the ruins, we the people of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church see the task ahead of us and still look forward to the future.” The Reverend Norwood Jones (1923-2004) was the District Superintendent of the Elizabeth City District at the time of the fire. He was presented with a memento of the old church which is a cross constructed from the large handmade nails taken from the ruins of the original building. His widow, Helen Jones, has recently donated the cross to the NC Conference Archives. Helen says that at the time of the fire, Mt. Zion was one of the oldest church buildings in the Conference.
The Tyson children grew up around eastern North Carolina. Their father, Marvin Earl Tyson, known as Jack, started out as a minister with the Free Will Baptist Church. "My dad had to quit school in eighth grade to help out on the farm," says Vernon. Then at age 26, Jack felt the spirit move in him, and he began to hold gatherings. Word got around how gifted a speaker he was, and the number of people who came to hear him grow.

One man offered to pay Jack $50 a month if he would go back to school and take some classes to improve his mind. "My father couldn't believe it. $50 a month was a lot of money in those days," says Vernon. Jack took the courses and was then put in charge of a Free Will Baptist Orphanage in Middlesex.

The orphanage was in dire straits, and Jack worked hard to improve it. Then, after five years, he decided he wanted to transfer to the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church initially turned him down because of his lack of education. Still, the district superintendent at the time saw promise in Jack and decided to allow him to take correspondence courses while serving as a circuit minister to three churches.

Thus began Jack’s career as a Methodist minister, moving his family from town to town in eastern North Carolina serving small churches. His wife, the former Irene Hart, was from a line of ministers herself. "Her grandfather and father were both ministers," explains Bobby, Sr.

Raise up a child

Although raised in a minister’s home, Vernon says they were not an especially pious family. "We come from deep religious roots, and my family is a family of faith. You might think we were seven sweet children all washed up and perfect, but we were like any other children. There were fights, doors slamming, and we made enough noise sometimes the neighbors would complain," he says with a laugh.

"Dewey, the oldest, was the most handsome of us all," says Vernon, laughing as he describes his oldest brother. "He had the Tyrone Power look. He even dated Ava Gardner.

"Tommy was a people person and an evangelist," he continues. "He founded the Aqueduct Conference Center in Chapel Hill. People still go there to explore what it means to live a life of faith."

George was the next in line. He loved books and longed to be a professor but died from leukemia at age 48. "When Uncle George died, it seemed that part of all the brothers died," says Bobby Jr.

The next brother, Earl, had a surprise when he went to the dean of admissions at Duke. "He was told that they didn’t have room for any more Tyson brothers," says Bobby Jr. Earl was given a six-church circuit in Virginia, and it was then that he decided to attend the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.

Vernon is the Tyson most remembered for his stance for racial equality during the 1960s and ’70s. His story is related in a book titled Blood Done Sign My Name by his son, Tim Tyson, history professor at Duke University.

Vernon admits that dealing with inter-racial tensions and situations formed a large part of his ministry for many years. "I was given the race issue by God and had to handle it the way I knew I wanted to. You know, people always talk about it, but during that time, I served the Lord in a lot of other ways. I baptized a lot of babies, buried a lot of devoted church members, and taught at a lot of Bible schools."

Bobby, Sr., the youngest of Jack’s children, was known as something of the maverick in the family. Like his father, Bobby Jr. has enjoyed serving mostly rural churches.

Passing the torch

The third generation of Tyson ministers has much admiration for the six brothers and their unique strengths. "Once you get to know us, you know we are not from a cookie-cutter mold," explains Merle’s daughter, Beth Hood, superintendent of the Greenville district of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. "We each had to wrestle with our own calling. We became ministers because of who we are, not because of our family."

"I knew how hard a minister’s life was, and I really didn’t want to become one," admits Bobby Jr. "I was making good money and had a career in front of me that would have given me a good life, but there was a gnawing on me that something was missing. I was helping my dad with his evangelism in Raleigh. I kept telling him and others I was only going to do administrative work. It took me two years to answer my call," he explains.

The first female Tyson to be ordained, Beth found that her journey to the ministry also took some time. “Other people saw it in me first,” she says. “When I asked my Uncle Dewey if he was surprised I was becoming a minister, he said he was just surprised it took me so long.”

For her first appointment, Beth was able to leverage some of the Tyson wisdom by serving under her Uncle Vernon. “He was serving at St. Luke in Sanford, and I was appointed his associate minister,” she explains. “The years I was with him taught me so much. Some of the things I do best, I learned from him.”

Vernon is equally appreciative of having had his niece with him during his last two years serving as a minister. "When you love your craft, you have the desire to teach it to the young," he says. "I was able to show her how to do some things — and she learned how not to do some things.”

There are moments in one’s life when it’s nice to have family by your side. “When I was ordained, I could have two ordained ministers of the church, one family member, and the Bishop lay their hands on me,” she says. "I was able to have Vernon, Bobby, and my mother with me. I can’t tell you what a powerful moment that was.”

Although different in their approach to ministry, the Tysons all share an up-front style and a keen sense of humor. When they do have the opportunity to get together as a family, that sense of humor predominates. "We really don’t talk shop that much," says Vernon, adding, "We do play Spades and have to keep each other from cheating.”

Beth says she remembers her mother’s house as being a place where her uncles could come and get away for a little while. Those were special times for the Tysons, times when the generations could relax and be themselves and maybe think back to how their family has evolved and of the blessings they share in the ministry.

Vernon sums it up with a quote from Psalm 16: “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places: Yes, I have a good inheritance.”

By: Diane Silcox-Jarrett

The article was first printed in the November 2007 issue of Our State, Down Home in North Carolina, Magazine and is used with permission of the author. Diane Silcox-Jarrett lives in Raleigh.