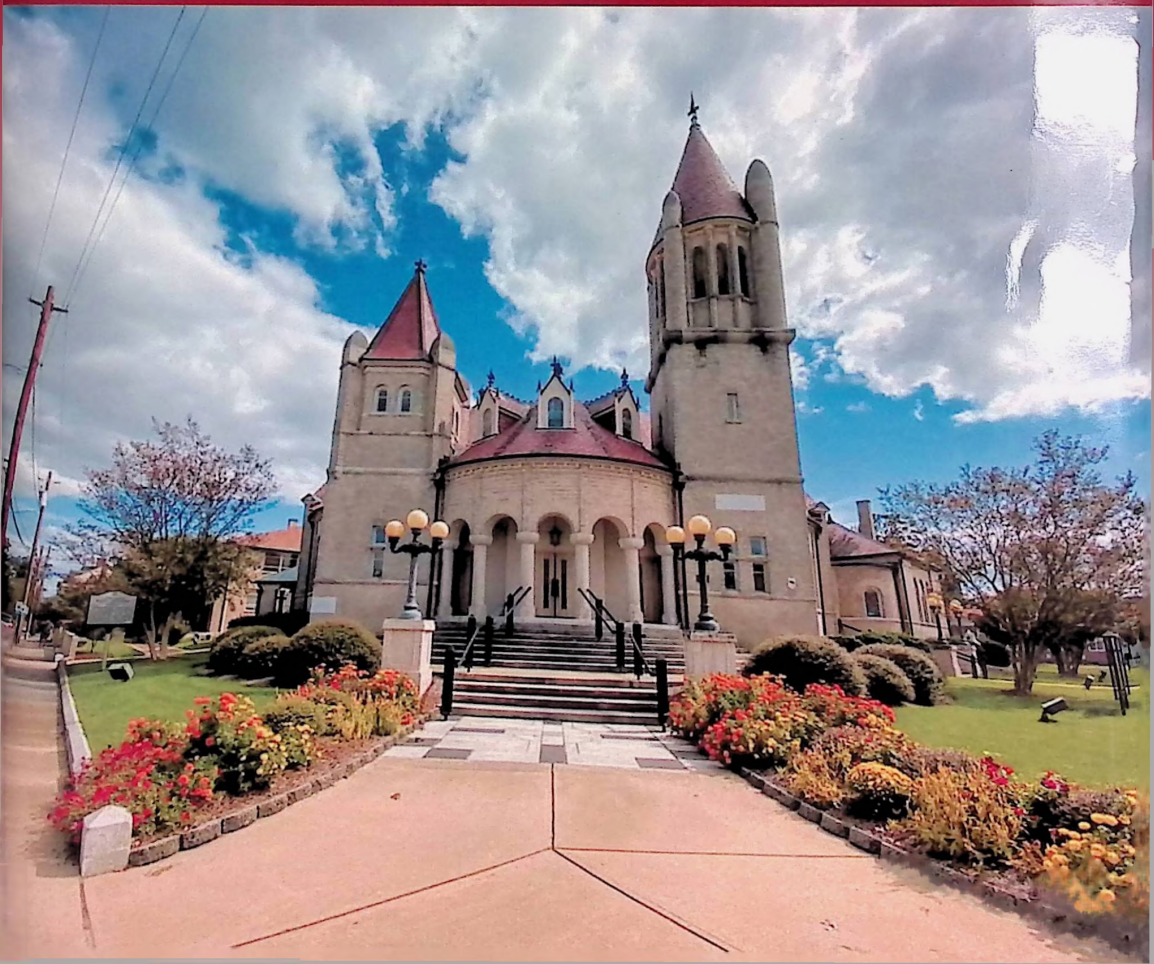


250 YEARS OF METHODISM IN NEW BERN

CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Memories

Centenary United Methodist Church has stood as a rock, solid in faith, for 250 years. Much of the credit should be given to the saints that have gone before us, and those who walk among us now. We would like to share a few quotes about what Centenary has meant to those faithful. We pray their memories will bless you.

At the conclusion of a musical concert in the sanctuary, the audience stood and offered prolonged applause. The conductor responded by saying, "We have no encore planned, but let's sing 'Amazing Grace.'" As we sang reverently as one great choir—voices high and low, young and old, cracked and whole, trained and untrained, but with sweet harmony of the heart—I experienced another moment of God's good grace and blessing at Centenary."

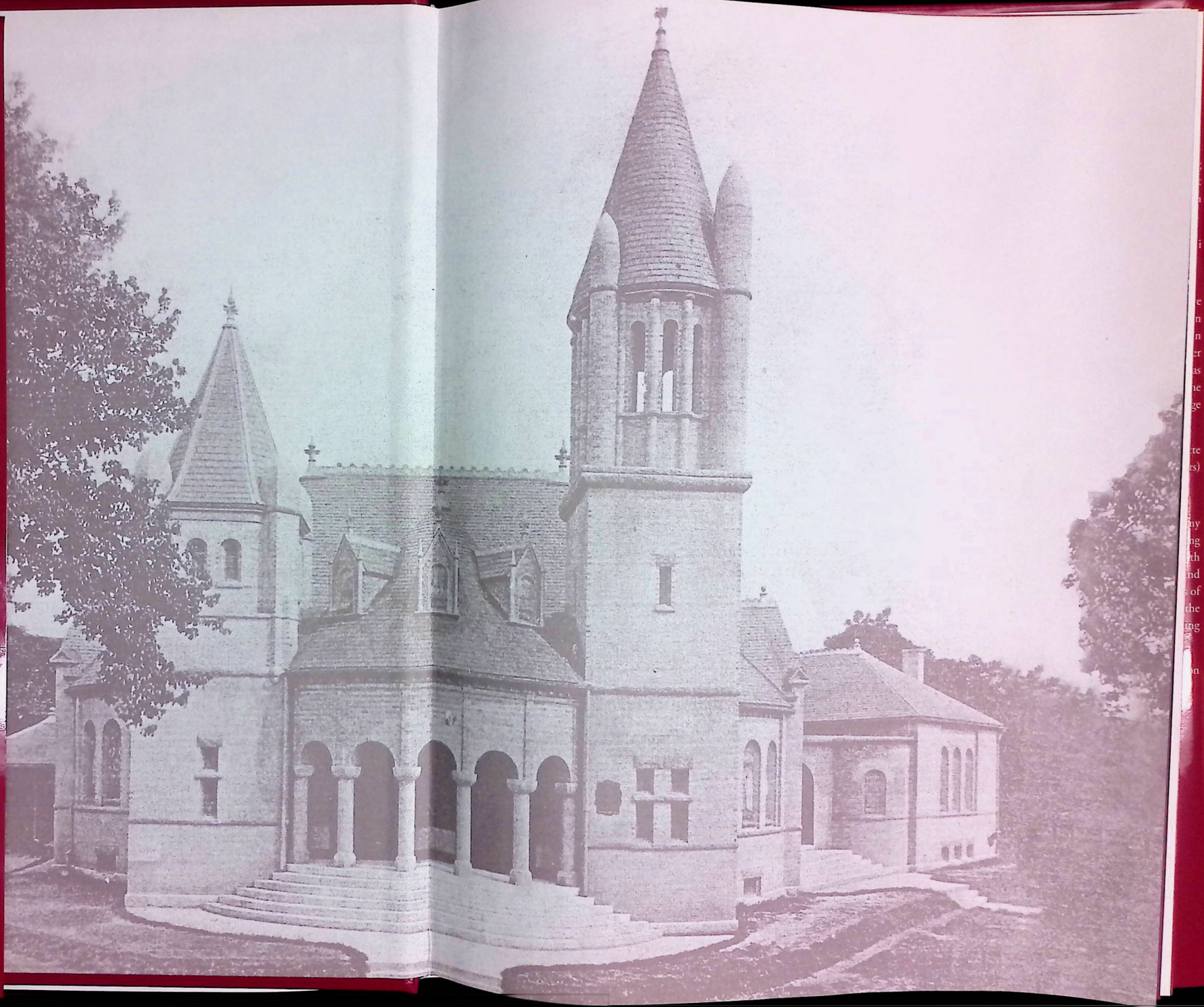
—Don Hodges

When I was five years old, I took piano lessons from Mary Hubbard Stratton, the organist at Centenary. One Saturday, the Mary invited me to go to Centenary to play the organ. I had never seen anything so grand—the windows were stunning, and the organ was magnificent. Miss Mary let me play, my feet tapping from the bench. This magical day will remain one of my most cherished memories of childhood."

—Eloise Collins
(now a part of the heavenly choir)

I joined Centenary by transfer in 1951; joined the Men's Bible Class and later became its teacher. Later, I joined the Sara Key Class and became their teacher. I taught Sunday school for forty years. My family and I have been a part of this congregation for over seventy years. In all these years, I have seen many Centenary "Saints" go on to glory, but I can walk the halls or sit in the pews and clearly hear them proclaim, "Centenary is truly a wonderful place!"

—Karl Kendrick
(who is now with the "Great cloud of witnesses")



Century United M
to look for 250 ye
to the saints that li
among us now. We v
Century has mean
will bless you.

to the conclusion
audience stood and
responded by saying
it was "Amazing C
—voices high
—and untrain
—experienced anothe
—centenary."

When I was five
—Robert Stratton
—the Mary' invited
—I never seen any
—of the organ was
—coming from the
—not cherished

—and Centenar
—and later be
—and became t
—Mr. family
—seventy
—"Saints"
—poor and ch
—of the place

Twelve

250 YEARS

OF METHODISM IN NEW BERN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright © 2022 by Centenary United Methodist Church

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this work in any form whatsoever without permission in writing from the publisher, except for brief passages in connection with a review. For information, please write:

The Donning Company Publishers
731 South Brunswick Street
Brookfield, MO 64628

Lex Cavanah, General Manager
Dennis Paalhar, Production Supervisor
Philip Briscoe, Editor
Chad Casey, Graphic Designer
Katie Gardner, Marketing and Project Coordinator

Nate Salgado, Project Director

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

On file with the Library of Congress
ISBN: 978-1-68184-338-4

Printed in the United States of America at Walsworth

7	Dedication to Eloise Stilley Collins
8	Foreword – Pastors' Messages
9	Acknowledgements
10	I. Methodists in New Bern New Bern's Methodist Meetinghouse / Andrew Chapel Centenary A Church Divided The Civil War Years Centenary Rebuilds Its Congregation Mother Church 200th-Anniversary Celebration The Christmas Church A Legacy of Faith
28	II. Our Building Architecture Russell Educational Building Church Renovations Symbols of Our Faith Baptismal Fonts Symbols of the Twelve Apostles in the Chapel Stained-Glass Windows Sanctuary Memorial (Altar) Kneelers Columbarium and Memorial Garden
52	III. Ministers Serving Centenary United Methodist Church
55	IV. Worship 8:30 a.m. – Informal Traditional (Chapel) 9:30 a.m. – "Xperience" Contemporary (Sanctuary) 11:00 a.m. – Traditional (Sanctuary) Wednesday Chapel Service at Noon
58	V. Youth Ministries Cent Kids Cent Youth / Mission Trips Vacation Bible School (VBS)
62	VI. Educational Ministries Bible Studies Sunday School Classes Thru-the-Week School
68	VII. Music Ministries Ministers of Music Centenary Church 200th-Anniversary Celebration Choirs Sanctuary Choir

Xperience Worship Team

Chapel Choir

Faith We Sing

Children's Choir

Ladies' Ensemble

Men's Ensemble

Létourneau Pipe Organ

Hinners Reed Organ

Hand Bell Ensemble

Orff Instruments

Centenary Brass

The Carillion Bells

Audio-Visual Production Team

Christmas Cantatas

82 VIII. Congregational Outreach

Centenary After School Program

Backpack Blessings / FUEL

C4C and Oaks Road Academy

Camp Don Lee

Caring Cooks

Catacombs at Centenary

Centenary Clown Ministry

Craven Messiah Chorus

Family Life Committee

GriefShare

Impact 10

Kairos Prison Ministry

Lord Is It I? Drama

Religious Community Services (RCS)

Centenary Sports

Stephen Ministry

Troop Support

Trunk or Treat

Zoe Mission Partnership

100 IX. Congregational Organizations, Service, and Fellowship

Acolytes

Altar Guild

Archives and History Room

Boy Scouts

Girl Scouts

Centenary Library

Trustees and Governance / Administrative Church Council in 2022

Committees and Chairs in 2022

United Methodist Men

United Methodist Women / Circles at Centenary

112 References

DEDICATION to ELOISE STILLEY COLLINS

November 8, 1942 – January 9, 2022

Born in Bridgeton, North Carolina, Eloise graduated from New Bern High School; she then graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro in 1965. She taught English and reading in public schools for many years and then finished her working life in Carteret County Social Services.

A lifelong Christian, she was a member of Centenary United Methodist Church, where she actively participated in worship, Bible studies, and the church choir. Ever the musician, she enjoyed participating in and playing piano for the Community Gospel Choir. She also sang in the New Bern Messiah Chorus. One of Eloise's passions was playing piano, and she was gifted with the ability to amaze listeners by playing the same hymn in multiple musical styles.

No words can come close to the reality of who she was and of all she was. In her funeral eulogy, Susan Pate-Greenwood shared some collected perspectives such as these: Angel on Earth, Saint of God, Olympic-class Prayer Warrior, piano player extraordinaire, person of deep and abiding faith, first-class prankster, gifted wordsmith, sharp mind with a loving heart, most intellectual person in her high school class, musical messenger of the deep love of Jesus, beacon of joy, and radiantly alive. Her son, Dan, wanted her to be remembered for both her piano playing and her servant's heart in sharing food gifts to those she knew needed them. Her husband, Jimmy, was quoted as saying she was the best and kindest person on earth, as well as the smartest woman he ever met.

Eloise loved so many people well, though Jimmy was always number one. If Eloise was your friend, you indeed had a great friend. She had a deep spiritual strength and was truly a woman of faith. For a lot of folks, she was a true representative of Jesus. She was a natural evangelist who seldom missed a chance to give God the credit. She was a serious student of the Scriptures, reading and meditating on the Word of God. She was an intercessor, something that takes time, energy, devotion, and self-sacrifice, coming to God on the behalf of others. She prayed about everything daily, fervently, and faithfully.

Eloise was known for her generosity, charity, and servant's heart. She was a gifted wordsmith and writer, co-authoring a history of Straits United Methodist Church. Friends, relatives, and colleagues have been richly blessed by her thoughtful, meaningful, and often touching handwritten greeting cards. The congregation of this church has been touched by her presence, and this editorial group has chosen her to be our muse and to make this book a tribute to her kindness and encouragement.

Eloise lived faithfully and joyfully because she had first been loved by God. It is impossible to speak of Eloise and not speak of her faith. No better words than these hold true for Eloise: "Because I live, you shall live also." She will be sorely missed, but we also know that Eloise is rejoicing in the presence of the Lord she loved and knew. Eloise lived rejoicing—let us do no less.



FOREWORD PASTORS' MESSAGES



Isaac Newton once wrote to a friend, "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." Those of us who look to the future from this moment stand on the shoulders of giants, from Joseph Pilmore to this very day. Two hundred and fifty years' worth of giants have left for us a legacy of faithfulness, mission, and ministry to the people of New Bern.

We mark this anniversary as a way of giving thanks for all that has gone before, and also dreaming of all that is yet to come. Together, we stand on the shoulders of giants and look to the future yet to be, confident in the providence of God. May God continue to bless the people of Centenary United Methodist Church and the mission to which we dedicate our lives.

Peace,
Thomas M. Greener, DMin
Lead Pastor through June 2022

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ."

—1 Corinthians 3:11

Founded by a Methodist lay preacher, Centenary United Methodist has been a solid rock in New Bern for 250 years. Centenary has been a spiritual home to many generations: a school of teaching and learning the Gospel, a temple of inspiring worship, a field hospital of compassionate care, and a headquarters of commitment to a more just society.



Having survived revolution, civil war, a fire, two global pandemics, and, of course, several hurricanes, Centenary continues to answer the clarion call to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We may be physically located at the corner of New and Middle, but the world is our parish. This anniversary is an opportunity not only to bask in the radiance of the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us—the saints of Centenary—but to thank them and the Lord they faithfully served.

Centenary's past has been glorious, but in Christ, the best is always yet to come. May God continue to bless and guide Centenary and its people to continue to share God's grace.

In Christ,
Vann Spivey
Pastor (beginning June 28, 2022)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of Centenary's early history has been recorded in the State Archives of North Carolina, located in Raleigh. As the work progressed, the group became aware that the Spirit led us to this point in history. We tried to imagine what the early ancestors must have experienced in attending worship in either very hot or cold structures, in lamplight or gaslight, and with horses or early motor cars as transportation. Nothing deterred their faithfulness; thus, we are Centenary today.

One day while sitting at the reception desk in 2019, Mary Carpenter approached me to be the editor for our 250th-anniversary book of history and commemoration to be ready for that anniversary in 2022. I agreed, and we had lots of time, we thought. Pastor Tom had gotten Brenda George to agree to write, and I had approached Gail Flowers for editing, proofreading—that sort of thing. Of course, Mary Carpenter was a logical history expert and archives researcher to bring on board. Along the way, Sherry Parker and Don Midyette volunteered to be part of our group. Getting into the writing and accumulating photos for the book, we realized none of us had any real computer experience for getting us ready for publishing such a massive undertaking. Though we had contracted with Penning Company Publishers for the end product, we needed someone who could get it to them and get our items organized to go off. Don Midyette talked with Sam Carter, and we were off and running. "Thank you" does not cover all that these hard-working individuals brought to the task.

We are grateful to those who have contributed articles and information for the production of this book, in particular Marshall Farnsworth and Kathy Mitchell. We regret any omissions and errors in text or contents.

We pray you find inspiration in both this book and Centenary's history and current events, and that we have done our Centenary church family proud. Thank you for your support.

Susan Crawford, Editor

I.

METHODISTS IN NEW BERN

"I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out."

—John Wesley, "Thoughts upon Methodism," 1786

Centenary United Methodist Church in New Bern, North Carolina, is officially recognized as the oldest continuous congregation in the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the denomination's oldest continuous congregation south and east of Baltimore, Maryland. The congregation, founded in 1710, is an active, vibrant, and mission-focused community of faith that has served the people of New Bern for 250 years.

The first people to be called Methodists were members of a small religious club organized by John and Charles Wesley in 1729 at Oxford University in England. Known for their methodical habits of study and religious observance, the Wesleys and the Methodists emerged as leaders of a spiritual renewal movement within the Church of England. The goal of the movement was to "reform the nation, particularly the church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land." Over time, a pattern of organization and discipline emerged. It included a set of general rules, societies made up of class meetings (small groups in which members of Methodist societies watched over one another), and band meetings (smaller confessional groups divided by gender), all connected by traveling lay preachers. By the 1760s, the Methodist movement spread to the American colonies, where European settlers worked to establish new Methodist societies under the oversight of John Wesley.

Founded in 1710, colonial New Bern proved to be fertile ground for early proponents of Methodism. Although it appears no Methodist church building was established in New Bern before the dawn of the nineteenth century, there is evidence of notable Methodist activity in the area as early as the mid-eighteenth century. George Whitefield, an Anglican evangelist and colleague of John Wesley, was the first to bring the Methodist message to eastern North Carolina. Traveling south from Virginia, Whitefield preached the Gospel to a receptive crowd of New Bern residents on December 25, 1739. An excerpt from Whitefield's published journal makes the following observations about the service: "The people were uncommonly attentive, most melted into Tears, and shewed what a great Impression the Word made upon their Hearts . . . This unexpected Success rejoiced me the more, because I looked upon it as an Earnest of future and more plentiful Effusions of God's Spirit in these Parts.—I really believe, whenever the Gospel is preached in these Parts with Power, it will be remarkably bless'd." By the time Whitefield returned to New Bern in 1765, he was widely known throughout the colonies, and the local Anglican minister noted that many who had previously been "instructed with the principles of Methodism" came a great number of miles to hear him.

In 1769, John Wesley appointed lay preachers Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman to assist the existing Methodist societies and extend the movement into other areas. Before leaving on their assignment, Pilmore and Boardman traveled together to London, where they conferred with John and Charles Wesley and with George Whitefield. Pilmore and Boardman left England by ship on August 21, 1769, arriving at Gloucester Point, New Jersey, nine weeks later. Deciding on a plan for pastoral oversight of the Methodist societies in Philadelphia and New York, Pilmore initially remained with the Methodists in Philadelphia while Richard Boardman went to New York City.

In 1772, Boardman and Pilmore discussed plans to travel outside of their assigned stations. Known to be an aggressive evangelist, Pilmore left Philadelphia in May on a missionary tour of the South that would take him as far as Savannah, Georgia. Arriving in New Bern on Christmas Eve, Pilmore went to Communion the following day at the Anglican Church. He writes:

In the afternoon I sent for a man that I had been told was a hearer of the Methodists when in London, and desired him to apply the Court-house which was readily granted, and I sent a person about the Town to inform the inhabitants that I should preach at six o'clock in the evening. At the time appointed I went to the Court-house and had the genteelst congregation I have seen since I left Philadelphia. Several of them invited me to their houses, and behaved with the utmost politeness and civility. Mr. William Wood took me home with him, and I had everything that my heart could desire.

During his stay in New Bern, Pilmore held daily services at the courthouse and met Methodist acquaintances from London, New York, and Philadelphia. Impressed by the growing crowds, Pilmore made the following journal entry on December 30, 1772, the final night of his stay:

At six in the evening, a great multitude attended to hear my last sermon for the present, and it was a time that will not soon be forgotten. My mind was quite at liberty, my heart was happy, and preaching was a delightful task, therefore I enlarged more than usual, and though we had most of the genteel people of the Town, I did not behold one trifler among them! In all my travels through the world, I have met none like the people of Newbern! Instead of going to Balls and Assemblies as people of fashion in general do, especially at this season of the year, they come driving in their Coaches to hear the word of the Lord and wait upon God in His ordinances!

Pilmore's visit sparked a marked increase in Methodist activity, and within a few months, other Methodist missionaries—known as "circuit riders"—began to come over the Virginia border to minister to settlers and organize congregations in eastern North Carolina. The first Methodist circuit composed entirely of geographical areas within North Carolina was created in May 1776, when three preachers were assigned to cover an area designated as the Carolina Circuit. By 1779, the original Carolina Circuit had grown from 683 members to a total membership of 1,467 and was divided into three circuits—Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope. New Bern became part of the Tar River Circuit, which included both the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse River systems and areas bordering the Pamlico Sound; the circuit was served by Andrew Yeargin and William Moore.

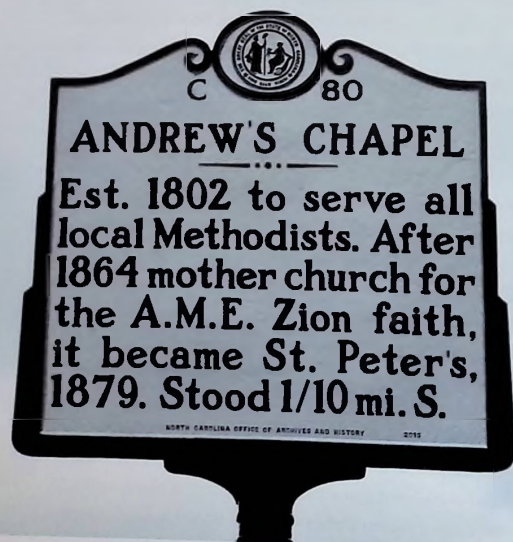
The Methodist Episcopal Church in America was formally organized under the leadership of Bishop Thomas Coke and Bishop Francis Asbury at the famous "Christmas Conference" that began at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore on Christmas Eve 1784. Bishop Asbury was a frequent visitor to New Bern, and his published journals and letters provide interesting details about his travels to the area during his tenure as bishop. On December 21, 1785, Asbury wrote: "Came to Newbern. Found brothers Allen and Baldwin in the church; I preached at three o'clock, on, 'The world by wisdom knew not God.' The assembly [legislature] was in session, and some of the members were friendly." On October 9, 1795, New Bern Methodists acquired a lot at the corner of Hancock Street and Pleasant Alley (later Church Alley) from Joseph Shute. Asbury's journal entry for December 15, 1796, provides

the following assessment of New Bern: "My hearers were numerous and serious. I had never viewed the situation of this town before; it is the image of Charleston, [South Carolina.] Neuse and Trent have a likeness to Cooper and Ashley rivers. This is a growing place. Our society here, of white and coloured members, consists of one hundred . . . Should piety, health, and trade attend this Newbern, it will be a very capital place in half a century."

New Bern's Methodist Meetinghouse / Andrew Chapel

There are indicators that a meetinghouse may have been erected in New Bern as early as 1797. However, based on information in Bishop Asbury's journal, the construction date of the first Methodist meetinghouse in New Bern has traditionally been given as 1802, when Asbury noted the need for a suitable church building and a regular preacher.

I judged it needful to make some temporal and spiritual arrangements for the society in Newbern—that a travelling preacher shall attend every Sabbath is one. Newbern is a trading, growing town; there are seven hundred or a thousand houses already built, and the number is yearly increased by less or greater additions, — among which are some respectable brick edifices; the new court house, truly so; near and elegant; another famous house, said to be designed for the masonic and theatrical gentleman: it might make a most excellent church. The population of the town, — transients and persons, may amount to three thousand five hundred or four thousand souls. We made a public collection which amounted to nearly sixty dollars; and parted from our brethren, whom we left full of good resolutions to finish the house of God: the African Methodists also were about to build a place of worship. Truly we are encouraged; our own people are stirred up, and judges, counselors, doctors, and ministers attended our preaching, and appeared to be pleased they be profited, and finally saved!



Upon his return to New Bern in February 1803, Bishop Asbury found the church to be "exceedingly crowded." The following year, he led an effort to raise additional funds to enlarge and finish the church, writing on February 20, 1804: "We moved a subscription to raise one thousand dollars to enlarge and finish the chapel: we have obtained six hundred dollars. Brother M'Caine preached, and there was something of a shout."

The Methodist movement had opposed slavery since its founding. Membership was encouraged for African Americans, slave and free, and some were licensed as local preachers. It is little wonder then that African Americans in New Bern, as elsewhere, were attracted to Methodism. While the labor of slaves provided the engine of the economy during the post-Revolutionary War and antebellum periods, New Bern in those decades was also home to the state's largest concentration of free black people. As

and meeting in the same building, it is likely that the black and white Methodists of New Bern met as separate groups for many years before the congregation officially divided along racial lines. Bishop Asbury's journal entry for Sunday, February 8, 1807, recorded the following summary of an annual conference meeting in New Bern: "On the Sabbath I preached to the whites, on John iii, 16; and to the Africans, on Eph. vi, 5-8. Much might be said; I will only observe that we have sixty-seven preachers, and have added three thousand one hundred and fifty-nine to this conference bounds; we have, since our sitting here, know that there are twenty whites converted, and as many blacks: these blessings on our labours pay all expenses, reward all toils on the midst of suffering and excessively cold weather."

Centenary

In 1839, Methodists around the world celebrated the centennial of Methodism, commemorating the formation by John Wesley of the first Methodist Societies in Bristol and London in 1739. As part of the hundredth anniversary celebration, the New Bern Methodist Society began a movement for the construction of a new church to be named Centenary. By July 1841, \$2,000 had been raised for the construction of the new church, and on October 21, 1841, church trustees purchased land on New Street across from the New Bern Academy for \$1,300. The church on New Street, erected between 1843 and 1844, was a large rectangular-frame church in the Greek Revival style. A two-story portico framed the entrance, and the roof was adorned by a two-stage tower with four corner spires.



CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 13

conference membership records bear out, the New Bern society from its earliest days was a predominantly African American church. Conference minutes for 1807 show New Bern with 102 white members and 512 black members. Though served by one minister

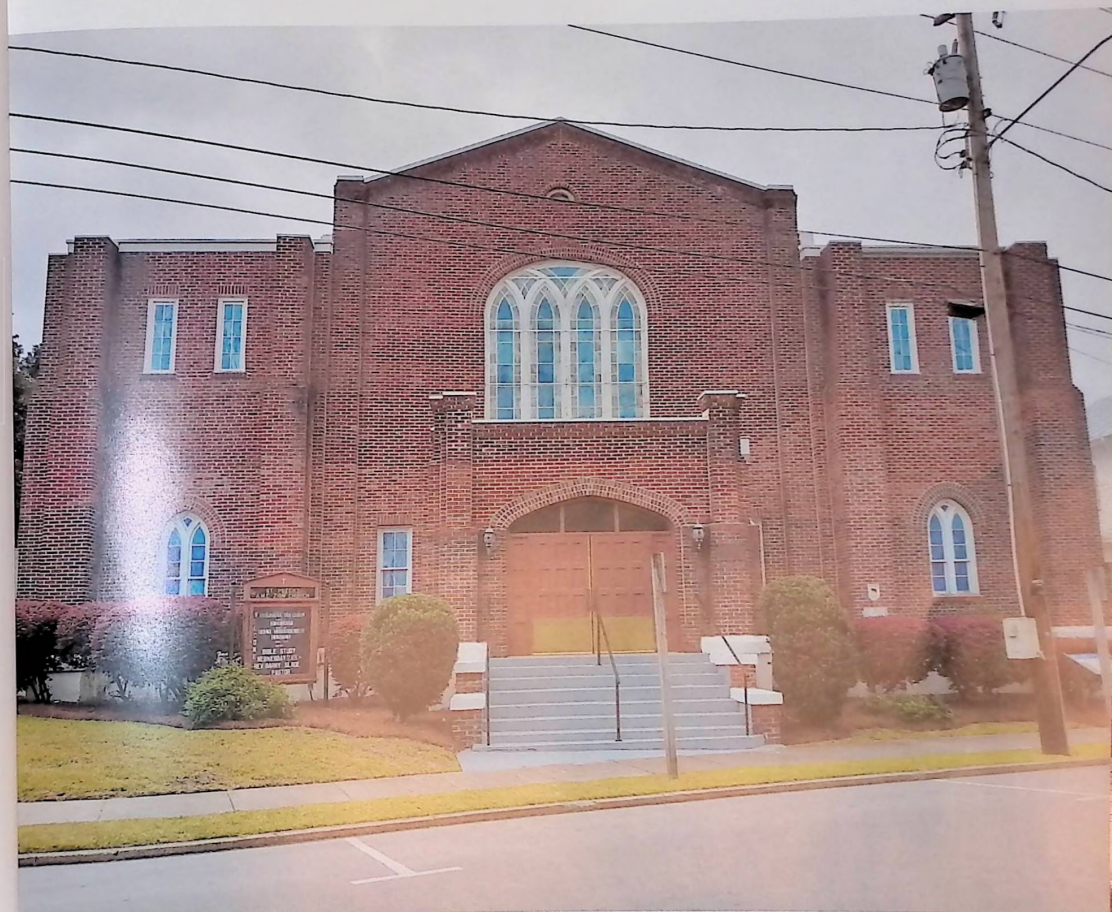
A Church Divided

In 1844, as the new church neared completion, the issue of slavery became the catalyst for division within the Methodist Episcopal Church. When the thirteenth General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church convened in New York City on May 1, 1844, delegates passed a resolution demanding that Bishop James O. Andrew of Georgia be suspended from office until he ended his status as a slaveholder. The resolution caused an impasse that resulted in the adoption of a Plan of Separation providing for a regionally divided Methodism. Delegates from North Carolina and other slaveholding states met at the Fourth Street Church in Louisville, Kentucky, May 1-19, 1845. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South was declared independent of the Methodist Episcopal Church and proclaimed a separate ecclesiastical connection. The first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS) met in Petersburg, Virginia, in 1846. Minutes from the 1846 annual meeting of the North Carolina Conference of the MECS are the first to show two ministers assigned to New Bern, with Samuel S. Bryant as pastor of the white congregation and Allen S. Andrews as pastor of the "People of colour." The 1847 minutes are the first to record the name "Centenary" for the white congregation of 256 members and "Andrew Church" (recorded in subsequent years as Andrew Chapel) for the eight-hundred-member black congregation worshipping in the old meetinghouse on Hancock Street.

The Civil War Years

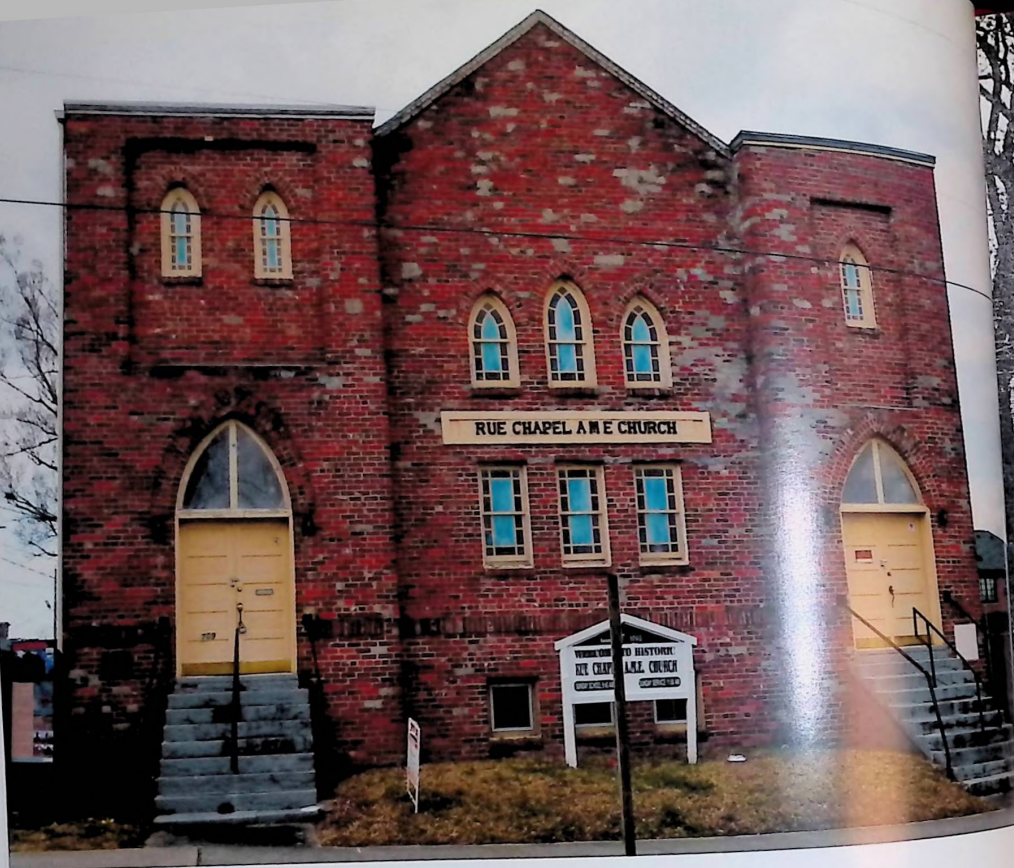
When New Bern came under the control of Union forces early in the Civil War, Centenary's congregation became scattered and fewer in number. Minutes for the first quarterly conference held in New Bern after the war make the following statement: "The forces of the United States obtained possession of the town of New Bern, N.C. 14th March 1862. The minister in charge Rev. L.S. Burkhead was compelled to leave." Clarissa Phelps Hanks, a member of Centenary, described the capture of New Bern and its impact on the church in her diary. "Sunday the 16 today is the Sabbath but I have not been to church for our preacher has gone to get out of the way of [the] enemy and we are left without preaching unless we go to hear the yankees preach but glory be to god he is not confined to places and we can worship him at home as well as anywhere else all we want is a preparation of heart I do love to go to the house of god and worship and hear his word preached I feel that god is with me and that to bless." Life for the congregation was further disrupted

when a yellow fever epidemic hit New Bern, claiming the lives of over three hundred Union soldiers and at least a thousand civilians in the three-month period from late August through late November 1864.



Under the authority granted to them by the secretary of war, the people of Andrew Chapel chose to unite with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church in 1864, becoming not only the first AMEZ church in North Carolina but also the first in the South. Andrew Chapel soon became the site of important community meetings, as well as worship services. In July 1874, the congregation purchased a lot on the southern side of Queen Street across from Cedar Grove Cemetery; construction began during the summer of 1879, and work continued for several years. The new church was dedicated on August 22, 1886, and eventually named St. Peter's AME Zion Church. Today, St. Peter's is recognized as the mother church of Zion Methodism in the South.

George Rue, a New Bern native and former member of Andrew Chapel, returned to New Bern in 1865 as a missionary of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Rue gathered a congregation, including a significant number of persons from Andrew Chapel, that met at a site near Cedar Grove Cemetery. New Bern was reported as a regular station of the AME Church at the May 1866

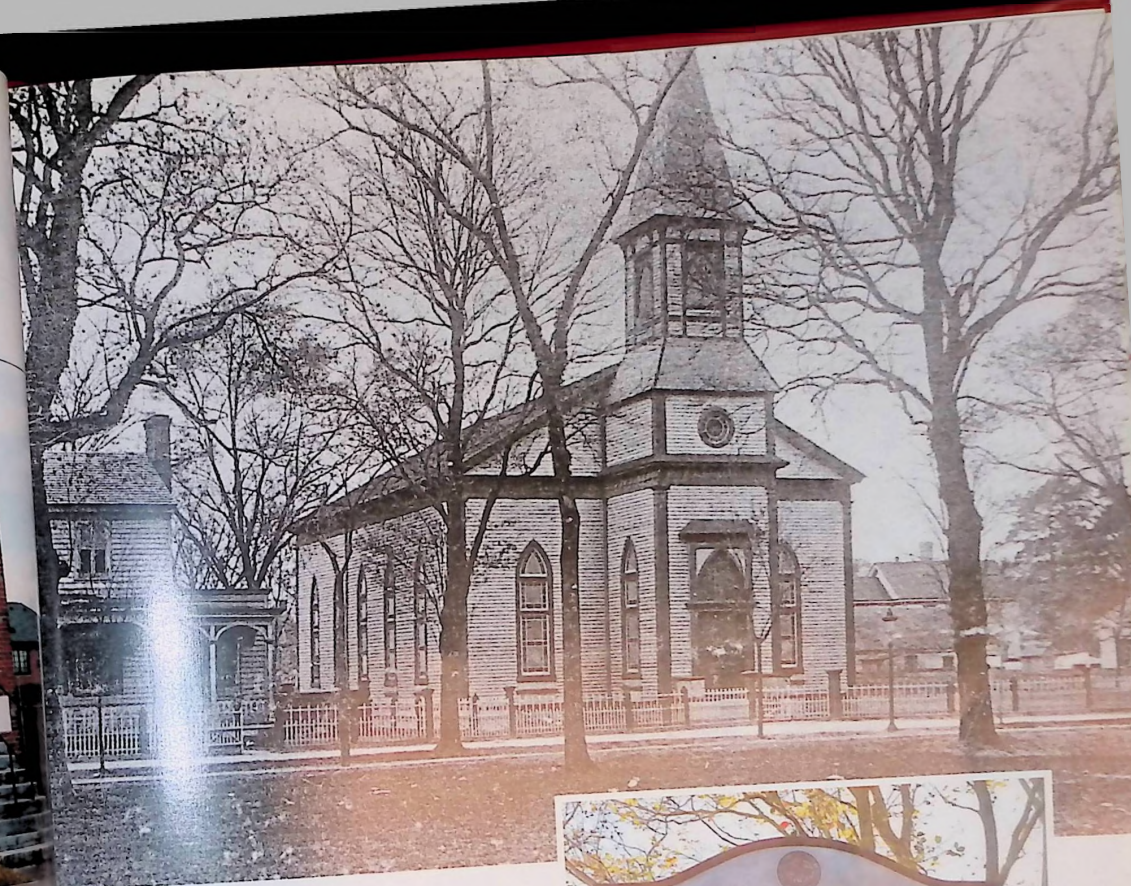


meeting of the South Carolina Conference of the AME Church. After Rue's untimely death in 1867, the congregation continued to meet at "Rev. George Rue's Chapel." The cornerstone of the new church at the corner of Cypress Street and Bragg Alley (now Howard Street) was laid on August 15, 1873. Rue Chapel was the first AME church established in North Carolina.

Centenary Rebuilds Its Congregation

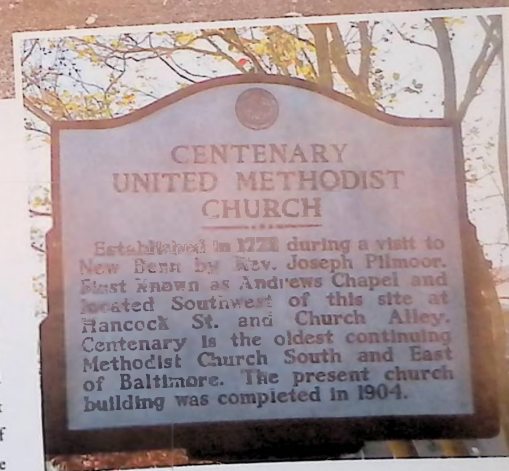
By May 1865, the Civil War had ended. Charles F. Deems, presiding elder of the New Bern District of the North Carolina Conference of the MECS, held a meeting of the male members of Centenary to make plans for reestablishing the church. The pastor was directed to make a list of all church members and to appoint class leaders along with a superintendent and teachers for Sunday school. Under the leadership of Rev. James A. Suydam, Centenary began rebuilding both its membership and its ministry. By the end of 1865, Centenary reported only 62 members. When the North Carolina Conference met in New Bern in November 1869, Centenary reported a membership of 347.

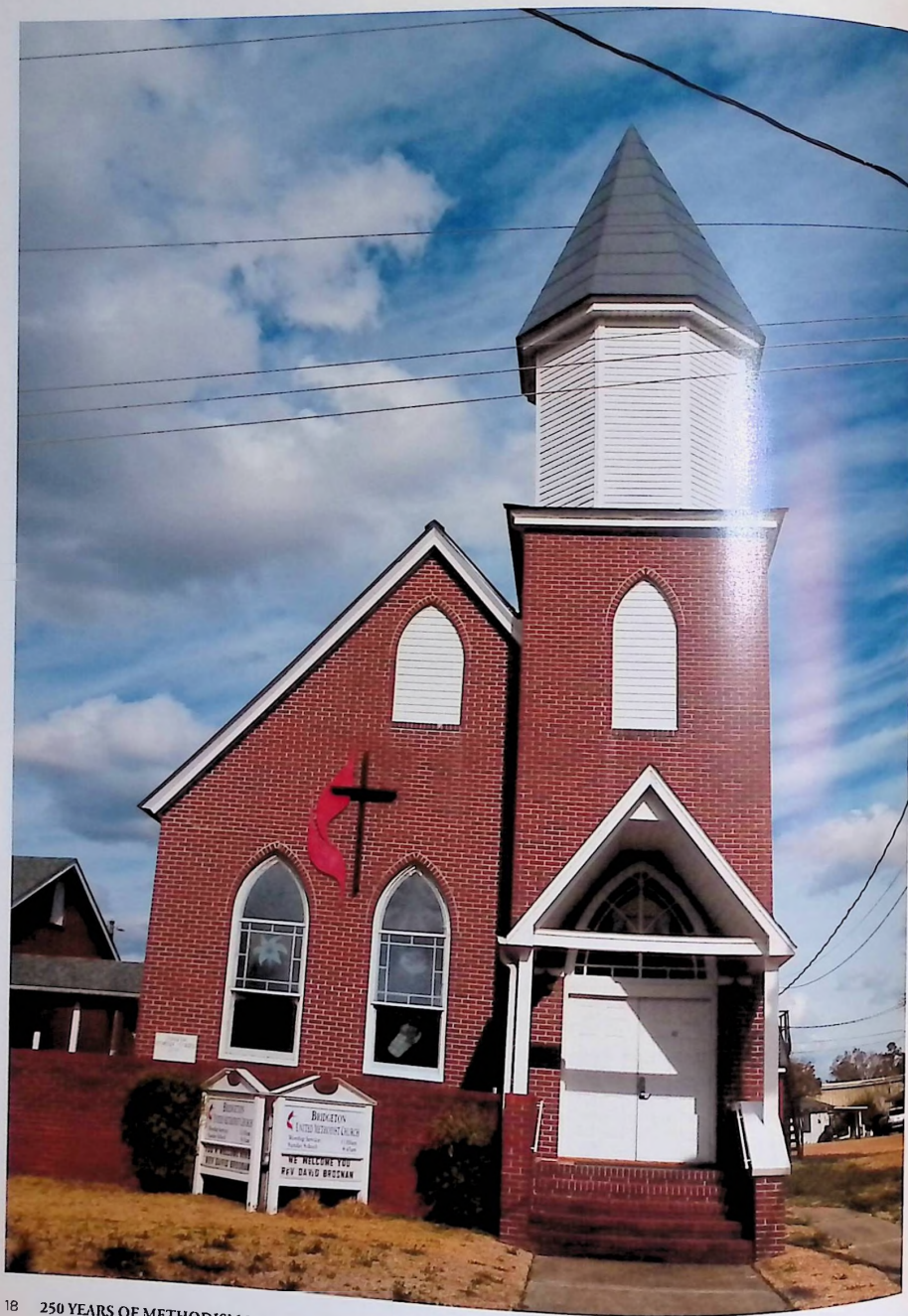
The congregation continued to grow steadily, and by late 1883, plans were being made for renovating and updating the church. A building committee was appointed, and the women of Centenary formed a "Working Society" to raise the necessary funds. Work began mid-July 1884 and was completed within five months. While construction was in progress, the congregation met in the theater of the nearby St. John's Masonic Lodge. When the church reopened on Sunday, December 21, 1884, the newspaper



for that day printed a lengthy article detailing the many improvements, including frescoed walls, new furnishings, a new choir gallery, the installation of stained-glass windows, and new lighting fixtures.

By the turn of the century, Centenary reported a total membership of more than seven hundred. A congregational meeting held on February 10, 1903, to discuss the need for "a modern substantial building affording the best accommodations for the preaching and the hearing of the Gospel, and for the work of the Sunday School, the Epworth League and the Missionary Societies" resulted in pledges totaling \$24,000. The new church would be constructed at the corner of Middle and New Streets; the lot and the large house standing on it had been purchased in July 1888 to serve as Centenary's parsonage. An adjoining lot on Middle Street was purchased to complete the building site.





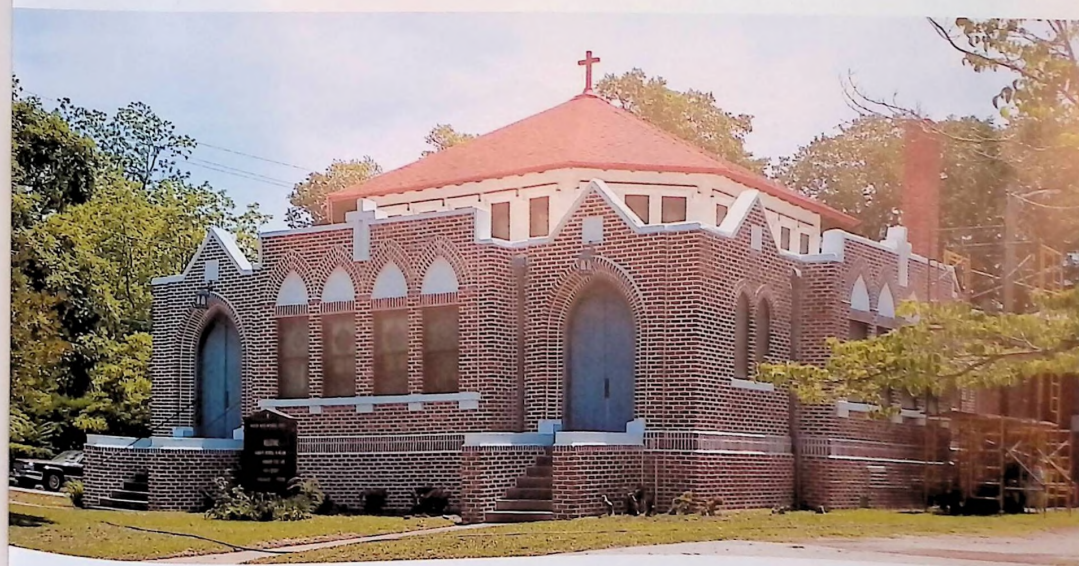
Mother Church

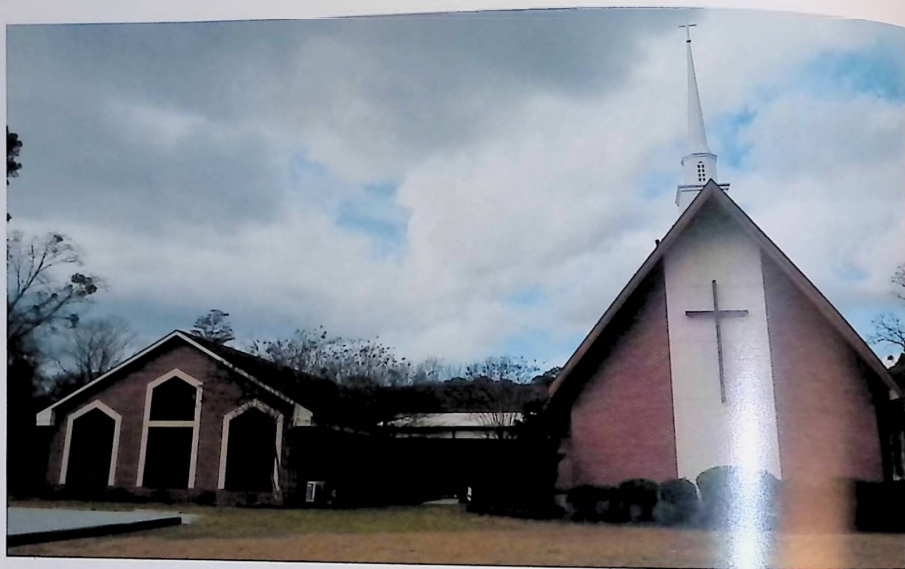
Centenary has always been a mission-oriented church, and its efforts have been fruitful indeed. In the 1870s, Centenary's congregation established a Sunday school and chapel known as the "Uptown School," or the "Pollock Street Sunday School," as a mission to the people of that area of the city. The school met in borrowed or rented buildings until 1896, when a twenty-by-forty-foot chapel was built near the intersection of Pollock and Fleet Streets. The Little Helpers, a children's organization at Centenary, pledged to put windows and doors in the chapel, and one of the Sunday school classes raised enough money to pay for the roof. Hardware merchants contributed items needed for the project, sawmill owners donated lumber, and church members gave their time and labor to build and paint the chapel. The Pollock Street Sunday School flourished until the property was sold in 1911 and the school merged with the larger Centenary Sunday School.

At its quarterly conference meeting on August 4, 1905, Centenary voted to take on two additional church extension projects. The pastor was authorized to build a chapel across the Neuse River at Bridgeton and another at Dunn's Field (now known as Riverside), utilizing the old Centenary Church building and pews.

The Bridgeton effort began when several Centenary members established a mission at the newly formed town across the Neuse River. A lot was purchased on B Street, and, according to local lore, parts of the old Centenary Church were moved across the river on a barge. The new Bridgeton Methodist Church was dedicated on Sunday, November 19, 1905, in a service led by Rev. G. T. Adams of Centenary. Rev. Adams solicited donations from the crowd to help retire the congregation's \$600 debt.

Organized by concerned and dedicated members of Centenary, a Sunday school established in Riverside in 1912 soon grew into a congregation that was officially chartered as Riverside Methodist Church in November 1913. The church met for a while in an old cannery building. Plans to erect a new building on the corner of Pasteur Street and Avenue A became a reality when services were held in the newly built sanctuary in August 1920.





Ambassadors from Centenary helped to establish Trinity Methodist Church, which began in 1933 as a neighborhood church on the western edge of the city.



In 1959, fifteen families from Centenary were among the charter members of Garber Methodist Church in the Trent Woods area of New Bern.

200th-Anniversary Celebration

Centenary began a celebration of its bicentennial on October 1, 1972, with the dedication of a restored church bell that hung in the first Centenary Church building from 1843 until it was moved in 1904 to a Bridgeton church erected for mill employees of the late Jim Blades. When that church was demolished to make way for a new highway, the bell was moved to the home of Mr. Blades's son on East Front Street. The Blades family eventually donated the bell to Centenary Church. With approval of the administrative board and the board of trustees, the bell was restored in honor of Mr. A. Jennings Flowers, whose birthday was September 12. The restoration was completed by Mr. Willie Gaskins, under the direction of R. R. Rivenbark at Barbour Boat Works. The historic Centenary Bell is now located on the Middle Street side of the church building near the entrance to the chapel. The month-long 200th-Anniversary Celebration concluded on October 29, 1972, with Bishop Robert M. Blackburn preaching the Bicentennial Service. New Bern District superintendent Rev. Charles H. Mercer was in attendance, along with eight former Centenary pastors and other clergy members affiliated with the congregation. Following the special service, the United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) buried a time capsule near the Old Bell. Centenary's wonderful religious heritage of two hundred years was beautifully expressed in its "Bicentennial Hymn," with words and music written by church member Mrs. L. H. Erdman. A covered dish dinner in the church basement concluded the activities.



Left to right: Rev. Charles H. Mercer, New Bern District Superintendent; Rev. Mark W. Lawrence (went into the ministry from Centenary Church); Bishop Robert M. Blackburn, Raleigh-area United Methodist Church - Bicentennial Sunday Preacher; Rev. Leon Russell, 1940-44; Rev. John A. Russell, 1951-57; Rev. J. Worth Lineberger Sr., 1957-62; Rev. Willis R. Stevens Sr., 1962-64; Rev. J. A. Tingle, associate, 1965-67; Rev. J. J. Williams, associate, 1967-69; Rev. A. F. Fisher, 1964-69; Rev. T. J. Barrett, 1969-70; Rev. James H. Miller Jr. 1970-72



The Christmas Church

"Instead of going to Balls and Assemblies as people of fashion in general do, especially at this season of the year, they come driving in their Coaches to hear the word of the Lord and wait upon God in His ordinances!"

—Joseph Pilmore, December 1772



Beautifully decorated with evergreen garlands, poinsettias, and the traditional Christmas tree, Centenary is known by many as the "Christmas Church." Carrying on in the tradition of George Whitefield, who first brought the Methodist message to New Bern on Christmas Day in 1739, and Joseph Pilmore, the Methodist minister who preached at the courthouse on Christmas Day in 1772, Centenary celebrates the birth of our Lord by focusing on messages of hope and promise and by joyfully sharing the good news of the Gospel. Centenary's "Living Nativity Scene" has been an annual favorite since it was first performed for the community in 1954. The community-wide presentation of Handel's "Messiah" is a highlight of the season. The Music Ministry of Centenary is renowned for its annual Christmas Cantata, which in recent years has been televised on the local network affiliate.



A Legacy of Faith

We are indebted to those who have gone before us, leaving a deep and rich spiritual legacy of faith and a uniquely beautiful building that has served as a place of worship and center of ministry to the entire community for more than a century. God has blessed the people of Centenary through periods of upheaval and turmoil, through fires and hurricanes, and through two worldwide pandemics. Our hope is that an awareness of our congregation's heritage will serve as evidence of God's faithfulness through all generations. John Wesley once noted that what had been achieved in the development of Methodism was no mere human endeavor but the work of God, and as such will be preserved by God so long as history remains. May it be so.

—Brenda George



State of North Carolina
Department of Cultural Resources
Division of Archives and History

This is to certify that

CENTENARY METHODIST CHURCH
NEW BERN

has been entered in

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

by the

United States Department of the Interior
upon nomination by the State Historic Preservation Officer under
provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665).

The National Register is a list of properties "significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture — a comprehensive index of the significant physical evidences of our national patrimony." Properties listed therein deserve to be preserved by their owners as a part of the cultural heritage of our nation.

William S. Rain
Director, Division of Archives and History
and
State Historic Preservation Officer

September 11, 1972
Date Entered



The North Carolina Annual Conference
Historical Society
of
The Methodist Church

Celebrating the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of the Beginning of
the Methodist Movement in America in the Annual Session at
Rocky Mount, North Carolina on June 13-16, 1966, Declares the

Centenary Methodist Church

To Be the Oldest Continuing Congregation in the

North Carolina Conference

Paul Jeff Harber
Presiding Bishop

William Kellam Quick
Secretary, Conference Historical Society



John Wesley

R. Grady Dawson
District Superintendent

Harold King
President, Conference Historical Society



II. OUR BUILDING

"A large and well-built church is not for show, it is for the greater development of God's Kingdom, and as the church has been put into a larger and better house of worship so their responsibility in the cause of Christianity increases."

—Rev. G. T. Adams, Pastor of Centenary

October 15, 1905

Architecture

The familiar facade of Centenary United Methodist Church is a well-known landmark in downtown New Bern. It has welcomed countless thousands through its doors since its dedication in 1905. Designed by architect Charles Granville Jones of New York City, the new church was heralded by the local newspaper as "one of the finest sanctuaries in the State" and "a splendid adornment to our city." For the congregation, the new church would provide "the best accommodations for the preaching and the hearing of the Gospel, and for the work of the Sunday School, the Epworth League and the Missionary Societies." Herbert Woodley Simpson, a New Bern native, served as associate architect and construction supervisor. Daniel Mellis of New York City was engaged to build the church for a contract price of \$46,280, exclusive of window glass, pews and other furnishings, chandeliers and other light fixtures, heat, and carpeting.



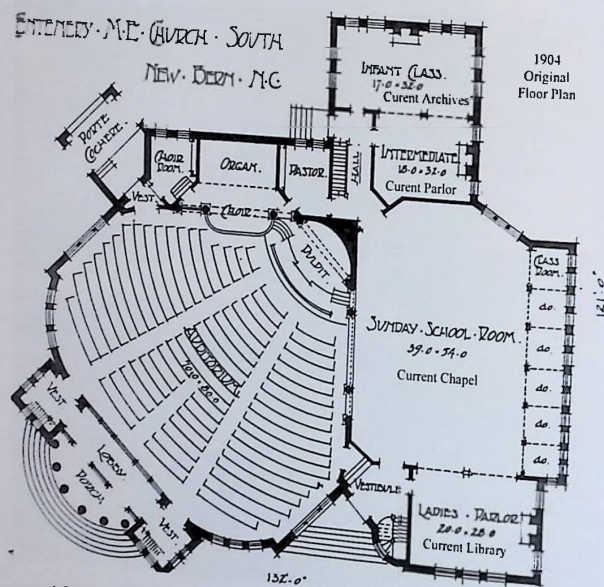
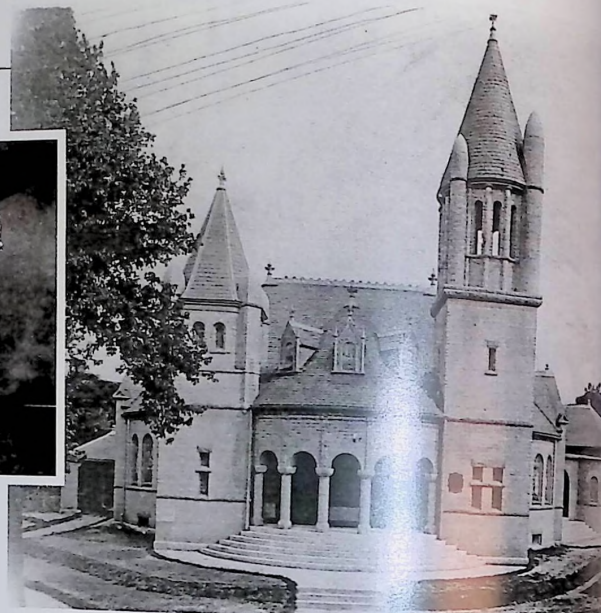
Sanctuary, 1936



Early photograph from 1904



Original 1904 chandelier



The construction site for the new church was a spacious lot at the corner of Middle and New Streets. The architect designed the church building to face the corner, sitting back seventy-five feet from the street on either side, and raised three to five feet from street level. The exterior would be of light-gray brick with brown-stone trimmings and a roof of red tile. Two towers would grace the front of the church, with chimes to be placed inside the taller one at some later date. The sanctuary was designed to seat 750 in a sloping amphitheater form, with seats arranged in a semicircular fashion. A choir loft was situated to the right of the pulpit, and a gallery at the rear of the auditorium. A large Sunday school room adjoining the sanctuary could be

The first brick for the new church was laid on December 7, 1903, and work was soon underway. Due to inclement weather and other delays, the large granite cornerstone engraved with the date 1904 was not actually set in place until May 8, 1905, when several mementos were placed in the cornerstone during a special ceremony. In laying the cornerstone, church officials declared a desire to "make this building a free will offering to God, as an expression of our gratitude for the blessings received through the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to whom we give all glory and praise forevermore."

The entire cost of the building, with the organ and all furnishings, and with the grading and laying of the grounds, was approximately \$75,000. After lengthy delays in the delivery of the stained-glass windows and interior furnishings, the new church was formally dedicated by Bishop William Duncan on October 22, 1905. An ardent appeal by Bishop Duncan raised enough funds to retire the congregation's \$40,000 debt. The church building was entered in the National Register of Historic Places on September 11, 1972.

Russell Educational Building

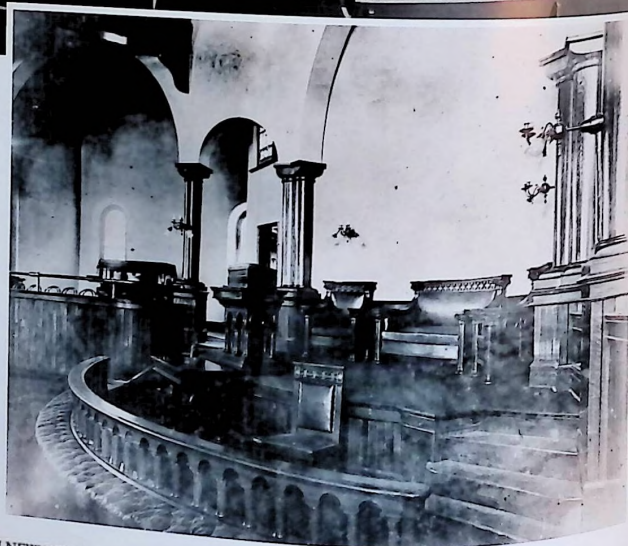
As Centenary's Sunday school outgrew the facilities built in 1904, plans were made to construct an adequate educational building. The congregation began raising money for the project in 1952. Raymond Fuson, a New Bern architect and member of Centenary, was employed to draw plans for the building. P. S. West Construction Company was the general contractor for the project. Construction of the building began in the spring of 1956 and was completed in the early winter of that year at a cost of \$191,615.97. The facility was named the John A. Russell Educational Building, in honor of the pastor who led the congregation through the planning and

opened for additional seating. With a seating capacity of 500 in the Sunday school space, and an additional 200 in the gallery, the church could accommodate 1,450 at full capacity. Plans included a full basement for "festival purposes."



construction process. An oil portrait of Mr. Russell hangs in the main entrance to the building, which includes a kitchen and dedicated fellowship hall to accommodate the church's many gatherings. The hall is an open space in the basement, with windows providing light for daytime events and with multiple ceiling lights for evening dinners and other special occasions. It has also served as the worship area during renovations of the sanctuary. Final payment on the educational building indebtedness was made on October 1, 1962, and the building was dedicated by Bishop Paul N. Garber on March 17, 1963.





Altar, 1904

Church Renovations

In 1966, the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the first Methodist societies in America, a major renovation was undertaken under the pastorate of Rev. Albert F. Fisher at a cost of \$250,000. Architects for the renovation were Harold E. Wagoner and Associates of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Robert H. Stephens and Aldo B. Cardelli of New Bern. The 1966 renovation included several changes in the sanctuary and adjacent areas. The current free-standing altar area was installed, consisting of a raised rectangular platform encircled by an elegant metal railing. The railing, the metal cross suspended above the altar, and a large stone baptismal font were designed by architect Harold Wagoner, one of the most notable architects of Protestant churches in mid-twentieth-century America. A second choir alcove was installed to balance the existing choir alcove on the opposite side of the altar. New pews and woodwork in lighter tones—along with improved lighting—served to enhance the spaciousness of the sanctuary. The Sunday school's assembly room, which also functioned as an overflow room for the sanctuary and a fellowship hall for other church gatherings, was partitioned off from the sanctuary, and a chapel was created within the major portion of the room by the addition of pews and a balcony. The space formerly occupied by small Sunday school classrooms was partitioned from the chapel by an arched plaster wall and now serves as a choir alcove. The starkly beautiful chapel is lit by the large round-headed stained-glass window in the southeastern wall and by a band of several smaller stained-glass clerestory windows high on the southern wall. The heavily carved communion table, placed in the center of the eastern end, is encircled by a wooden railing and a kneeling bench, and the pulpit stands near the northern wall at the eastern end. The 1966 renovation also converted the former Ladies' Parlor into a library. An unusual feature of our library is the beautiful stained-glass windows.





Library renovation, 1966



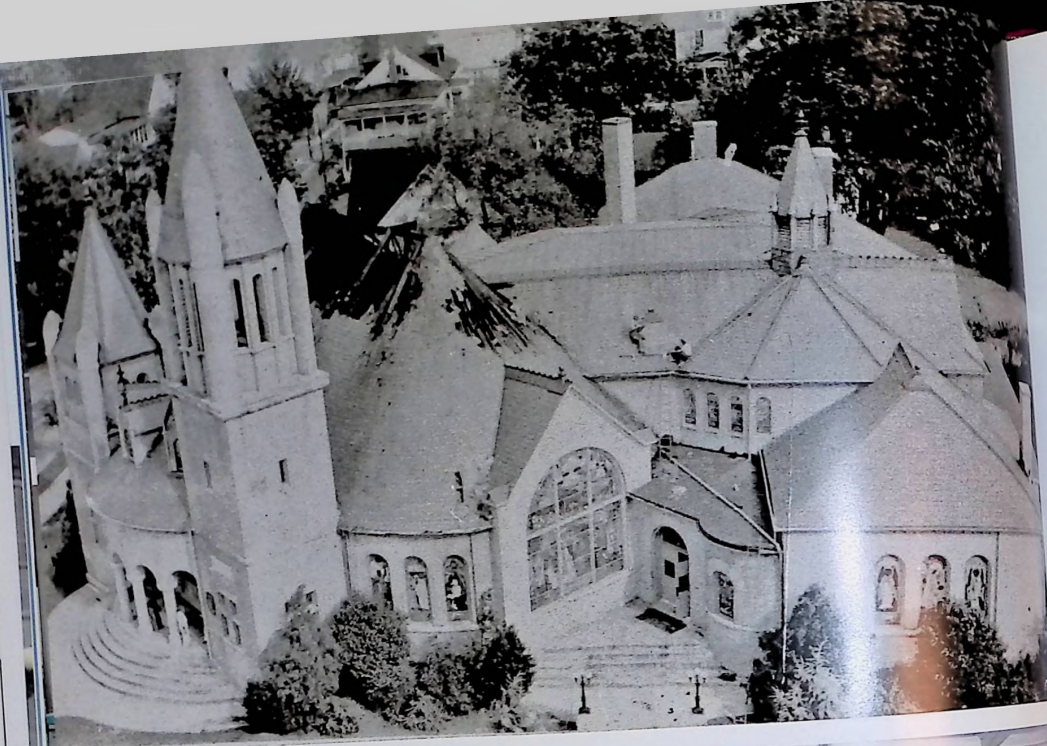
Renovation, 1966

In 1994, the ninetieth "birthday" of the church building provided an opportunity for the board of trustees to call for a major capital funds campaign "to respond to our lovely building's call for repair." A detailed and extensive survey of the damages was undertaken by Stephens and Francis, a local architectural firm. The major portion of the restoration project involved the repair of the distinctive red-slate roof and supporting structural elements. Additional repairs were made to the masonry and woodwork in many areas of the building. To truly restore the building exterior to its original appearance, lamps were added on either side of the entrance walks to the sanctuary and the chapel area. New landscaping around the building, a new fence around the playground, replacements of the sidewalks and curbing, refurbishment of the parking area, and other expenses brought the cost of the renovations to \$650,000.

The church building has also undergone emergency renovations as a result of fire-related damage.

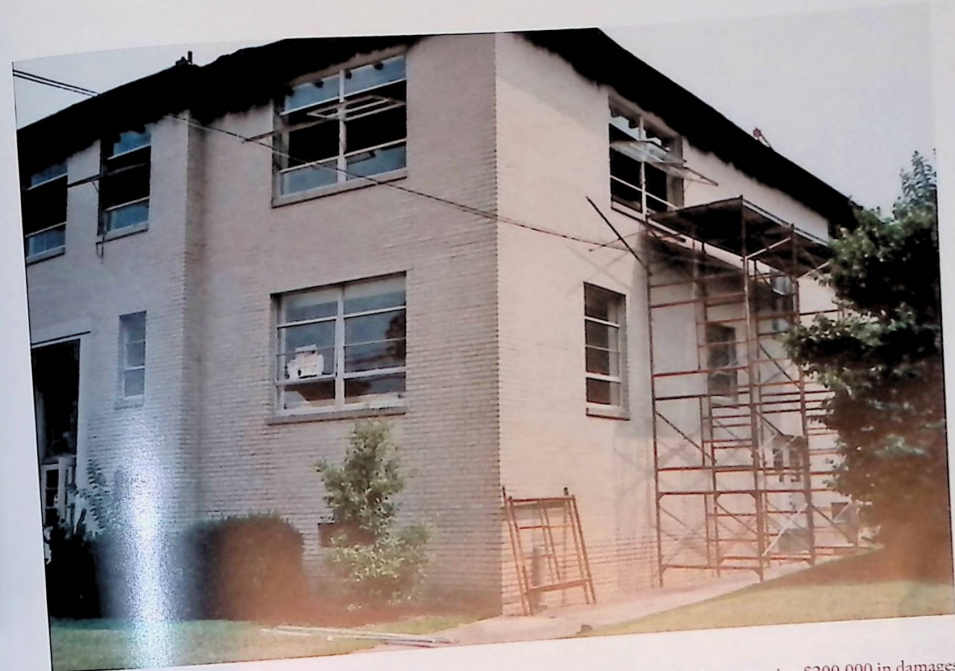


Renovation, 1966



Renovation after the fire in 1936

In the early hours of September 15, 1936, a fire broke out in the sanctuary and went undiscovered long enough that the roof collapsed. The Catholic nuns who lived across the street stood on the sidewalk and fervently prayed that the inspiring stained-glass windows would be spared, and indeed they were. Damages estimated at \$25,000 did not dampen the spirits of the faithful, and repairs were completed in time for Centenary to host the Centennial Session of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church in November.



Another major fire occurred on May 1, 1991, on the second floor of the Russell Educational Building, causing \$200,000 in damages and resulting in the relocation of church activities while the building was being repaired. Church activities resumed in the Russell Educational Building in September of 1991.

Disaster was averted on March 31, 2004, when a burning smell was detected during a midday Lenten service in the chapel. The fire department arrived and evacuated the church, including the United Methodist Women, who had been preparing lunch in the basement. After finding the source of the smoke, the firefighters and EMTs were invited by the ladies to stay and enjoy the lunch that had been prepared.

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

The thing I most remember about my first visit to Centenary is the friendliness of the ushers as I approached the doors of the church. As I began to interact with members of the congregation, attended Bible studies, and joined the choir, I knew Centenary was the place for me. It is a church shaped and sustained by all the marks of a fruitful congregation—Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity. I am blessed to be a part of a church that has such an incredible history of service and commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission.

—Brenda Carter George



Tiffany communion set



Easter Altar



Symbols of Our Faith

Throughout the Centenary campus, Christian symbols are used to communicate a message of faith and bring worshipers closer to God. The chancel area of the sanctuary, with the baptismal font on the left, the communion table in the center, and the pulpit on the right, symbolizes the importance of the sacraments and the preached word. The hanging cross over the altar bears the Greek words, IC IX NI KA, for "Jesus Christ Conquers"; these words also appear on the altar front.

Baptismal Fonts

One of the few surviving receipts from the construction and furnishing of the church building shows that in May 1905, a baptismal font for the new church was donated by Little Helpers, a children's missionary society at Centenary, at a cost of \$250. The font was made of Rutland Italian marble and purchased from New Bern monument dealer Joe K. Willis, a member of Centenary. The original baptismal font was replaced during the 1966 renovation by a large stone font designed by renowned architect Harold Wagoner. The Wagoner font has since been relocated from the sanctuary to the foyer facing Middle Street by the chapel as a permanent reminder of the personal baptism experience. The current baptismal font is portable and can be conveniently placed for use during a baptism. Constructed of mahogany by Phil Minton, this font was placed in the sanctuary around 2004 in honor of Mary Ann Minton, Phil's wife.



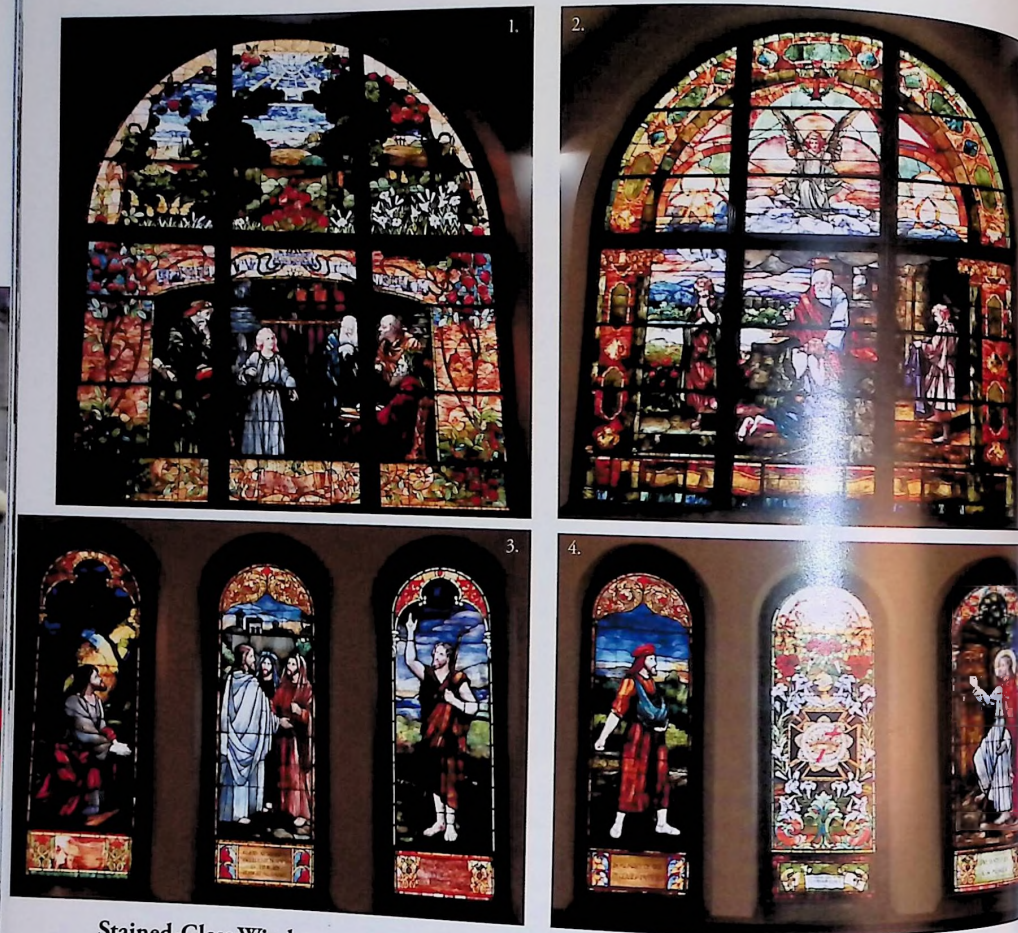
Symbols of the Twelve Apostles in the Chapel

This feature was designed by New Bern architect Robert H. Stephens, a former member of Centenary, and a charter member of Garber United Methodist Church. (We note with sadness Mr. Stephens's passing on May 11, 2022.)

Twelve carved plaster plaques displayed on the northeastern walls of the chapel bear symbols of the Twelve Apostles.

- An inverted cross and keys represent Peter, symbolizing his confession and request to be crucified head downward.
- An X-like cross represents Andrew, symbolizing the cross on which he died in Greece.
- Three scallop shells represent James the Greater, symbolizing his pilgrimage and missionary journeys.
- A chalice and serpent represent John, symbolizing an alleged attempt to kill him with poisoned wine, in response to which Peter supposedly made the sign of the cross over the chalice and caused the poison to escape in the form of a serpent.
- A central cross and two shocks of wheat represent Phillip, symbolizing Jesus's feeding the five thousand.
- Three flaying knives represent Bartholomew, symbolizing reports that he was flayed (skinned) alive and then crucified.
- A vertical shield and a carpenter's square represent Thomas, symbolizing the legend that he erected a church in East India and was shot with arrows and put to death with a spear by a pagan priest.
- A fish lying on a book represents Simon, symbolizing his earlier career as a fisherman and his new calling as a "fisher of men."
- A saw placed vertically with the handle above represents James the Less, symbolizing the legend that at age ninety-six, he was thrown from the top of the temple and his body sawn asunder.
- A sailing ship represents Jude, symbolizing his missionary journeys to Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia.
- Three purses represent Matthew, symbolizing his earlier career as tax collector before he turned apostle.
- A hangman's noose represents Judas Iscariot, who hanged himself in remorse over his betrayal of Jesus.

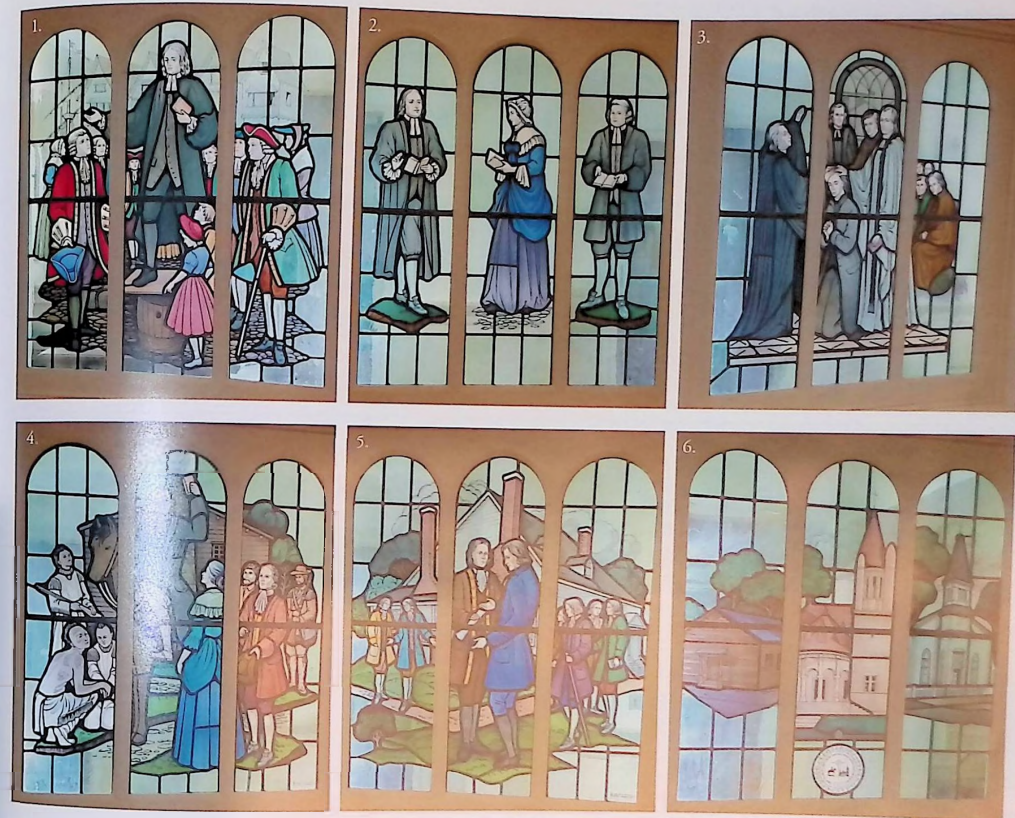
—Sherry Parker



Stained-Glass Windows

Centenary's beautiful stained-glass windows are magnificent works of art that serve as theological teachers, illustrating highlights of the Scriptures and conveying things people are encouraged to see, think about, and understand. The original stained-glass windows in Centenary's sanctuary are in the Tiffany style and were made in New Jersey by a German firm. These windows and their Scripture references are:

1. Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:44-51)
2. The story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
3. The Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42); The Meeting on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35); John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-17)
4. The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23); The Cross (Luke 23:26), The Crown (James 1:21), and The Armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-20); Jesus Knocking at the Door (Revelation 3:20-22)



In the 1966 renovation, stained-glass panels illustrating the history of the church were added between the narthex and the sanctuary. The antique English-glass panels, made in Great Britain, depict:

1. John Wesley, Founder of Methodism
2. John Wesley; his mother Susanna Wesley; and his brother Charles Wesley, who wrote 6,500 hymns
3. The Ordination and Consecration of Bishop Francis Asbury by Bishop Thomas Coke, assisted by Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey and others, at the Christmas Conference at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1784
4. Bishop Asbury preaching to settlers, frontiersmen, Native Americans, and others
5. The first North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held at the Green Hill House near Louisburg, North Carolina, on April 20, 1785, with Bishop Francis Asbury presiding
6. The Methodist Meeting House (later named Andrew Chapel), built in 1802; the present church, built 1904; the first Centenary building, built from 1843 to 1844

—Brenda George

Sanctuary Memorial (Altar) Kneelers

Centenary's beautiful symbolic needlepoint kneelers were put into use in 1993, designed by Lesley Plaster and given in honor of Mrs. Nonie Barker. The symbols on each kneeler communicate messages that are a beautiful and powerful part of our Christian heritage; they represent powerful events in the life of Jesus, and in the life of Centenary Church as an extension of Jesus's ministry. The kneelers are an extraordinary addition to our church and significantly enhance the beauty and symbolism of our worship. The many hours of dedicated work involved in doing the needlepoint are a testament to the skills and talents of the ladies, their love for the church, and their devotion to the project we all so much enjoy today. Our thanks and gratitude for this priceless gift are sincere.

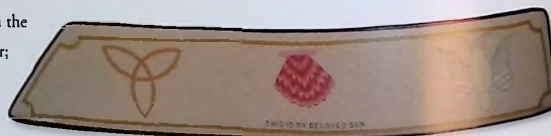
Cushion 1 centers the Methodist Cross and Flame, with the Jerusalem Cross portrayed in each corner.



Cushion 2 has the Manger scene at its center with the words "A Child is Born." To the right is the Star of Epiphany, to the left the Christmas Rose.



Cushion 3 portrays symbols of our baptism, with the Scallop Shell of our Lord's baptism at the center; the Descending Dove on the right, as God came to Jesus at his baptism; and a triquetra on the left, symbol of the Trinity.



Cushion 4 shows Jesus in the center with the children and the words, "For Such is the Kingdom." To the left is the Lamp, symbol of the Word of God. To the right are the Greek letters Alpha Mu Omega meaning "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever."



Cushion 5 shows the words "Bread of Life" under Jesus, with the loaves and fishes pictured. To the left is the single fish with the Greek letters IXOYC, standing for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Savior." To the right is the Anchor Cross.



Cushion 6 has as its centerpiece the Centenary Methodist Church Medallion, which depicts a circuit rider and the exterior of the current building, our founding date 1772, and the Cross. On either side we see IHS, the Greek letters meaning "Jesus the Savior of Mankind."



Cushion 7 depicts the "Living Water" at Jacob's Well, with Jesus and the Woman. To the right, a griffin symbolizes the twofold nature of Christ, as His Divine Nature and His Humanity. To the left is the Chi Rho with the Alpha and Omega, which together signify the eternal existence of our Lord.



Cushion 8 centers on Jesus in the Garden with the words "Not My Will, but Thine." To the left, a wheat sheaf symbolizes the Lord's Supper and also reminds us that Jesus is the Bread of Life. To the right is the Chalice with the Cross of agony in it, for Christ's suffering on the Cross.



Cushion 9 depicts three Crosses, and the words "Father Forgive Them" are in the center of this panel, illustrating the Crucifixion. The Crown of Thorns is on the right, and the Greek letters INRI ("Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews") are on the left.



Cushion 10 contains sunrays in the center that illustrate the Resurrection and Glory of Christ. To the left we see the Cross and Crown showing the reward of faithfulness and life after death for believers. To the right is the butterfly, symbol of the resurrection.

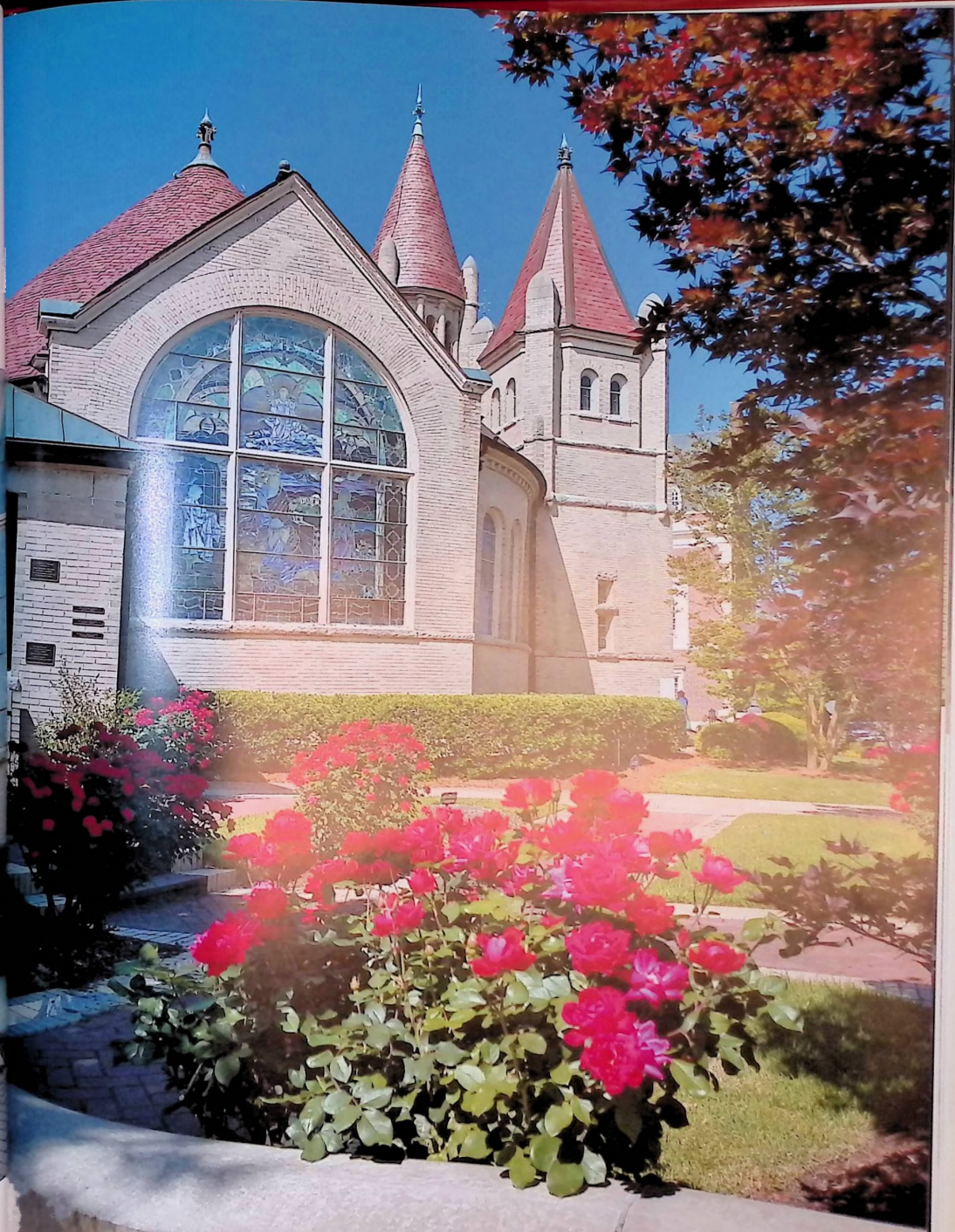


—Julie Brinson, Susan Crawford

Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Centenary's Columbarium and Memorial Garden was dedicated on July 20, 2014, by Pastor Susan Pare-Greenwood. The garden features four benches, and its walls feature bronze memorial plaques honoring or memorializing loved ones. Underground niches for urns are covered with granite name plates, and two locations contain above-ground niches; each niche is designed to hold two urns of ashes.

Mary Cox Bullard, a Centenary member who worked tirelessly for fourteen years to bring the project to fruition, was recognized during the dedication ceremony for her leadership. Benny Thompson, another Centenary member, was recognized for the creative design and skilled execution of a cross sculpture that frames and creates a backdrop for the area. The cross sculpture was given in memory of Jack Pearson Huddle by his family.



"O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power. O God, make the door of this house the gateway of your eternal kingdom. You who have given us heritage, grant us grace gratefully to receive it, wisely to use it, and faithfully to continue it, to your glory and our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

—Thomas Ken,
Bishop of Wells (1637–1711)





III. MINISTERS SERVING CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Benjamin Matthews	1800
Christopher Mooring	1801
Samuel Risher	1802
Thomas Mann	1803
John Somerwell	1804
William Hubbard	1805
David Mintz	1806
Richard Lottimer	1807
Thomas Shonda	1808
Eramus Hill	1809
Enoch Jones	1810
William Hill	1811
Leroy Merritt	1812
Charles Callaway	1813
James Thomas	1814
R. Griffith	1815
Menton Thrift	1816
F. Harris	1817
John T. Wright	1818-1819
Amos C. Treadwell	1821
Ethelbert Drake	1822-1823
F. A. Ward	1824
George A. Bain	1825
Daniel Hall	1826
Thomas Crowder	1827-1828
Christopher Thomas	1829
Leroy M. Lee	1830
C. Leach	1831-1832
I. Atkinson	1833
David Wood	1834
G. W. Langhorne	1835-1838
J. H. Davis	1839-1840
J. E. Edwards	1841-1842
William E. Pell	1843-1845
Sidney D. Bumpass	1846
S. S. Bryant	1847-1848

Charles Force Deems, DD, LLD	1849-1850
Ira T. Wyche	1851
Nathan H. D. Wilson	1852-1853
Joseph H. Wheeler	1854-1855
Charles P. Jones	1856-1857
Abram Weaver	1858
James H. Brent	1859
John F. Long	1860-1861
Lingurn Skidmore Burkhead	1862
James Suydam	1863-1864
Joel W. Tucker	1865-1866
R. A. Willis	1867-1869
Linville L. Hendren	1870-1872
W. C. Gannon	1873-1876
John R. Brooks	1877-1880
F. H. Wood	1881-1882
Lingurn Skidmore Burkhead	1883-1885
I. W. Crawford	1886-1889
James Emory Mann	1890
R. A. Willis	1890-1893
J. T. Lyon	1894
L. L. Nash	1895
F. A. Bishop	1896-1897
Roderick Belton John	1898-1900
Robah Ridus Bumpass	1900-1903
Gaston Troy Adams	1904-1906
Rufus Cicero Beaman	1907-1909
John Bolivar Hurley	1910-1913
Euclid H. McWhorter	1914-1917
Hilary Augustus Humble	1918-1921
William Vogel McRae	1921-1923
John Wesley Harrell	1923-1925
Nathan H. D. Wilson	1925-1929
Andrew Jarvis Hobbs, DD	1929-1934
Leon Crawford Larkin	1934-1938
Cornelius Blackman Culbreth	1938-1940

Leon Russell	1940-1944
William Albert Cade	1944-1945
Robert L. Jerome	1945-1950
Hiram Kershaw King	1950-1951
John Armstrong Russell	1951-1957
J. Worth Lineberger	1957-1962
Willis R. Stevens	1962-1964
Albert Fleet Fisher	1964-1969
Troy James Barrett	1969-1970
James Herbert Miller Jr.	1970-1973
Ernest Ray Porter, LLD	1973-1980
Norwood L. Jones	1980-1983
Roger Vernon Elliott, DD	1983-1989
Carol W. Goehring	1996-2001
David J. Goehring	1996-2001
Danny G. Allen	2001-2007
Charlene P. Guider	2002-2007
Susan Pate-Greenwood	2007-2019

Thomas M. Greener	2019-2022
Richard Vann Spivey	2022-

<i>Associate Ministers</i>	
Danny C. Wise	1969-1970
Lynn T. Wall	1979-1983
Linda M. Kelly	1983-1984
	1986-1989
Andrea R. Woodhouse	1989-1993
Wayne A. Price	1993-1996
Bryan S. Huffman	2007-2014
Laura K. Thompson	2014-2015
Jamie L. Thompson	2014-2015
Rick A. Moser	2015-2019
Michael Williams	2019-

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

My grandfather, Henry William Armstrong and grandmother Rosetta Carawon Armstrong joined Centenary on November 15, 1903. They raised seven children in the church, and all the children were members. Their home was outside of town on a large farm that is now part of Trent Woods. During his life at church, he became a steward at the church. In later years, he started Armstrong Grocery on Broadway, which is still in operation today.

Nellie Armstrong Chadwick, one of my aunts, played piano at the church and sang in the choir for over forty years. She helped to establish Trinity UMC.

My mother, Elizabeth Armstrong Midyette, attended Centenary for ninety-nine years. My first memory of Centenary was sleeping in my mother's lap. Our family sat in the center section, third row from the front. Later, they moved to the left side, fourth pew from the front, where my mother sat for over fifty years. My wife, Gayle, sits in that seat today.

Both parents were very active in the church, with Mother being president of the United Methodist Women, being active in her Circle, and making one of the needlepoint kneelers in the sanctuary. My father, Donald, taught Sunday school and served as chairman of the administrative board.

Gayle Cutler Midyette, my wife, and I are active members of Centenary. Our daughters, Elizabeth and Kathryn, were baptized here. Gayle taught Sunday school when our girls were in it. Presently, she serves on the Missions Committee. She is also the coordinator of the C4C partnership program with the public school, Oaks Road Academy.

I serve on the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee, prepare a yearly seafood dinner for the men's fellowship, help with landscaping the flowers at the main entrance to the church, and sing in the choir. Centenary has meant so much to me and my family for over one hundred years.

—Don Midyette and family

SERMON NOTES OF PASTOR SUSAN PATE-GREENWOOD,
FEBRUARY 13, 2022
(Served Centenary 2007–2019)

"We are open, and all are welcome" are themes that followed Centenary during Pastor Susan's tenure here. And now there are 250 years of those themes' continuation.

Each pastor can only be in one place at one time, so the members become "the priesthood of all believers" in the community. This means we all have the ability to be the hands and feet of Jesus throughout the community. We give away what we have received.

Once asked by a member what she was proudest of during her time at Centenary, Pastor Susan said she was grateful for the laity working in the community. Such groups as these were noted: Religious Community Services (RCS), Habitat for Humanity, Caring Cooks, Oaks Road, GriefShare, and community meals. Community meals were born out of community help during the aftermath of Hurricane Florence, and they continue through today.

We have a need to be *open*. Susan quoted *Three Simple Rules* from the John Wesley movement: "Do no harm. Do good to all. Stay in love with God."

Pastor Susan gave credit to the music ministries for drawing people into our doors; the welcoming people then invited the visitors to stay. Folks were won over by the warmth and friendliness of the people, who showed Jesus to them. With open hearts, you never know who you might serve or draw into faith.

Pastor Susan tied together the Scriptures chosen for the day: Job 42:1–5, 1 John 4:7–12, and John 15:12–17. Words are just words, but actions show our love for others. God loved us, so we must retell the story to all who listen. This is not optional, not a suggestion, but a commandment. Love is never wasted.

IV. WORSHIP

Psalm 100

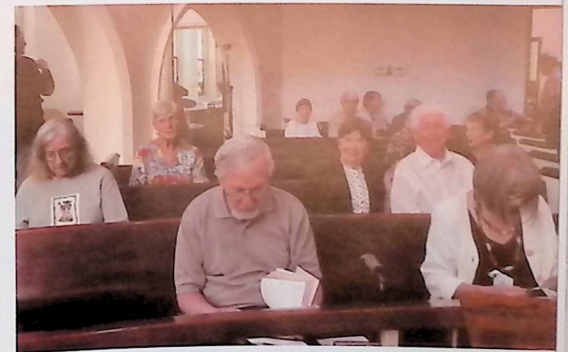
A psalm for giving grateful praise.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Worship describes those times we gather deliberately seeking to encounter God in Christ. God uses worship to transform lives, heal wounded souls, renew hope, shape decisions, provoke change, inspire compassion, and bind people to one another. In worship, we offer our utmost and highest. Centenary provides several opportunities for worship each week.

8:30 a.m. — Informal Traditional (Chapel)

Appealing to early risers, this warm, intimate, and friendly worship service is held in the light-filled chapel. It features an old-time hymn-sing by request. Music is by the Chapel Choir and instrumentalists.





9:30 a.m. – “Xperience” Contemporary (Sanctuary)

Held in the sanctuary, this service is an uplifting blend of contemporary music and classic elements of Methodist worship. Drums, bass guitar, and four-part harmonies round out the music led by the band. Experience this “come as you are” service surrounded by the beautiful stained-glass windows of the sanctuary.

11:00 a.m. – Traditional (Sanctuary)

This family worship service is held within the awe-inspiring large sanctuary. It features the Music Ministry of the Sanctuary Choir and the Carillon (Handbells) Choir, and it is enhanced by the magnificent Létourneau pipe organ.

Wednesday Chapel Service at Noon

During the Lenten Season, we gather in the chapel on Wednesday at noon for Communion Service. This short service is informal and intimate, and worshippers choose the opening and closing hymns. We welcome all to this service, which offers a brief respite from the busy workday.



—Sherry Parker, Sam Carter

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

My husband, Todd, and I began visiting Centenary UMC in 2012 as we anticipated moving to New Bern after our retirement. Our visits were encouraged by our son and his family, as they had become members of the Centenary congregation. After we shared our contact information during a visit, we received a phone call from a Centenary member who brought a loaf of bread to us and offered additional information about the church and the three worship services. Also, Pastor Susan Pate-Greenwood called us, and we shared our faith stories. She encouraged us to attend Wednesday-evening dinners at the church. As we attended various events and services, we were welcomed and invited to join the many ministries of Centenary. The members and leaders of the worship services were welcoming, and the congregation's community outreach represented the church's spiritual heritage. We joined in 2016, and as the saying goes, we've never looked back. Centenary's history lives within its congregation, and our prayers are that as we serve and are served in this church community, it will remain a light for God's faithfulness.

—Gail Flowers

SERMON NOTES OF PASTOR BILL SHERMAN, JANUARY 30, 2022 (SERVED CENTENARY 1989–1996)

There has been a rich history of Methodism in New Bern since 1772. Centenary is now 250 years old.

The fire of 1992 in the educational building was three years into Pastor Sherman's tenure. He discussed his role in working with the fire department and about the cleaning of all the furnishings and interior that took place. It was May 1 when they called for a “May Day” at the church. Pastor Sherman spoke of going to the trial of the Boy Scout who had started the fire. He told the judge the church forgave the boy, so the church felt the judge should too. The boy was not charged, but he was given three years of summers in community service with the fire department. The boy graduated from New Bern High School with honors, from North Carolina State University with honors, and now leads a very productive life.

Pastor Sherman spoke of sharing worship and classroom space with the Catholic church next door. This allowed the preschool to get back into operation by October of that year.

Opportunities for service for both the congregation and Pastor Sherman during his tenure here:

- Religious Community Services (RCS) served meals there, in their old building
- Built Habitat for Humanity houses (and remembered their addresses!)
- Encouraged members in the Walk to Emmaus movement
- Began the 8:30 a.m. service in the chapel, to include hymn-sings each week
- Introduced the Disciple Bible Study classes, a five-year series and commitment
- Catacombs began as a fundraising effort towards a new roof, and it has continued to this day. It brought together the men, women, and young people of all ages in service to the community together; it also served to bring the congregation together.

V. YOUTH MINISTRIES



Crop Walk

CENT Kids

Centenary's Children's Ministries are dedicated to helping kids and their families grow closer to both Jesus and each other. We have numerous fun events throughout the year designed to bring families together, such as our Easter Celebration, Trunk or Treat, Happy Birthday Jesus Party, and our recently added Fall Ball. Every summer, our Vacation Bible School brings the whole church together to put on a fantastic week of fun, worship, and engaging Scripture lessons. This amazing event draws families from all around our community each year.

Cent Kids includes programs that are designed specifically for our kindergarten through fifth-grade students. We meet every Sunday to share, learn, grow, pray, and worship together. A



CENT Kids

typical lesson includes interactive games, crafts, discussions, music, and a snack. We recently renovated our classroom to make it a comfortable and inviting place for the kids to enjoy being together.

Young Explorers is a group of third- to fifth-grade students who go on field trips and do community service projects throughout the year. This program is designed to help prepare our older students for youth group and spend time fellowshiping with one another.

—Amber Harr

CENT Youth / Mission Trips

CENT Youth is the name of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) meeting at Centenary Church. The group is composed of sixth through twelfth graders, and we enjoy living life together. We enjoy playing, learning about God, and learning about our responsibility in God's world. We try to take on at least two mission projects a year, with goals of incorporating an annual mission opportunity in another country. Some of our mission work has taken us to Ocracoke Island following Hurricane Florence (which did much damage there), and we have traveled to Huntington, West Virginia, to work with addicted persons in a community center there. "Eye opening and life changing" were some of the words expressed by our youth, who also said they felt they had lived in a bubble before these experiences.



The group is led by Pastor Michael Williams and meets on Sunday evenings at 5:00 p.m. for an activity; afterwards, a meal is provided by individual congregational members. At the end of senior year, graduates offer a sermon while the youth conduct the worship services, which include messages to youngsters attending worship that day. The group is vibrant and cohesive as they demonstrate their life in the faith.

—Michael Williams

Youth mission trip

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

Centenary United Methodist Church has always been my home church. I was baptized in 1955 and confirmed in 1964 at Centenary. My mother, Rose Linko, was instrumental in seeing that my brother, Richard, my sister, Brenda, and I were active participants in the life of our church. The following are some of my memories that I am sharing, even though there are many more.

In the early 1960s, the church started a program called White Christmas. It was named White Christmas, not because of snow, but because the food items brought in by church members were wrapped in white tissue paper. After the food items had all been collected, unwrapped, and sorted, the youth and youth counselors delivered it to families in the community who were in need of food assistance. As the White Christmas program grew, there were suggestions made to possibly include Christmas gifts for the children. This idea was well received. Sunday school classes, United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF), staff, the United Methodist Men (UMM), and the United Methodist Women (UMW) were involved in helping to provide gifts, as well as the whole congregation providing food. The wrapping of food in tissue paper was soon discontinued, even though this is how I learned to wrap cylinder-shaped presents.

Another memory is that during the Lenten Season, Centenary would use self-denial Lenten folders. Every church member would receive a self-denial folder to take home over Lent. Members would place a dime in the slotted folder for each day until Easter. The filled folders would then be turned in on Easter Sunday in the offering plates and the United Methodist Women would remove and count each dime given. The money was donated to our missionaries in Korea, Jack and Barbara Theis, to support their mission work. The removing and counting of dimes became very time consuming, so the church moved to providing quarter folders. This was a much-welcomed change by the UMW. These folders were one way the congregation as a whole could help support our missionaries over the years.

The Phone Booth—my memories of this place, in the early 1970s, was a house that Centenary used as a hangout for youth in the community. This house was located approximately where the playground is currently. The Phone Booth would be open on Thursday nights during the summer. This was a place for ninth graders and up to come together to socialize. The house was decorated in classic 70s style: black lights, a mirror ball, beads, and music. On July 8, 1971, Sammy Dorsey, a guitarist and singer who appeared at the Koinonia House in Atlantic Beach, performed between the hours of 8 and 11 p.m. at the Phone Booth. This was a wonderful hangout and a great place to meet old friends and make new ones. It was groovy!

I am thankful to have been a participant of the Bicentennial Celebration in October 1972 and the UMW's Centennial Celebration in September 1984. I am looking forward to participating in the Sestercentennial Celebration in November 2022.

The love for this church runs deep within our family. Jerry and I were married at Centenary in 1977. We have raised our children—Rebecca, Julie, Phillip, and Amanda—at Centenary UMC. They were all baptized, confirmed, and married at the church, and several of our grandchildren have been baptized at CUMC. Centenary has been a blessing to our family, and we are thankful to call Centenary our church home.

—Mary Carpenter

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Centenary's VBS is a church-wide community outreach program that brings one hundred to two hundred kids into our church for a week of Christ-centered fun. Volunteers transform the building into a themed adventure where kids sing songs, hear stories, make crafts, and do cool science projects that relate to the focused Bible verse of the day. This program would not be possible without the support of the forty-plus volunteers who participate with the kids that week. We value the prayers and support of the whole church in the weeks leading up to the week-long event.

—Amber Harr



Story time at VBS



VBS snack time

VI. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES



Ladies' Bible Study

Bible Studies

With a long tradition of Sunday school and Bible studies, Centenary leads the way for continuing education and growth in the study of the Bible. Usually operating during the regular public-school year, courses can be taken in areas such as Disciple Bible series, church-wide studies, ladies' studies, topical issues, and seasonal programming. Teaching and facilitating the groups are pastors and laypersons dedicated to helping others understand the Scriptures in light of current conditions in our lives and in our homes.

—Susan Crawford

Sunday School Classes

Aldersgate Sunday School Class

Very early in the 1950s, a young adult class began. By the mid-1960s and the war in Vietnam, Rev. James Tingle invited Mary Ann Brinson to draw in the spouses of military men serving overseas. During this time, Harry and Katie Wright taught the class. Eventually, that responsibility became part of the role of rotating teachers from within the class. In 1996, Rev. Don Hill became the teacher, and the class grew so large that it moved to the fellowship hall. Because of the closeness of class members, the Aldersgate name was chosen to reflect their fellowship. Aldersgate was the street where John Wesley held meetings and where his heart "was strangely warmed."

Pastor Don retired from teaching in 2014. Several other people then rotated through the teaching role again until P. D. Scott took over with Pastor Don's encouragement in 2015.

Though some members recollect this class began in the 1950s, the beginnings are not as important as the services of faith this group has delivered over the years. Listed here are many of those:

- served Wednesday-night dinners
- served Lenten Lunches following Wednesday noon services
- shopped for needy families at Christmas
- screened applicants for the Salvation Army for those requesting Christmas help
- packed food bags for the FUEL program, started by class member Marilyn Ontiveros; these bags provided food for school children on the weekends
- FUEL grew into a county-wide program called Backpack Blessings, and the class continues to help pack food for the children throughout the county
- helped a family restore their mobile home
- organized and carried out floor painting in the education wing
- financially assisted Craven Community College students
- sorted health kits for Methodist Disaster Relief Center in Goldsboro

—Mary Ann Brinson

Chadwick Sunday School Class

The Chadwick class is named for Mr. Will Chadwick, a pillar of the church in past years. Begun in the late 1970s, the class is video led with class participation in the form of questions and answers. The class is very project driven and participates in the following activities:

- support for Oaks Road Academy
- serving community meals
- support for Youth Mission Trips
- support for Kairos Ministries
- serving Lenten Lunches
- providing Christmas for families without means

—Collette Maple



W. C. Chadwick Sunday School Class

Contemporary Issues Sunday School Class

This "Issues" class was started by Phil Swain in 2010. The concept for starting this class was to discuss topics that impact our lives, such as homosexuality, assisted suicide, abortion, and the death penalty. This class has also studied traditional Christian writers and ideas.

The format is to read a book and view a video by the author to encourage discussion. Some of the authors we have read are Brian McClaren, Andy Stanley, Rob Bell, and Adam Hamilton. About six to ten individuals regularly attend. This group normally meets in the library following the Xperience worship.

—Dick Peebles

Helen Morton Sunday School Class

When we were at a gateway in our lives—young adults just starting our families—the Gateway Class was begun in 1989. A few years after starting, the name was changed to the Helen Morton Class. The class was very small in the beginning with six to ten members. Debbie Hunter was the teacher. Different pastors joined the class when coming to Centenary, such as Rev. Wayne Price and his wife, Joy. Rev. David Goering taught the class while he was at Centenary. Now, our twenty-five members still look at ourselves as young. Most of our children are grown, married, and have made us grandparents—a true blessing.

Some of the activities this class is involved in are:

- Living Nativity
- Catacombs
- Mission Trips
- Wednesday-night suppers
- RCS

—Judy Morton

SERMON NOTES OF REV. CHARLENE GUIDER, MARCH 7, 2022 (SERVED CENTENARY 2002–2007)

The title of Pastor Guider's sermon was "There is an Elephant in the Room," and she began by telling a story about the perceptions of three blind men touching an elephant for the first time, and then relating to us that if the men had not had a conversation about what they felt, their stories about the elephant would be vastly different. The Gospel lesson for the day was John 12:1–8, the story of Mary anointing Jesus with expensive perfume. The story is told in all four Gospels, with remarkable differences—much like the men touching the elephant and feeling something quite different even though they were touching the same animal. Pastor Guider went on to say that Jesus always came to the defense of women. He loved them extravagantly. As amazing as it seems, even to this day we tell this story of the woman.

Leading into the discussion of her remembrances of Centenary, Pastor Guider felt the extravagant love of this congregation for her as the pastor, as well as for the other members of the staff. She thanked Centenary for being accepting of clergy women. She spoke of the parsonage as the "Big House" and how she was grateful it was so large when her mother came to live with her there during her illness.

Pastor Guider listed things that she will remember Centenary for, including the devotion to worship and sacred spaces such as the intimacy of the chapel. She spoke of the beauty of the sanctuary and the beautiful windows there. She feels that the quality of the musicianship and the organ is continuing today. She applauded our sense of preservation and the incorporation of technology to reach folks inside the building. She was especially proud of the mission DNA of Centenary: RCS, the refugee program, working to help those affected by hurricanes, Wednesday dinners, the heart for caring and loving people as in the Stephen Ministry, Bible studies in the parsonage, Youth Ministries and ski trips, Catacombs, the Live Nativity, the Messiah programs, those who were called to ministry, and—lastly—our Saints that have passed on. She reminded us that whatever shakes us shapes us. We are to fill our cups with extravagant love; living into our potential, for whatever is inside our cup will be shaken out. Her challenge to Centenary is that when life gets tough, we recognize what comes out of us as individuals and as a congregation. Use it to the good.

Thru-the-Week School

Founded in 1969 by a group of women who wanted to start a preschool for their children and the community, this Christian preschool believes that a child's first school experience can set the course for discovering God's unique plan and purpose for each individual. The founding group included Joyce Morris, Evelyn Haire, Billy Taylor, Elaine White, and Sue Ann Russell.

The teachers fill the school year with hands-on experiences incorporated into theme-based curriculums. Together with the children, learning is fun, and life is an adventure. Our classrooms are large, bright, and cheerful. Each room has several interactive "centers" that make learning fun. Our large fenced playground is well equipped and closely supervised.

We want to recognize the women who have directed the school through the years: Sue Ann Russell, 1969–1973; Elaine White, 1973–1997; Kathy Mitchell, 1997–2010; Diane Hawkins, 2010–2011; and Katherine Muse, 2011–present.

The philosophy over the past fifty years has been "Learn Through Play," leaning on the premise that play is the profession of children. This philosophy enriches the natural learning process of young children. With a keen focus on play as a child's first, and best, learning environment, our school provides the foundation upon which emotional, intellectual, social, and physical development can thrive, helping each child achieve his or her full potential.

Our children participate in the following activities:

- weekly chapel time with our pastors
- weekly music parties with our music director, Mr. Paul Saik
- bi-weekly trips to the county library for story time
- November Spaghetti Suppers and April Art Shows that showcase the children's efforts, achievements, and artwork
- a Thanksgiving Feast prepared by the children to make the Pilgrims proud
- a spring "Farm Unit" teaches about life cycles by watching caterpillars transform into butterflies; the butterflies are then released on the playground
- making food, mixing colors, or watching a geyser are activities in our "Science Unit"
- community helpers visit and talk about their jobs; often, these helpers are parents of the children
- to celebrate preschool accomplishments, there is a full graduation ceremony, complete with caps and gowns

Field trips expand our curriculum to discover the wonders of God's world beyond our remarkable campus. Some of them have been to a pumpkin patch, a children's play at a local theater, the New Bern Fire Department, the post office—and—for seeing how ice cream is made—the Cow Café.

We offer expanded programs beyond regular hours for an additional fee. "Early Risers" come at 8:05 a.m. for play before preschool hours. And the "Lunch Bunch" stays after for lunch and a supervised activity from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.



Tiny-tot slide

New Playground Installed

In 2019, the Stewardship Committee started the campaign to bring a new playground to Centenary UMC. Along with the help of the preschool, they researched the guidelines for safety requirements and the prospective costs with the hopes of being able to provide a safe and functional environment for the children at Centenary. After a long search and the placing of bids, a company was picked and a campaign was launched. But then COVID-19 hit, and everything shut down. A year and a half later, the committee was finally able to pick back up and move forward with the plans to have a new playground. Barrs Recreation was selected to work with the preschool director to come up with a surface material and equipment that would best serve the target age-groups at Centenary. Poured rubber was chosen as the surface material because it is the safest and most durable option. Next, several pieces of equipment were selected to be inclusive for all ages and abilities, while also incorporating gross motor activities. A committee was selected to help choose colors that would blend best with both our church and this area of the community. The playground was officially opened in November 2021, and it has been a huge hit with the teachers, parents, grandparents, and especially the children!

—Katherine Muse



Playground slide



Preschool children on the playground

VII. MUSIC MINISTRIES

Ministers of Music

The Music Ministries of Centenary have historically been a significant and vital area of the overall program of the church. Many highly qualified and capable persons have led this ministry through the years. When the present sanctuary was built in 1904, Mrs. J. A. Meadows donated the organ and became the first organist in the new facility. Professor Bourdelais followed Mrs. Meadows as director. A student of the professor, Mary Whitehurst Stratton, held the longest tenure, from 1929 to 1961. Miss Willis Marshall was a volunteer choir director for Miss Whitehurst.

The following persons served as director from 1965 through this year of 2022:

Greg Bell, College Student – 1965
 Michael S. Howe, College Student – 1965
 Greg Jones – 1972–1974
 Marilyn Johnson – 1965, as needed 1973–1978
 Bess Edwards Sawyer – 1979–1980
 Bette Jo Oglesby – 1980–1988
 Dr. Stanley M. Wicks – 1988–1998
 Jan Gronosky, Handbell Director – 1997–2017
 John Hinners, Music Associate – 1992–1998
 Alan Whitmore – 1999–2002
 Music Director search, interim – 2003
 Dr. Betsy Curtis – 2004–2005
 Ruth Mosley – 2005–2008
 Simon Spalding, Associate Director – 2006–2012
 Dr. Monica Harper Dekle – 2009–2011
 Patrick Riddick, Lead Music Associate, Xperience service – 2009 to the present
 Patrick Bliss, Music Associate
 Dr. William Wiser, interim – 2011
 Paul Saik, Director of Music Ministries – 2012 to the present
 Dr. Timothy Maddox-Fisher – accompanist
 Colby Griffin – accompanist
 Amanda Kennedy, Associate in Children's Music – 2015–2018
 Dora Bullock, Associate in Children's Music Ministries – 2018 to the present
 Janet Sutton – Volunteer in Children's Music programs – many years

Music ministry has always been an integral part of church life at Centenary, through its vocal choirs and ensembles, musical groups, bell ensemble, brass ensemble, and praise and worship music. Through offering all styles of church music for all ages, the musical offerings seek to honor, worship, and glorify God. Many thanks go forward to Paul Saik for his input on these paragraphs, as well as for his gifts and dedication to Music Ministries here.

Centenary Church 200th-Anniversary Celebration Choirs

In 1972, as part of Centenary's month-long 200th-Anniversary Celebration, the four choirs sang a program beginning with sixteenth-century hymns and classical composers and concluding with the twentieth century. There were folk hymns from America and Europe, spirituals and Gospel hymns, and contemporary rhythmic anthems. Mrs. Marilyn Johnson, director of music at the time, designed the program to show how church music developed and changed through the centuries.

The hymn of dedication for the day was "The Bicentennial Hymn," written and composed by Mrs. L. H. Erdman, a member of the Sanctuary Choir.

Sanctuary Choir

This choir leads worship each Sunday morning at the 11:00 a.m. service, and it is open to any adults who feel called to serve God through the musical gifts God has given them. A variety of choral styles—from hymns that reflect our heritage to the latest in sacred choral music—are presented. This choir also presents several special programs offered to the community throughout the year. Rehearsals are held on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the choir room on the second floor of the Russell Educational Building. There is always a place for you!





Xperience Worship Team

These exuberant musicians lead worship in the Xperience Worship Service, offered each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. The group shares music from the top Christian-radio hits to Gospel classics. Membership is by invitation.

Chapel Choir

This group leads worship each Sunday at 8:30 a.m. in the chapel. Often accompanied by accordion, harmonica, violin, and piano, they lead hymns and sing anthems in the more intimate setting the chapel provides. Rehearsals are held jointly with the Sanctuary Choir on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the choir room.



Faith We Sing

Our newest musical ensemble shares songs from the *Faith We Sing* hymnal, using guitar and piano accompaniment. All are welcome to join this group as they occasionally lead the congregational singing at the 9:30 a.m. service. Steve Russ devotes his time and talents to leading this group, which meets in the chapel for rehearsals at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays.

Children's Choir

This choir ministry provides children ages four through fifth grade the opportunity to grow spiritually through music. Musical selections are chosen to encourage growing in faith and the exploration of children's gifts, talents, and abilities. The children have access to a full set of Orff instruments for accompaniment when they sing quarterly at the 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. Rehearsals are at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays during the school year.







Ladies' Ensemble

All ladies are welcome to join this group, which has been presenting harmony and anthems since 2018. Rehearsals are Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. in the choir room. A highlight of the year has been their annual fall trip to Choir Music Week at Lake Junaluska.

Men's Ensemble

Organized in 2018, this is a group of men interested in providing harmonies and singing for worship and special programming. Open to all men, rehearsals are Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. in the choir room.

Létourneau Pipe Organ

The Létourneau pipe organ in the sanctuary provides outstanding worship music and accompanies the choir and the congregational singing.

In 1987, Centenary's organ required extensive restoration work, bringing into question the mechanical serviceability of the instrument, some tone and design shortcomings, and the poor condition of the pipe work. An Organ Study and Evaluation Committee was formed by the administrative council in September 1988. A group was chosen who represented the body of the congregation and the church committees. Chaired by Randy Hunter, the committee was charged with evaluating the present instrument and making appropriate recommendations regarding the renovation of the existing organ or the purchase of a new one. With the help of a consultant at Duke University, it was determined that major renovations of the existing organ would not be practical or cost effective. The group spent two years traveling to evaluate organ builders. After careful consideration, three companies were selected to present proposals to the Centenary committee. The committee chose a builder whom they felt could create an instrument that would most greatly enhance the worship experience for the congregation.

In March 1991, the committee presented the report to the administrative council. Because of more immediate needs for physical plant repairs and a new slate roof, the proposal was not approved at that time.



In the year 2000, a Centennial Campaign was initiated to fund a new organ. Five organ builders were evaluated. Two builders were invited to present proposals to the church. The Létourneau organ builder was chosen for the quality of sound, craftsmanship, and working relationship with other churches. With a substantial organ fund from numerous gifts through the years and an initial gift from the estate of William C. Chadwick, Centenary was able to apply a down payment of 25 percent of the total cost of the instrument.

Preparation for the new installation began in early January 2004 with the removal of the old organ and the renovation of the existing choir and organ space. Early in the morning of March 16, 2004, eager church members met the truck and lovingly and carefully helped unload the new organ. Upon completion of the installation, the tuner arrived.

The new organ was inaugurated on Sunday, May 9, 2004. The primary purpose of the organ was to enrich the equality of worship for those who enter the sanctuary. The Létourneau organ is truly an instrument given in love and dedicated to the praise and glory of Almighty God.

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

In 1992, we moved to New Bern and as soon as we were settled, a search for a church home began. After visiting various churches, we decided one weekend to visit Centenary United Methodist, and we've been here ever since. The 1994 confirmation class included our oldest son, who became a church member ten minutes before my wife and me. In our twenty-eight years of attendance, we've been involved with various boards/committees and active in Sunday school and the music ministry. Church activities also kept our sons involved until adulthood. Our youngest son achieved the rank of Eagle Scout with Troop 13, while our oldest son was active in Centenary's bell choir. Both young men went on to perform as musicians with the Raleigh Ringers bell choir because of the foundation they received by participating in Centenary's music ministries. For us, the talents of our sons that were discovered and developed at Centenary laid the basis for the two great lessons. The first lesson comes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, and Luke 12:48 provides guidance for the second. Centenary remains such an important part of our family's life that our only granddaughter was baptized at Centenary United Methodist.

—Sam Carter

Hinners Reed Organ

Sunday, October 25, 1992, a special service and dedication was held in the chapel for the Hinners reed organ that was installed there. It was a two-manual, full-pedal reed instrument donated by John and Linda Hinners when they were members. Both were choir members and very involved in the community. John's great-grandfather was the president of the company that built this organ, about the time of construction of this 1904 Centenary church building.

During the dedication service, John Hinners was the organist and offered information and history about the organ. Renovations were made in the chapel to accommodate the instrument and to place the bellows in the basement below the chapel. Of interest is one Lenten Lunch, when smoke was seen rising through the openings from the basement. Folks rushed to the basement to put out the fire, and finding the mechanics overheating, they promptly disconnected the works there. Soon after, the Hinnerses moved away and took their organ with them. Centenary was blessed to have this instrument in the time we did have it.

—Mary Carpenter

Hand Bell Ensemble

The bell choir utilizes eight octaves of Schulmerich handbells and hand chimes. Students and adults are welcome, and they offer their music monthly during the 11:00 a.m. service. Thursday rehearsals are at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Orff Instruments

The Orff Approach is a child-centered way of learning music, using materials that are basic, natural, and close to a child's world of thought and fantasy. Teachers create an atmosphere that allows children to feel comfortable as they explore musical instruments and musical skills and learn rhythm and tempo as qualities of music. Students learn by doing, and every student is treated as an equal. The music is often improvisational and builds a sense of confidence and interest in creative thinking. With the instruments, students sing, dance, and play short pieces. It is hoped that a desire to develop further musical skills emerges and that the children are propelled to learn more formal types of music. The instruments used are miniature xylophones, glockenspiels, and metallophones,



and they are easily transported and stored. Drums may also be introduced. With the instruments, children sing, chant, clap, dance, pat, and snap fingers along with the melodies and rhythms. The proper position for playing the instruments is sitting cross-legged on the floor with the instrument in front of the player.

A set of Orff instruments was purchased in 1980, when Bette Jo Oglesby became director of Music Ministries. When Stan Wicks



was director of Music Ministries from 1988 to 1998, a series of music levels for children was introduced. His assistants attended a workshop at East Carolina University (ECU), learning the levels and Orff Schulwerk.

In the early 1990s, Centenary sponsored a weeklong workshop that included children from First Presbyterian and Garber United Methodist Church. A concert was presented in the sanctuary at the end of the week for parents and friends.

Centenary Brass

Special occasions call for the brass ensemble to play for worship. They accompany congregational singing and perform group pieces, quarterly. They rehearse Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the parlor.

The Carillon Bells

The Schulmerick carillon bells were donated by George and Hadylene Davis and put into use in June 2004. The carillon is an extraordinary musical instrument. It is electronic and comes with preinstalled carillons, bells, and chimes, and it can also be programmed for custom songs on special occasions. This carillon is played for weddings, funerals, church services, and can be programmed to play the Westminster Chimes and bell strikes for the hours of the day. The speakers for the carillon are in the tallest tower at the front of the sanctuary.

Audio-Visual Production Team

These folks control the sound and cameras for all services, producing a live-feed Facebook connection and a local radio feed, as well as a live feed available on both Centenary's website and YouTube. Recordings of the choir and special events in the sanctuary are also handled by this group.

Christmas Cantatas

Centenary United Methodist Church
presents

AMAH! AND THE NIGHT VISITORS

An Opera in One Act
by
Gian-Carlo Menotti



CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MIDDLE STREET, NEW BERN, N.C.

January 5, 1986
Allen Monroe, Amahl

January 6, 1986
Kevin Lane, Amahl

Music has a long and glorious history at Centenary, and that is most evident at Christmastime in the presentation of our annual Christmas cantata. A cantata consists of a number of related musical pieces that tell a story through four-part vocal harmony, accompanied by an orchestra, an organ, and narration. These works are chosen with great thought and prayer by Paul Saik, director of Music Ministries. Our church family welcomes community participation in bringing the message of hope to a hurting world. Rev. Barry Templeton of New Bern's First Baptist Church has served for many years as co-conductor, and singers from other churches in the area have joined us in this annual event. The Trent River Players orchestra is led by Rachel Harmaruk and is composed of members of the North Carolina Symphony and ECU music faculty. These cantatas are presented during Advent, and they recently have been broadcast via local ABC TV affiliates to the greater eastern North Carolina region.

—Susan Crawford, Janet Sutton



VIII. CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH

Centenary After School Program

The After School Program at Centenary began in the 1990s because there were a number of children struggling, and the schools were performing at less than the North Carolina average. There were about a dozen students who needed a little more encouragement as selected by their teachers. Attending the program two days a week, the students received assistance with their homework. The church provided the volunteer tutors to work one-on-one with the students, or with small groups of two to three children. The children were always welcomed in a warm and inviting manner.

In the early 2000s, the church became involved with Interfaith Refugee Ministry, a program through the Episcopal Church. Since Centenary sponsors Burmese families with school-aged children, it was decided to include those families in the After School Program. Gradually, as Interfaith referred more refugee children to us, the ratio changed to three-to-one. The need for this sort of ministry continues in the refugee community, and our children come from Christian-, Buddhist-, and Muslim-faith backgrounds. The current children are of Burmese and Vietnamese parentage.

As budget restraints cause diminished services in the public schools for the English as a second language (ESL) program, our program has been expanded to include Hispanic children. Centenary has a wonderful working relationship with Oaks Road Academy through the C4C program, so this was an easy transition. The After School Program is a flexible program, endeavoring to meet the needs of the community, as well as establishing relationships with parents and teachers alike.

—Judy Tynes

Backpack Blessings / FUEL

In 2006, Chuck and Marilyn Ontiveros brought the idea of the FUEL program from Salem United Methodist Church in Clarksville, Tennessee, to Centenary. FUEL provides weekend food packets for school children with food insecurity. After researching Craven County school children's needs, Marilyn met with Centenary pastor Danny Allen, and they established the program as a mission project for Centenary.

In the 2006–07 school year, Oaks Road Elementary School was identified as having the greatest need in Craven County. The program began in October with thirty-five kindergarten children per week receiving a gallon-size zip bag filled with nutritious items to take home over the weekend. A total of 1,150 food bags were provided the first year.

In 2007–08, Marilyn applied for and received a grant of \$4,500 to expand the FUEL program. This grant allowed first-grade children to be included. During the school year, an average of seventy students were served per week.



In 2008–09, FUEL served an average of seventy-five kindergarten and first-grade students per week at Oaks Road. In 2011–12, second grade students were added to the program. In 2012–13, eighty-two students were served weekend food bags.

Marilyn gave presentations of the FUEL program to other churches and community service organizations. By the Spring of 2013, twelve churches were involved.

In March of 2013, Garber United Methodist Church and the New Bern certified public accountants spearheaded an effort to unite all churches to join a program called Backpack Blessings and created a countywide program. Although FUEL no longer exists, Centenary actively participates in Backpack Blessings.

—Marilyn Ontiveros



Oaks Road Academy

C4C and Oaks Road Academy

In July 2015, Centenary associate pastor Rick Moser and church member Gayle Midyette attended a C4C program in Raleigh. Several Methodist churches from North Carolina were present to share information about the C4C program. Different churches sponsored different activities. After discussion with Senior Pastor Susan Pate-Greenwood, a plan was devised for Centenary. There had been previous discussion about helping Oaks Road Elementary School, the nearest public school to Centenary. Gayle met with the school principal to confirm that church members were welcome. Craven County Schools' superintendent, Dr. Megan Doyle, fully supported the C4C program.



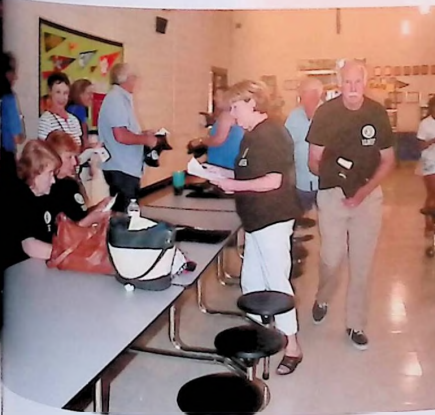
Book gifts to students at Oaks Road Academy

Volunteer information was distributed to the congregation in the fall of 2016. Gayle met with church members who were interested in volunteering with individual students or small groups, doing clerical work or chaperoning groups. Another volunteer choice was the "lunch bunch." Volunteers worked one day a week in the cafeteria so that the teachers could have a "duty free" lunch period. As the years passed, volunteers painted furniture, constructed picnic tables, helped set up a garden and greenhouse, and worked on dozens of other projects. At the suggestion of Pastor Susan, in the fall of 2016, Centenary began a new program. During Thanksgiving week of 2016, members donated books for the students of Oaks Road. Enough books were donated that each student was able to select a book for his or her own. The faculty of Oaks Road attended our 11:00 a.m. worship service to be recognized and to collect the books that were distributed the following week at the school. The event has become an annual celebration, and most years, at least five hundred books have been donated. As the years have passed, the number of volunteers has increased and now includes those who are not members of Centenary.



In May 2017, Centenary was awarded the Linda Thomas Volunteer Service Award by Craven County Schools. That year, we had five thousand volunteer hours at Oaks Road Academy. Our program continued to grow until the 2020–2021 school year and the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that time, volunteers have been unable to go on the school campus. The program has adapted to a monetary-needs one, with donations for specific items when requested. It is hoped that in the years to come, Centenary will continue to support Oaks Road again with their presence and financial support.

—Gayle Midyette



Oaks Road volunteers, led by Gayle Midyette



Oaks Road volunteers



Oaks Road Academy students at Camp Don Lee

Camp Don Lee

Centenary built and has supported Cabin #1 at Camp Don Lee, a church camp operated by the North Carolina United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc. Youth and adults from Sunday school classes and mission groups have participated in organized workdays to paint, repair, and refurbish the cabin. Also, the pier at the camp has often been repaired and updated by the Centenary workers. Church bulletins announcing the dates and times encourage participation and produce large groups of forty to fifty volunteers. They depart Centenary during early morning hours to travel the twenty-eight miles to the camp, located in Arapahoe. With tools and meals packed for the day of labor, the volunteers complete many of the tasks in a single day. The reward for the dedication and hard work is a return trip to enjoy a fellowship picnic, which includes softball, volleyball, sailing, canoeing, and golf. On occasion, a weekend event for the church membership is planned that includes an early worship service, singing, and a meal.

The camp provides a location for campers each summer who may not otherwise have a recreational place to enjoy. Oaks Road Elementary School, a local school adopted by Centenary, benefits from the availability of the camp. Many of the Oaks Road students do not have access to summer activities. Centenary members who volunteer at the school coordinate inviting teachers and students to attend a camping session at Camp Don Lee.

—Don Midyette, Mary Carpenter

Caring Cooks

Centenary Caring Cooks started quietly with a calling on the heartstrings of Dawn Ferreira in 2012. She wanted to do something for others, and she knew it would have to be something that included cooking. After a meeting with Susan Pate-Greenwood, she was advised to go think and pray about it. A short time later, Dawn was having a conversation with Annette Hunt, who was recovering from brain-aneurysm surgery. She expressed a longing to find a way to share God's love and peace with the congregation, as she had experienced it through their prayers during her surgery and recovery. She explained that it felt like being wrapped in a soft blanket and held in God's arms. A love like no other, to know you were loved and everything was going to be okay. So, once again, the two made an appointment with Susan and shared their plans. They wanted to include all church members and involve all those who wanted to join in this expression of love for others. On Susan's go-ahead, on February 2, 2014, they were off and cooking.

The goal was to get together and cook enough to fill the freezer with healthy, tasty casseroles, soups, and stews to be shared with church members and others in their times of need. The plan was to reach all members of the congregation, including those in nursing homes and the home bound. All members were encouraged to come and join in the kitchen or to be the hands and feet to deliver meals and visit those in need. Caring Cooks reached out to those members in caregiving facilities with visits, flowers, cookies, and cinnamon buns. In addition, in 2014, they wanted to honor the staff in a unique way, so quarterly birthday luncheons were planned. A birthday calendar was made up for the entire staff.

A list was begun of church members who showed an interest and wanted to be involved in the cooking. They would be contacted by e-mail when the time came to cook and refill the freezer. Of course, this was the perfect time to deliver a warm meal on the way home. The first fundraising event was April 30, 2014, when picture notecards of the church were sold six for \$5. We made \$35. Donations were received in addition to fundraising. A number of ideas were tried, but the most popular was the baking and selling of cinnamon buns at Christmastime. The smell alone would bring happy shoppers to the church. In addition, Caring Cooks received \$500 each year from the church to fund the project.

Today there are about twenty-five "chefs" who gather in the kitchen every other month. It takes about three to four hours to prepare a hundred meals. Meals are labeled and frozen. A sign-up sheet is posted on the freezer door to track where meals go so that no duplication is made. The group holds one to two fundraisers a year to put towards costs and to donate to other food ministries chosen by the group. The Caring Cooks ministry continues to grow, and we are so blessed to be able to spread God's love through our ministry.

—Dawn Ferreira



Caring Cooks

Catacombs at Centenary

In the year 1992, the New Bern Historical Society promoted a "New Bern at Night Ghost Walk." The program was to have a few houses on display for tourists to visit, but with a history or legend slant of New Bern. It seems there are still ghosts and spirits residing in New Bern, even now. The program was so successful, it was overwhelming.



A few problems needed attending to for a more organized tour, such as needing a place to eat and bathrooms being available. Centenary Church was approached for selling a supper meal and access to restrooms. Pastor Bill Sherman, pastor at the time, approached Evelyn Haber about creating a supper meal. At the time, the roof was being rehabilitated and the funds for the dinner were

thought to be helpful with this expense. Evelyn had some misgivings about ghoulish costumes related to ghosts and spirits, but after doing some research, she created a celebration that was both pertinent to the Christian belief and connected with the historical society's theme.

Thus began Catacombs. Evelyn found a way to turn a simple spaghetti supper into a fun and frolicking event for guests and Centenarians alike. She created an illusionary catacomb in the fellowship hall, with black lawn cloth draped throughout. Tables were arranged to feed the tourists among replicas of tombstones, bags of dirt, fencing for security, and a host of bones, bats, insects, snakes, and rats. Archways were created using the supporting posts to encase the hallway in a catacomb-like appearance.

The first guests to Catacombs came on October 22, 1993, and were served by Centenarians dressed in robes like the ones monks who lived in monasteries would have worn. Guests were entertained by singers utilizing chants of the monks, as well as other styles of ancient music. Music can be enjoyed before or after the meal in the sanctuary, where the organist plays music appropriate to the event. Tables were blessed by the Spirit of St. Benedict. Although the hall never looks exactly the same, the food service folks and servers go home to rest each night after a job well done of welcoming the community and guests into our fellowship.

—Mary Carpenter, Archives and History Committee



Centenary Clown Ministry

In the summer of 1987, a clown ministry troop was invited to perform at Centenary's Vacation Bible School. The interest generated from that experience created a clown ministry at CUMC in the fall of 1991. Our Clown Ministry was composed of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade children. After many weeks of practice, prop preparation, costume design, make-up challenges, and the preparation by dedicated parents and talented children, the Centenary Clown Ministry was ready to take their performance on the road. They traveled to area nursing homes and church/youth groups; they even visited with Centenary shut-ins. The skits pertained mainly to the parables of Jesus. Some of the favorites were the parable of the mustard seed, the parable of the lost sheep, and the parable of salt and light. Our Clown Ministry dedicated three years to travel, enrichment, and entertainment.

—Mary Carpenter

Craven Messiah Chorus

In 1981, Centenary Church began hosting an annual Christmas concert of George Frideric Handel's "Messiah". Downtown churches provided directors and singers, and many members of the large orchestra are members of the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra. Mr. James Ogle has been the guest conductor since the beginning of these performances. Local rehearsals are conducted by Pat Rowlett and Betty Jo Oglesby, and they begin in October of each year. The singers come from Craven and surrounding counties and number 135. The performances are in part supported by the Craven Arts Council and ticket sales. The sanctuary is filled to capacity for each performance, and the dress rehearsal prior to each concert is usually filled to capacity as well. This is a very meaningful tradition for the New Bern community, and Centenary has been honored over the years to be the host church.



Community chorus performing Handel's "Messiah" with the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra

Family Life Committee

It is very important for the congregational family of Centenary to have opportunities to gather outside of the church. The Family Life Committee seeks to provide these opportunities through recreation, fellowship, and the interactions of individuals. The programs are family-targeted programs, but they are also ways that the congregation can support and strengthen families simply by being a supportive community.

The Family Life Committee has sponsored such events as Family Skate Night, New Member Luncheon, Family Movie Night, Down East Wood Ducks baseball game outing, High School Seniors Graduation Luncheon, Hanging of the Greens, MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers support group), and Community Church T-Ball League.

—Katie Saik

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

When Charlie and I moved back to New Bern in 2012, we visited several churches looking for a new church home. The first Sunday we visited Centenary, Dennis and Martha Leoni came up to meet us and to welcome us to the church. It was a great first impression of the congregation. As we sat there waiting for the service to begin, we looked around at the beautiful sanctuary, the stained-glass windows, the cross, the organ, and all the friendly people. As the service began, we knew we had found the church for us. We felt right at home. And on the Sunday we formally joined the church, Dennis and Martha stood up with us. It was a very special moment. As the years have passed and we have become more involved in the church and its activities, we know God had His hand in our decision to make Centenary our church home. We love the church, its missions, and its people. Two hundred and fifty years of ministry to the community and people is something we can all be proud of. We thank God for His continued blessings on the church and its ministry.

—Sharon Barker

GriefShare

GriefShare is a Christian-faith-based support-group program for those who have lost loved ones, and it is based in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Pamela Fairchild, a member of Centenary, after having lost her husband, attended several meetings in Pennsylvania, and after returning to New Bern, she contacted our Stephen Ministry program and presented the program to them. Sometime later, the church leadership approved the program, and thus was the beginning of GriefShare at Centenary.

In October 2015, the first session was held at Centenary, led by Pamela Fairchild and Ron and Pam Bonina. There are thirteen sessions lasting two hours each, which include a video and a workbook group discussion. We offer fall/winter and spring/summer sessions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we offered Zoom classes that were held on Monday evenings. Our daytime sessions have just recently resumed this past September, meeting at the church each Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and the nighttime session Zooms on each Monday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

During the past six years, we have had around two hundred participants, some of whom—after having attended several sessions—have become facilitators. In November of each year, we provide a two-hour session on “Surviving the Holidays,” led by our facilitators.

Centenary's GriefShare has also provided support and training for the establishment of the GriefShare program at Garber United Methodist Church.

Those who have both served and are serving as facilitators are Pamela Fairchild, Ron and Pam Bonina, Kathy Fanin, Ruth Waters, Carolyn Fish, Nancy Guinivan, Jack Morton, Wanda Rains, Claire Hageman, Kathy Goforth, Rick Brooks, Amy Salter, Rodger Wilcox, Martha Dzioba, Christy DelMastro, Marian Bissett, Linda Genez, Betty Blythe, Sharon Irving, Teresa Allen, Lea Strand, and Daewon Yang.

I personally do not know what I would have done or how I would have survived the death of my dear husband had it not been for this program. It is amazing to see God working and healing our participants, and for some reason, there is a bond that happens to almost everyone during these thirteen weeks that cannot be explained other than God is holding each one's hand and heart in His.

—Ruth Waters

Impact 10

Impact 10 is the New Church Development fund for the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Impact 10 exists to help new faith communities essentially “come to life” and have a long-term impact on both the community and the lives they touch. In 2022, we are supporting a new faith community, Storied Church, in Mebane, North Carolina.

—Mary Carpenter

Kairos Prison Ministry

Centenarians have actively supported and participated in Kairos Prison Ministry since 2004. Members of the congregation have supported with their time, their prayers, and their resources in four area prisons, bringing the love of Jesus to hundreds of incarcerated men. Centenary actively supported the creation of a Kairos team to begin this ministry at our nearest prison, Pamlico Correctional Institute (PCI), in Pamlico County, in 2015. The first four-day weekend at PCI was delayed by Hurricane Florence in September 2018, but it was later held in the spring of 2019 with six Centenarians on the team. Centenarians remain committed to bringing the love of Christ to incarcerated members of our community.

—Jim Polo

Lord Is It I? Drama

Following a trip to experience the “Passion Play” in Oberammergau, Germany, in 2000, Ruth Waters reports she was so moved that she hoped to bring something of that depth to Centenary. Bette Jo Oglesby, the director of music at the time, found a script for

Lord Is It I?, and the drama had its first production in 2004. This drama features a tableau around the table of the Last Supper, and as each character speaks, they move to their place in the scene. The characters are portrayed by thirteen men of the congregation who speak their thoughts about their role in the Holy Week observances. It ends with Jesus's statement that one of them would betray Him, thus the title of the drama. Those in attendance at the dramas have been profoundly moved by the message.



Depiction of the Last Supper from *Lord Is It I?*

Religious Community Services (RCS)

An emergency center on Tryon Palace Drive was started on October 7, 1982. This center provided a food pantry, a clothing closet, and utility assistance to folks requiring these types of emergency assistance. The emergency center was the first ministry of Religious Community Services (RCS). The downtown churches all agreed that they were seeing the same issues and believed they would be stronger helping their brothers and sisters through one central location rather than each of them attempting to provide these services separately. Dr. Richard Boyd of First Presbyterian Church was the first chairman of the RCS Board of Directors. First Presbyterian was one of about ten churches originally involved in starting RCS, and Centenary was one of those original supporting churches.



Religious Community Services (RCS) food boxes for the needy

During the summer of 1983, a group met at Christ Episcopal Church to discuss a desire to form a soup kitchen in New Bern. Dr. William Hunt, vestry at the church, called a meeting. Interested parishioners who attended the meeting heard from a Kinston, North Carolina, gentleman describing the Kinston Soup Kitchen. Thus, a steering committee was formed to determine the need for such a program in New Bern and to communicate that need through proper channels to make it a reality. The committee determined the need and believed the program should become the effort of all churches in New Bern. They compiled the data, presented it to RCS, and the representatives of those supporting churches took the concept back to their respective churches. Both the momentum and the interest in the program were beginning to heighten, and when the vote came up at the RCS board, the project received unanimous approval. Once approval was reached, RCS formed a committee to bring the project to fruition. At the same time, Sister Angela Mary Parker was leaving her teaching position at St. Paul Catholic School and was hired to work as the director of the soup kitchen.

The kitchen was initially housed at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church on Bern Street and opened on November 5, 1984. Leasing the property at 503 Guion Street from the City of New Bern, RCS broke ground for the new RCS Community Kitchen on March 6, 1985. The kitchen and the original ministries that had been housed on Tryon Palace Drive opened on August 19, 1985.

Rev. Dr. Roger Elliott, Centenary pastor, was the second chairman of the board of directors. Financial support from Centenary began from the beginning, with the church pledging \$10,000 per year for the first ten years of operation. Centenarians volunteered many hours and days at RCS, and that commitment continues to this day. A Centenarian has served on the RCS board since the very beginning and several have held positions on the executive board.

Beginning in 2007, RCS conducted a BEE Capital Campaign. The project raised \$1.35 million to transform the old facility into a modern-day center containing the community kitchen, a dining hall, a client services reception area, a warehouse, a wellness office, four family rooms, and five veterans' suites with separate common living areas and kitchens. In addition, the existing sixteen-bed shelter has been updated. Centenary committed \$100,000 to that campaign, and the new shelter is named the Centenary Family Housing Common Living Area. The entire facility was completed in the Spring of 2020.

—Patti Peebles

Centenary Sports

Centenary's trophy case represents both its New Bern sports community involvement and the Christian fellowship shared by the participants. In 1959, one of the first organized baseball teams from Centenary won the title of Church National League Champions. "The Centenarian," Centenary's church bulletin, was often filled with news of the rosters and the wins of the ball teams. Through the years, many Centenary athletes and their families enjoyed the extension of their church as they played on the various community and YMCA church leagues.



Youth baseball team



Church league baseball team



Church league baseball team

In the spring of 1974, donations bought the Sunday School League uniforms for Centenary's players, and the season-opening ceremonies were held at Pierce Field. The men's baseball team wore the uniforms proudly and ended the season as the minor league city champions. The men's basketball team also enjoyed a winning season, as they were the New Bern Sunday School League Season Runner-Up. During the next several seasons, Centenary women's softball teams captured the titles of Softball Tournament Champions and New Bern Recreation Department Women's Church League Champions.



Church league baseball team

Proudly, Centenary hosted four ball teams during the summer of 1980. In the baseball league, Centenary had a major league team and a minor league team, with the men's softball team capturing the regular-season championship. Also, the tee-ball team had many participants, with young parents inviting and sponsoring players. From 1987 through the 1990s, Centenary teams won titles that included Trent League Champions, New Bern Recreation Department Men's Church League Tournament Runner-Up, and Trent Major League Tournament Champions.



Tee-ball team,
2008

Coed volleyball in the 1997-98 New Bern Church League's regular season was dominated by the Centenary team, as they were the Regular Season Champions and proved to be another outreach for the church.

At the Centenary worship services, the groups of athletes were honored as they were introduced to the congregation and invited to share their experiences playing on the teams. Many of the sponsored players gave testimony as to the Christian influences during practices and games, as well as the cookouts and fellowships during the sports season.

—Mary Carpenter



Tee-ball team, 2022



Church youth volunteers serving the Special Needs Baseball team

Special Needs Baseball

Centenary UMC answered the call to help with Special Needs Baseball, started in 2014. Courtney White, director of Children's Ministries at the time, gathered a group of kids and adults to facilitate the baseball game, as well as a cookout for lunch with the players. Centenary sponsored a game for several years, sharing in fun and fellowship with the special needs community.

—Rebecca Scott

Stephen Ministry

Centenary has been a Stephen Ministry congregation since 1996. Stephen Ministers are trained caregivers who provide high-quality, one-on-one Christian care to those in both the church and the community who are experiencing crises or cares in their lives. Training consists of fifty hours of instruction regarding meeting and relating to those in need. Those needing a Stephen Minister contact the church, who then refers the person to Rev. David Brosnan, our care coordinator. There are currently ten active Stephen Ministers who meet every month to support each other and discuss ongoing caring relationships.

—Sherry Parker

Troop Support

Troop Support first started in 2007 to show support for local US Army National Guard units deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. Care packages were sent to active personnel and veterans. Two thousand-plus packages have been sent containing things ranging from personal care items to Christmas cookies. Packages have been mailed to deployed troops and local veterans' homes. The Troop Support project has grown to include chaplain units, area military commands, and wives' organizations. Centenary has received many American flags that have been flown overseas, as well as personal letters of appreciation because of our support of the troops.

—Sherry Parker

Trunk or Treat

I remember that back around Halloween of 2009, my family was invited to participate in our first Trunk or Treat celebration. That year, the youth and Joel Grimm, Youth Ministries director, were in charge of "voting" for "Most Creative" trunk, and somehow our "Duck Blind" trunk won. I am not sure just when the church first started this outreach, but I recall that a couple years prior to me becoming the director of Children's Ministries in 2013, it was not taking place. It was a loved tradition, so we decided to bring it back.

We would close off the parking lot and invite those who wanted to decorate to come in and decorate the trunks of their cars. Some were so creative and even interactive, including games or ways to interact with the theme. Smiling children in costumes would run from car to car to get as many treats as they could. Often, children would take several laps around the parking lot and enjoy the decorations and treats every time.



Trunk or Treaters



Trunk or Treat characters



Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot

Each year, Trunk or Treat became more and more popular. Caring Cooks helped support Children's Ministries and began preparing hot dog dinners in brown bags for all who attended—or until we ran out. There was one year that the weather was not cooperating, but that did not stop us. Quickly, Katherine Muse, me, and a few others brainstormed and sprang into action. We set up tables around the fellowship hall, plugged in some black lights and disco balls, and folks then decorated their tables and the children had a wonderful time.

Word began to spread. Each year, the number of families attending and participating grew and grew. I very vividly remember in October 2016 when we had roughly three hundred people come participate in our annual Trunk or Treat. I believe this was the biggest year to date. As I stood in the driveway welcoming folks, I remember tearing up and thinking they just keep coming—this is why we do this!

Trunk or Treat will hopefully remain an annual outreach to both Centenary and the community. It is fun for all ages! Decorating and being creative with your trunk is truly as much fun for the adults as it is for the children to get treats. It is a great opportunity for families to gather, meet, and have fun, as well as for children to celebrate Halloween in a safe, caring environment. And let's be honest—as a mom, I fully recognize and appreciate an additional opportunity to share those adorable Halloween costumes.

—Dana Riddick



Zoe Mission Partnership

Millions of children are isolated and exploited due to extreme poverty. The Zoe Empowerment Model implements a response that, over a three-year program, creates independent—rather than dependent—young people. These children go from beggars to bosses, from poverty to self-reliance in three years! Zoe's model impacts eight barriers simultaneously:

- Food Security
- Health/Hygiene
- Income Generation
- Spiritual Strength
- Secure Housing
- Education
- Child Rights
- Community

Centenary United Methodist Church Zoe Involvement

Since 2012, Centenary United Methodist Church has sponsored five empowerment groups in Rwanda, Africa. By providing a foundation of relationship, resources, and training, Zoe Empowers equips orphans and vulnerable children with the physical and psychological tools to find their voice and utilize their God-given gifts and talents to make a sustainable change both in their lives and within their communities.

Centenary UMC has empowered 188 families and 473 children. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord. "They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope."

—Patti Peebles

IX. CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SERVICE, AND FELLOWSHIP

Acolytes

Centenary has an extraordinarily rich program for acolytes. The typical age for acolytes is eight years old (beginning in third grade) through ten years old (end of fifth grade). During times when there are a limited number of children between these ages, the children can stay for as long as they would like to. The program is not limited to just children. Adults are more than welcome to be an acolyte.

The duties for an acolyte are especially important to the worship service. At the beginning of the service, they are bringing the Light of Christ into worship by lighting the candles. At the end of the service, they are taking the Light of Christ into the world by extinguishing the candles—all but the last one. They relight their candle lighters from the last candle and then extinguish the candle—then they walk out.

—Julie Brinson

Altar Guild

Centenary is blessed to have a rich history of the Altar Guild. Now, there is a team of volunteers that are responsible for all the duties the Altar Guild requires. These volunteers are divided into twelve teams, and there are typically three to five volunteers on each team.

Our number one purpose is to provide the best possible environment for our congregation's worship of God. We work closely with our pastor. Our duties include:

- Making sure paraments follow the liturgical calendar. There are five colors: white, purple, red, green, and blue.
- Making sure the banners follow the liturgical calendar. We have six banners: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Pentecost, and Kingdomtide.
- Preparing the altar area for communion once a month, as well as for Christmas Eve, when there are six services; keeping the sanctuary and chapel clean.

Other areas that are included under the Altar Guild:

- Baptisms: A silver pitcher with hot water is placed on the altar along with a baptism candle.
- Funerals: Paraments are changed to white, and a memorial candle is placed on the altar.
- Weddings: Centenary has a wedding coordinator that is in charge of weddings held at Centenary. The Altar Guild's responsibility is to ensure that the paraments are correct. The paraments that are used are typically the ones for the season, unless the bride wants them white.

—Julie Brinson

Archives and History Room

In 1983, the administrative council (which is now called the church council) saw the need for a designated area in the church to properly preserve and display the church's vast history. Rose Linko was already the church historian, so she was approached, and it was agreed that she would get the Archives and History Room up and running. After many years, the church's collection of history was outgrowing the room.

From 2020 to 2021, the room underwent a complete renovation. The room has new painting, flooring, lighting, and display cases.

In 2022, in conjunction with Centenary's 250th year, the Archives and History Room has now become the new history display room. This year each month, the history room will feature a display of different areas of the church. The archives part has now moved upstairs into the adult choir room. This area is designated for research, storage of records, files, blueprints, etc.

—Mary Carpenter
Archives and History Chair

Highlighted areas during 250th-Anniversary Celebration:

January – Centenary United Methodist Church Beginnings
February – Scouting
March – Music / Choir
April – Missions / Outreach Programs
May – United Methodist Women
June – United Methodist Men
July – CUMC Sports
August – Centenary Thru-The-Week School
September – Sunday School / Bible Studies
October – Worship Areas
November – Nativity

Guest pastors during 250th-Anniversary Celebration:

January – Bill Sherman
February – Susan Pate-Greenwood
March – Rick Moser
April – Charlene Guider
May – Roger Elliot
June – Carol Goehring
July – David Goehring
August – Bryan Huffman
September – Garry M. Slade, St. Peter's AME Zion Church
October – District Superintendent Jon Strother
November – Bishop Leonard Fairley

SERMON NOTES OF REV. DR. ROGER ELLIOT, MAY 15, 2022

(SERVED CENTENARY 1983–1989)

Dr. Elliot began with his welcome to the church by several older ladies who brought food, flowers, and personal warmth, which impressed him very much. He related a story about one of the first projects he was involved with, which was getting individuals and families to paint the walls of the educational building. Each family took such pride in their work; they got protective of their part when someone would inadvertently lean on the wall.

The Elliot family moved into the brand-new parsonage a year after arriving in New Bern, and that was a high point. In 1985, Dr. Elliot was part of a pastoral exchange with Rev. Paul Edishaw from London, England. Apparently, those English folks enjoyed Roger's accent, much like a TV personality of the time. Dr. Elliot was proud of his good memories of productions like *Angels and the Night Visitors*, *Lord Is It I?*, "Messiah," and the Living Nativity in 1983, which was during one of the coldest days ever in New Bern. He recalled being graded with flashcards on his sermons from young people in the balcony of the chapel as a really fun memory.

The verses in 1 Samuel 7:10–13 were the basis of his sermon, likening Samuel setting up a stone and naming it Ebenezer (God has helped us) to the 250 continuous years that Methodists have existed in New Bern. He spoke of Mr. Pilmore's preaching near our current church on December 24 and 25 of 1772. He spoke of Andrews Chapel, the first building, and then the new Centenary, renamed in 1844 and built on New Street. Dr. Elliot recalled his daughters' response to seeing our current 1903 building for the first time and calling it a "beautiful castle."

He wondered what stories our walls could tell from the "great cloud of witnesses" surrounding us now, those who were our "heroes of the faith" and likening them to those in Hebrews Chapters 11 and 12. He believes they are cheering us on, saying things like, "I am glad you remember us," "that you have been keeping up the building," and "keeping the traditions that we love," but those are not the main things we do. Our relationship with Jesus and how we share it with others—that is the main thing. That is why our church continues to exist and will do so in the future. In our fellowship and care of each other, in our outreach, our missions, our servants—in all of these, the main thing is that we offer them Christ. Dr. Elliot reminded us that when we put God back in our churches, we build our Ebenezers, as did the Israelites in 1 Samuel Chapter 7, finally able to defeat the Philistines when they brought their God back to the front of the army.

Dr. Elliot shared Wesley's 1738 "warming of his heart," or Ebenezer moment, after hearing a message written by Martin Luther introducing Paul's letter to the Romans. He shared with us that Fanny Crosby wrote many hymns like "Blessed Assurance," and she touched so many hearers because she got personal with the words, "Jesus is mine." A few other meaningful stories were told to help us recognize our that our main thing is to share the message that Jesus is our Bread of Life, our stronghold of faith, and how we see it. To continue our rich heritage, we must share the message of Christ.

Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts of America was established only nineteen years before New Bern's Troop 13. Troop 13 was established at Riverside Methodist Church on May 31, 1929. After Riverside ceased its sponsorship in 1939, Centenary took over and continues to sponsor Troop 13 today. According to Abbot Weatherly, a charter member of Troop 13, "the Depression and Scouting meshed together to teach self-reliance, teamwork, and honesty." During World War II, the Scouts of Troop 13 assisted civil defense groups. As a coastal town, New Bern was a potential bomb target, so the city participated in blackouts. The Scouts would go around and make sure that blackout curtains were drawn and lights were out. The Scouts would also stand watch in the city hall tower and phone the time and direction of any planes they spotted to civil defense.

The first scoutmaster, B. M. Potter, let the older Scouts have as much control as possible in meetings and activities, a tradition that continues today under the current Scoutmaster, Tim Mitchell. Ten men have been Scoutmaster of Troop 13: Bryan M. Potter, William F. Pierce, Charles F. Taylor, James N. Smith, John F. Gwaltney, J. E. Jones, Robert P. Kaylor, Randall N. Lovette, Walter F. Crayton, and Tim Mitchell.

Frank Crayton says that Troop 13 beats the national average for Eagle Scouts. The national average is one Scout earning Eagle rank for every one hundred boys who join. The Troop 13 average is thirteen Eagle Scouts for every one hundred boys who join. Troop 13's first Eagle Scouts were Don Basnight, William Perry, and Milton Dail. All three achieved the Eagle Scout rank on December 10, 1931. Crayton also says, "We get all the support we need from the church and our alumni." Walt Crayton, also an Eagle Scout, said, "It feels good to get my Eagle from the same troop as my dad got his thirty years ago." One previous member, Fred Latham, said, "The adult support of the troop and the leadership taught to the boys lasts a lifetime." In 2004, when Troop 13 celebrated seventy-five years of Scouting, the present Scoutmaster, Tim Mitchell, said, "For a troop to exist for seventy-five years, it's just amazing to consider the number of boys that it has touched throughout time." While talking about seventy-five years of Scouting



Troop 13, 2022



Father-son Eagle Scouts,
the Craytons



Lifetime member Frank Crayton receiving his Eagle Scout Award

mementos, Mitchell also said, "I think it adds pride to them. It also adds tradition, and it gives the boys a sense of history. They look at some of these pictures and some of this stuff and they say, 'I'm part of history.'"

Troop 13 is now ninety-two years old and still going strong. Over the years, more than two hundred Scouts have reached the Eagle Scout rank, and there will certainly be more in years to come.

—Dana Crayton

Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts have been meeting at Centenary since 2014. The North Carolina Pines Council's Troop 4813 is composed of Brownies (second to third grades), Juniors (fourth to fifth grades), and Cadettes (sixth to eighth grades). National Girl Scouting came into being in March of 1912, when founder Juliette Gordon Lowe brought the first group of girls together in Savannah, Georgia. The aim was to explore together new possibilities and the wonders of the world around them. Well known for cookie sales, Centenary's Troop 4813 turns those profits into amazing adventures including overnight camping, learning about nature, kayaking/canoeing, archery, sleeping with the fishes in the aquarium, spending the night in a kids' museum, and using Legos to learn engineering principles. Community service is also an important component of Centenary's Girl Scouting program. The troop participates in community events such as providing school supplies to children in need and placing Christmas wreaths on the headstones at the National Cemetery in December and American flags on them on Memorial Day.

Girl Scouts work to earn badges and complete "Journeys" to signify their growing knowledge of their community and world. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience focuses on four key areas: science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). With the help of supportive adults and troop leaders who bring those processes to life, Girl Scouts discover, connect, and take action. Fun Journeys have included "It's Your Planet – Love it!," "Engineering: Think Like an Engineer," and "Outdoor STEM: Think Like a Citizen Scientist."

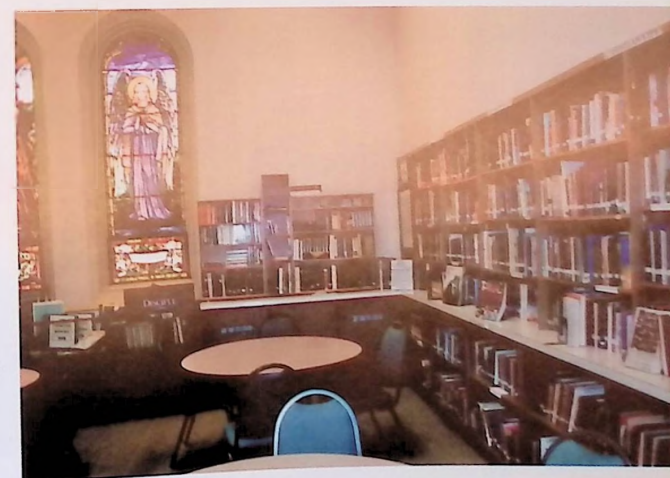
The Girl Scout motto "Make New Friends, But Keep the Old: One is Silver and the Other Gold" unites the girls as they develop friendships and learn skills that will serve them throughout their lives. They are united across time and miles with two million members and more than fifty million Girl Scout alums, forging forever friendships, bonds of adventure, and aspirations to advocate important change that leave the world a better place than they find it.

—Leigh Anne Freisen

Centenary Library

The Centenary library became official on August 28, 1967, when the first entry was handwritten into the newly purchased accession book. Then, as now, most of the books were donated by church members. The books were not formally organized until around 1998, when the Dewey Decimal System was deemed the most logical solution to a growing library.

The library offers a wide variety of reference material, along with most versions of the Holy Bible, Christian fiction, and biographies of influential persons. CDs, DVDs, and books on tape are also available, along with Sunday school materials found in room 107—mostly ordered by Sunday school classes and then donated.



Centenary's library

Most entries to the collection are in the "200 Religion" classification.

Devotional and prayer books are among the most popular items that are checked out, along with additions to the United Methodist Women's reading-program books purchased each year. Other additions to the library are those recommended or requested by Centenary members.

The library has moved to a computerized system, with all books cataloged by title, author, and subject. Printouts are updated in a notebook found in the library, or the computer is available by request to the office.

—Judy Tymes

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT CENTENARY

In the summer of 2012, we vacationed in New Bern. Mark and I loved all that the town had to offer: golf, history, proximity to the beach, shopping, and the alive town. We thought if we had the opportunity, we could retire here. Three years later, we were able to transfer here with Mark's work. I had seen Centenary Church on the back of the New Bern magazine and thought I would love to see inside the beautiful building and worship there. We were Methodists at the time, so it was a good fit.

Entering the sanctuary in April 2015 when I was here looking for houses, I was greeted by two very friendly gentlemen who welcomed me. One was Dennis Leoni, who took me by the arm and led me to the pew where his wife sat. He introduced me to Martha and her friend Kristin Bonforte. We chatted until the prelude started and Paul Saik opened up the great organ and shook the floor. That convinced me this would be my church. My pew mates said I would always be welcome to sit with them, but my response was that I would be sitting in the choir.

After the service, I turned around to be greeted by a man with a big smile and warm handshake—that was Jimmy Collins, who told me that his wife sang in the choir. By the time I was ready to leave, Martha had brought Paul to meet me, and he graciously encouraged me to get involved with all the music programs.

So, the building initially drew me, the people were so friendly and warm, and the music was exactly what my heart desired in a church. After our move in June of 2015, we started attending, and Rick Moser offered that day's sermon, his first at Centenary. We chatted afterwards about his hometown, which was near where we had lived. There were so many reasons to connect to Centenary, to be involved, and to join in with the congregation of lovely people. Currently, I sing in the choir and Ladies' Ensemble, I teach Ladies' Bible Studies, and I am editing this 250th-anniversary history book. Joining a church does not mean just attending worship each Sunday. One must get involved with the activities and people in this place. Your heart will be truly warmed—I know mine is.

—Susan A. Crawford

Trustees and Governance

Paragraph 244 of the 2016 Book of Discipline states that "the basic organizational plan for the local church shall include provision for the following units: a charge conference, a church council, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, a committee on nominations and leadership development, and such other elected leaders, commissions, councils, committees and task forces as the charge conference may determine. The church council and all other administrative and programmatic structures of the local church shall be amenable to the charge conference. The church council shall function as the executive agency of the charge conference."

Administrative Church Council in 2022

Chairperson	Robert Jordan
Recording Secretary	Jean Hemphill
Lay Leader	Si Seymour
Lay Member to the Annual Conference	Julie Brinson
Church Treasurer	Patry Peebles
Assistant Church Treasurer	Jean Hemphill
United Methodist Men, President	Steve Russ
United Methodist Women, President	Sherry Parker
Evangelism, Chairperson	Lydia Warren
Librarian/After-School Program	Judy Tymes
Missions, Chairperson	Bill Fentress
Stewardship, Chairperson	Jeffrey Sawyer
Worship, Chairperson	Charles Parker
Children's Coordinator	TBA
Children	Jennie Switzer
Youth	Dana Riddick
Family	Katie Saik
Stephen Ministry Representative	David Brosnan
Trustees, Chairperson	Larry Gilliam
Finance, Chairperson	Mike Morton
Endowments Committee	Si Seymour
Staff Parish Relations, Chairperson	Dick Peebles
History and Archives	Mary Carpenter
Members at Large	Jeffrey Sawyer
	Richard Becker
	Bob Simril
	Cindy Seymour
	Joan McClellan
	Mike Harrell
	Ashley Craig

—Sherry Parker

Committees and Chairs in 2022

Church Council	Robert Jordan
Finance Committee	Mike Morton
Stewardship Committee	Jeffrey Sawyer
Staff Parish Relations	Dick Peebles
Trustees	Larry Gilliam
Missions	Bill Fentress
Worship	Charles Parker
Evangelism	Lydia Warren and Dana Riddick
Lay Leadership (Nominations)	Tom Greener
Family Life Council	Katie Saik
Sunday School Superintendent	Dennis Bellamy
Endowments	Si Seymour
Memorial Gifts	Dana Crayton
Usher Teams	Charles Parker
Impact 10 (\$10 Club)	Frank Crayton
Thru-the-Week Preschool Advisory Board	Katherine Muse
Annual Conference Session for Youth Reps	TBA
Office Volunteers	Pam Scott
Membership Secretary	Marshall Faulkenberry
Archives / History	Mary Carpenter
Recreation Committee	Dennis Bellamy
Scoutmaster	Tim Mitchell
Kairos Ministry	Jim Polo
Librarian/After School Program	Judy Tymes
Children's Coordinator	TBA
Children's Council	Jennie Switzer
Stephen Ministry Representative	David Brosnan

—Sherry Parker

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men (UMM) of Centenary meet one evening a month for a meal and fellowship. For over one hundred years, the men of Centenary have been serving in the church and the community, as well as nationally and internationally.

The UMM provides financial assistance each year for hurricane relief, most recently after Hurricane Florence. This relief mainly was in the form of manpower and financial assistance. Other financial relief has been provided for mission trips to such places as Haiti, Armenia, Peru, Costa Rica, Liberia, Jamaica, and Honduras. They support international relief such as United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the Zoe project, Boy Scouts, Meret Clinic, Oaks Road Academy, Camp Don Lee, The First Tee, United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, Religious Community Services, Promise Place, Campus Crusade, Methodist Home in Durham, North Carolina, care packages and Christmas cards to deployed military, Wreaths Across America, and many other worthwhile projects.



Sarah Porter
Circle picnic



Sarah Porter
Circle picnic

The main source of funds comes from the annual pancake supper held each February. This supper, held for over forty years, is a time of fellowship within the church and community and is also the main fundraiser for the UMM. The Boy Scouts assist the men and share in the profits of the dinner.

The United Methodist Men can always be counted on for support when approached by organizations within the church. They serve as an example of dedicated Christian men serving God through their good works and caring ministry.

United Methodist Women

Purpose: The organized unit of the United Methodist Women (UMW) shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

In 1878, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1880, the Women's Missionary Society was organized at Centenary.

The social priorities of UMW are climate justice, maternal and child health, economic inequality, and the fight against the criminalization of our communities of color.

The UMW is celebrating 150-plus years of women in mission. They provide cleaning kits, hygiene kits, school kits, hygiene kits, and birthday kits for UMCOR. The three circles of UMW provide Lenten Lunches and bereavement receptions. Each year during the UMM pancake supper, the UMW sponsors a bake sale to raise money for missions. The UMW also supports RCS, Merci Clinic, Empty Bowls, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Youth Activities, and other local, state, and national projects.

Circles at Centenary

Originally, there were six circles: Mary Balko Circle, Sophie Gaskill Circle, New Dawn Circle, Centenary Circle, Susan Miller Circle, and Sara Porter Circle. Over the years, as numbers diminished, New Dawn and Centenary Circles ceased to exist. The Mary Balko and Sophie Gaskill Circles also combined into one. Today, there are three active circles: Balko/Gaskill, Susan Miller, and Sara Porter Rejoice.

The Balko/Gaskill Circle does not meet, but the members are available when called upon for various projects, activities, and bereavement receptions. Mary Peeler is the leader of the circle.

The Susan Miller Circle meets the second Tuesday of the month, September through May, at 10:00 a.m. at the church. The leader is Pam Scott. The members serve at bereavement receptions, serve Lenten Lunches, collect school supplies, help make Vials for Life kits, support Caring Cooks, help at the UMW annual bake sale, make birthday kits for children at RCS since 2016, started a pillowcase ministry in 2017 for residents at RCS, and support various organizations with donations.

The Sara Porter Rejoice Circle at one time was dwindling in numbers and was about to cease to exist. Rev. Ernie Porter, Centenary's pastor at the time, told his wife to get the group moving with more members, which she did. It is for this reason that the circle is named for her. The circle meets the first Tuesday of the month at the church because there are now too many members to meet in a private home. The circle leader is Sherry Parker. Some of their projects include playing bingo with residents of Riverstone Assisted residents of Riverstone, baking and distributing cookies at Christmas to Centenarians who can no longer get out, making ceramic bowls for the Empty Bowls event, providing Lenten Lunches, and contributing to various missions projects.



Sarah Porter Empty Bowls project

Over the years, the women of Centenary have been actively involved in missions at home and abroad. When asked what she sees as the role of women and the circles at Centenary, lifelong Centenarian Martha Leoni replied, "To be active in the work of the church and to increase the number of women involved in its activities."

—Sherry Parker

REFERENCES

Crawford, Susan. Original photograph of Centenary UMC on back endsheet. 2020.

Francouer, Janet Trowbridge. Original pen and ink drawing of Centenary UMC on front cover; used by permission of the artist, 2016.

Gadski, Mary Ellen. *The History of the New Bern Academy*. New Bern, North Carolina: Tryon Palace Commission, 1986. (1864 map of New Bern showing the proximity of churches at the end of the Civil War.)

Green, John Burgwin, III. *Methodist Meeting House: The Early History of Centenary United Methodist Church, New Bern, North Carolina*. New Bern, North Carolina, 2002. (Multiple pages of text and photographs were used by permission.)

Ingram, O. Kelly. *Methodism Alive in North Carolina: A Commemorative Volume for the Bicentennial of the First Carolina Circuit*. Durham, North Carolina: The Duke Divinity School, 1976.

Lindemann, Ben. Original drone photograph of Centenary UMC at Christmas; used by permission of the photographer. 2022.

Miller, (Pastor) James H. *A History of Centenary United Methodist Church, New Bern, N.C.* Self-published, 1972. (Written for Centenary's bicentennial in October 1972.)

Solano, Amneris. "70 Years of Scouting." *New Bern Sun Journal*, May 23, 1999.

Wooten, Bayard. Original sepia photograph of Centenary UMC on front endsheet. 1912.



Memories (continued)

"I have been a part of the Centenary family since birth. I remember worship service in the sanctuary when I was young. The church felt so big and cozy. I have made many lasting friendships. My favorite memory is of my wedding day, August 6, 1978, in the same sanctuary where my parents had been married in 1939."

—Martha Thompson Leon

"I remember the altar area was a stage with heavy furniture for the preacher and others who served. Easter had children processing carrying lilies. At Christmas, three Wise Men processed down the aisle to a large Christmas tree. I remember fellowship meals that my mother helped prepare. When I was married and lived on Johnson Street, I remember the fire at the church and that the dome roof collapsed, destroying the huge chandelier that had hung there."

—Elizabeth Midyette
(a member of Centenary for ninety-nine years)

"I have been a member since 1969. Memories include my children's baptisms, the rich history of the church, teaching Sunday school and Bible Studies, volunteering for youth director, children's summer music camp, directing cherub and carol choirs, working for the new organ, the majestic sounds of Létourneau organ, participating in 'Messiah,' 'Amahl and the Night Visitors,' the wonderful music of the choirs providing me the joy and enrichment in response to a calling."

—Janet Sutton

