

FIFTY FAVORED YEARS

By

Richard L. Young



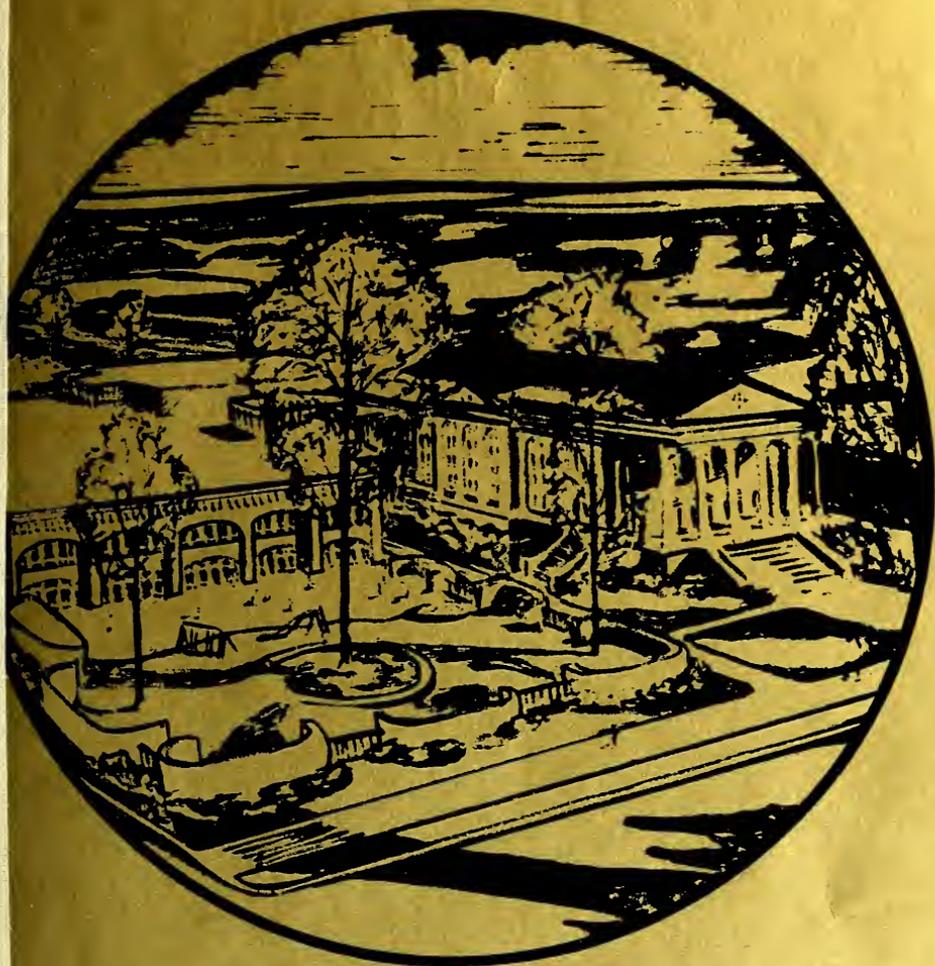
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Fifty Favored Years

A History of
St. John's Baptist Church

Covenant of St. John's Baptist Church

Having been as we trust, brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other to walk together in Him, with brotherly love; to His Glory, as our common Lord. We do, therefore, in His strength engage:—

That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully warn, exhort, and admonish each other as occasion may require:

That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God, and the ordinances of His house:

That we will not omit closet and family religion at home, nor neglect the great duty of religiously training our children, and those under our care, for the service of Christ, and the enjoyment of heaven:

That we are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, we will seek divine aid to enable us to deny ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to walk circumspectfully in the world, that we may win the souls of men:

That we will cheerfully contribute our property, according as God has prospered us, for the maintenance of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, for the support of the poor, and that we will in all conditions, even till death, strive to live to the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

“And may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Adopted March 26, 1922

Fifty Favored Years:

A History of St. John's Baptist Church

BY RICHARD L. YOUNG AND
J. KENNETH SANFORD

*Published on the occasion of the observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary
of the Church at Charlotte, North Carolina
March 26, 1972*

PREFACE

The contents of these pages are referred to as a “history.” But they are not a complete history. Words could never tell the entire story of St. John’s. Of necessity, the history refers primarily to ministers, other staff members and elected leaders.

But the true history of St. John’s has been written by the hundreds of persons who have served tirelessly as Sunday School teachers, as children’s workers, as choir members, as meal servers at many dinner functions, as contributors of time and money. St. John’s has been blessed by these faithful members and favored by God over its 50-year history.

There has been a unique spirit of cooperation at St. John’s—a spirit of harmony despite differences.

Perhaps the spirit of St. John’s was best typified by the relationship between Dr. Broach and Dr. Durden. Dr. Broach says, “One of the happiest memories I have is that of my relationship with Dr. Durden. He was *such* a gentleman, so gracious to me as his young and (*probably*) brash successor. I loved him dearly. It was just great to go and sit on his front porch while he puffed his cigar and reminisced about old times in Georgia and the tough Depression years at St. John’s. We just had a grand time every time we were together. He lived eight years after I came. When he came to church, he always sat in the same place, front and center on the second row, Fifth Street side. And I would always stop there after the benediction so he could take my arm and walk with me to the vestibule while the choir did the choral response or the Amen. The last time I saw him in the hospital, he was very sick, very weak. And when he whispered his goodbye it came in Latin. I bent and kissed his brow and he whispered the old scholar’s benediction, “Pax vobiscum—peace be with you.”

FIFTY FAVORED YEARS

The meeting of a group of some 200 worshipers to formally organize St. John's Baptist Church on March 26, 1922 was the culmination of a series of gatherings, prayer groups and conferences of interested Baptists concerned with the progress of their denomination in the eastern section of what was then suburban Charlotte.

The formal beginning of the Baptist eastern effort was a dinner held in December, 1921 in the parish house of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, to which were invited all Baptists interested in the formation of a church. However, before that dinner, a small band of men from the First Baptist Church had gone to the roof of the Realty Building and scanned the eastern suburbs. They spotted a vacant lot at the corner of Fifth Street and Hawthorne Lane. There was unanimous agreement among that group: "That's the site of the new Baptist Church."

It was exactly 10 years earlier that the idea of a Baptist Church in the eastern suburbs was first advanced. At a meeting of the Board of Deacons of the First Baptist Church in September, 1911, the question was discussed. This resulted in the appointment of a committee, headed by J. P. Hackney, with instructions to make an investigation. Nothing happened until a Board meeting in September, 1914, when it was agreed that a committee comprised of Mr. Hackney and local Baptist ministers should undertake a survey of the eastern area of the city.

Still the momentum was lacking, although there was frequent discussion. In 1921 there developed an urgency to act before all available property was gone. Mr. Hackney was empowered to select the members of his committee, and the following were chosen: Dr. C. N. Peeler, Dr. J. G. Johnston, D. L. Probert, L. C. Withers, and J. E. Murphy. It was this committee that gathered on top of the Realty Building and selected a lot.

At the First Baptist Deacons' meeting in October, 1921 the Board on recommendation of Mr. Hackney's committee voted to buy the property, and a committee was instructed to negotiate with J. H. Cutter, the owner. The committee agreed to purchase the property for the sum of \$15,500.

The group of interested men and women moved feverishly to keep the momentum moving, and another meeting was held the evening of November 12, 1921 at the home of John L. Dabbs. Present at that meeting were A. F. Mosteller, L. C. Withers, J. P. Hackney, J. S. Brinkley, John L. Dabbs, E. S. Hoggard, B. Arp Lowrance, Wade H. Williams, Dr. J. G. Johnston, Dr. J. S. Hoffman, J. M. Porter, Willis Brown, E. L. Mason, Mrs. J. S. Hoffman, Mrs. J. L. Dabbs, Mrs. Willis Brown, Mrs. E. S. Hoggard, and Mrs. E. L. Mason.

Mr. Dabbs was chosen as chairman to head the movement for the immediate erection of a building. Agreement was also reached to proceed with a canvass of the area to ascertain the number of Baptists living in that part of the city and to gauge the sentiment for the organization of the church.

Agreement was reached to have a general meeting of Baptists in the area, and December 2, 1921 was the date set. This was the meeting held in the parish house of St. Martin's Episcopal Church.

Wade H. Williams presided at this meeting, which was well attended and which produced enthusiastic endorsement of plans for the new church. B. Arp Lowrance reported that the canvass had disclosed that 397 Baptists were living east of Sugaw Creek, and that there were 166 children in these families, for a total of 563 persons.

The motion, made by E. L. Mason, for immediate organization of the new church and Sunday School, received seconds from all parts of the room.

There followed appointment of a committee to confer with a committee from the Deacons of First Baptist Church, and the presiding officer named Dr. C. N. Peeler of First Baptist Church, Fred S. Conrad of Ninth Avenue (now Midwood) Baptist and B. Arp Lowrance of the Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church.

In the balloting for temporary officers, John L. Dabbs was chosen chairman; L. C. Withers, treasurer; and Richard L. Young, secretary.

AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH

At the next meeting, held in the auditorium of the nearby Elizabeth School on December 16, 1921, there came a surprising development, disclosing the strong faith and sincere determination of the small group to accept full responsibility for the formation of the new church. This was the decision to proceed independently without the ties to First Baptist Church.

The action was preceded by a report from John M. Porter, who presented a resolution from First Baptist Church dealing with a financial campaign to raise \$125,000 to provide for a new Sunday School Building at that church and for a new Baptist Church in the eastern suburbs.

The keynote was sounded by Mrs. L. C. Withers when she declared that the new church ought to have faith enough to launch out on the enterprise independently. She said that a better feeling of pride and spiritual satisfaction would result if the move were made alone. There was full agreement from the group, and the offer of First Baptist was declined with expressions of appreciation.

At a meeting on January 10, 1922, at the Knox (Caldwell) Memorial Presbyterian Church, V. J. Guthery, chairman of the finance committee, reported that \$3,000 had been pledged for the new building. And before the end of the meeting another \$1,000 was pledged to help finance the cost of construction of the new frame building, which Mr. Guthery reported was well under way at the rear of the lot at Fifth and Hawthorne.

The group was so determined to proceed rapidly that they immediately made plans for calling a pastor. Mr. Dabbs announced the appointment of a pastor-selection committee as follows: B. Arp Lowrance,

chairman; Dr. J. S. Hoffman, Mrs. L. C. Withers, E. L. Mason, J. S. Brinkley, and Wade H. Williams.

At a meeting March 9, 1922 at the Knox Church, plans were laid for the launching of the new church. The pioneers in the effort were cheered by the report of a survey which disclosed that 269 Baptists had signed a pledge to join. This included 215 from First Baptist, 20 from Ninth Avenue, 12 from Pritchard Memorial, one from Allen Street, and 21 from churches outside the city.

Significantly, there also appeared at this meeting the man who subsequently was to be named the first pastor of the new church, the Rev. Joseph A. Gaines. He was introduced as a Baptist minister from Timmonsville, S. C. visiting in the city. He spoke briefly from the text found in Hebrews 10:35-39, which aptly fitted the situation and cheered the pathfinders: "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." His short sermon proved to be an inspiration to the group venturing out on their own to advance the Kingdom.

Then came the day all dreamed of—March 26, 1922 when the new Baptist congregation was formally organized as a church. It was a bright sunny afternoon, and the pleasant weather matched the mood of the worshippers gathered in the just completed community house.

The 3 p.m. service that Sunday afternoon began with a devotional conducted by the Rev. R. G. Carroll, pastor of Allen Street Baptist Church.

CHOOSING A NAME

The first order of business was the selection of the new church's name, and preparation had already been made by the appointment of a committee for that purpose. The report of this committee, as submitted by V. J. Guthery, chairman, included four suggestions as follows: St. John's Baptist Church, Emanuel Baptist Church, Barron Memorial Baptist Church, and Durham Temple Baptist Church.

The discussion that followed quickly showed considerable preference for "St. John's", although there was some dissent. One remarked to the effect that the name sounded too much like the Episcopal Church. Whereupon Mrs. L. C. Withers, daughter of the beloved Dr. A. C. Barron, who was for many years pastor of First Baptist Church, arose and declared, "Our friends the Episcopalians don't have a monopoly on the saints!"

When the vote was taken, the count showed 74 votes in favor of the selection of "St. John's Baptist Church," and then came unanimous action in acceptance of that designation.

The resolution formally organizing the new church, read by Dr. J. G. Johnson, was unanimously adopted as follows:

“Resolved: That guided as we believe by the Holy Spirit and relying on the blessings of God we do here and now, by this act, constitute ourselves a Missionary Baptist Church of Jesus Christ, to perform His service and to be governed by His will as revealed in the New Testament and to this end we adopt and agree to the Covenant and Articles of Faith.”

Election of the first church officers resulted as follows: Dr. C. N. Peeler, church clerk; L. C. Withers, treasurer; and M. C. Salassa, benevolence treasurer.

THE FIRST PASTOR

The pastor-selection committee was asked to report, and B. Arp Lowrance said the committee recommended that a call be extended to the Rev. Joseph A. Gaines of Timmonsville, South Carolina. This report was unanimously accepted and on the suggestion of L. L. Hackney, an invitation was formally extended to Dr. Gaines to come and begin evangelistic services.

Dr. J. G. Johnston reported plans for organization of the Sunday School and submitted a list of nominees for superintendent and two assistants with the result that John L. Dabbs was elected first superintendent and Dr. Johnston and Mr. Guthery, assistant superintendents. The first meeting of the Sunday School was set for 9:45 a.m., Sunday, April 2, 1922.

After a two-hour session, all details of organization was completed, and St. John's Baptist Church was begun on a high note of Christian fellowship.

The church's invitation to Mr. Gaines was accepted, and he began evangelistic services April 2 and continued them through April 9, 1922. He assumed his pastoral duties on May 7, 1922.

The church began with a charter membership of 293 and moved forward with vigor. At the first quarterly meeting on June 21, 1922 encouraging reports were made, showing three months' receipts of \$9,935.33 and disbursements of \$8,680.77 with a balance of \$1,254.56.

At that meeting it was reported that the Sunday School had shown an average attendance for the first three months of 294 with collections of \$334.38. The Woman's Missionary Society disclosed enrollment of 87 women in 10 circles with contributions of \$127.40. Agreement was also reached to hold another business meeting on July 2, 1922 when the executive board of the deacons would be elected, and it was stipulated that J. A. Durham, one of the leaders in the movement for the new church, would be included as a life member of this board.

At the meeting on July 2, 1922, those chosen as members of the Executive Board of Deacons were J. A. Durham, Dr. C. N. Peeler, V. J. Guthery, Dr. J. G. Johnston, John M. Porter, L. C. Withers, and J. P. Hackney, L. L. Hackney, John L. Dabbs and Wade H. Williams. These ten members of the Executive Board and the following constituted the first Board of Deacons: D. L. Probert, Willis Brown, C. H. Powell, B.

Arp Lowrance, and J. S. Brinkley. J. P. Hackney, who as a member of the First Baptist Church was one of the leaders in the movement for the organization of the church, was named first chairman of the Board.

The title of the church property was a problem of keen concern for the leadership of the new church. After several months of negotiations between deacons of St. John's and of First Baptist Church, agreement was reached to settle the matter by payment of \$6,000 to the First Church. On May 13, 1923, the St. John's congregation voted to approve this agreement, and the title was transferred to St. John's.

The record of growth for the first year was quite encouraging. Membership reached 380, which included 20 by Baptism. The Sunday School reached an enrollment of 369 with an average attendance of 265. The small building became overcrowded, and it was necessary to erect another frame building along the eastern boundary of the property. Much of the work on this building was done by a volunteer group of men and boys who devoted a full day to its construction. Yet even this was not sufficient, and it was necessary to house the junior department in a large tent pitched near the community building.

BUILDING NEEDED

From the very first year, thoughts for erection of a church building were uppermost in the minds of the church leaders. Discussion was soon underway on plans for a new building, and on April 6, 1924, the congregation gave approval to the appointment of a building committee:

J. P. Hackney, chairman; John F. Durham, secretary; E. J. Caffrey, treasurer; T. H. Bryant, John L. Dabbs, R. L. Goode, V. J. Guthery, Mrs. V. J. Guthery, L. L. Hackney, Mrs. L. L. Hackney, Dr. J. S. Hoffman, Mrs. J. C. Hutto, Dr. J. G. Johnston, B. Arp Lowrance, Dr. C. N. Peeler, John M. Porter, D. L. Probert, T. B. E. Spencer, J. Mack Woodside, L. C. Withers, and Mrs. L. C. Withers.

A Charlotte architect, J. M. McMichael, was retained shortly afterward. Before the end of October, the Finance Committee announced that it had pledged of more than \$100,000 for the new building. Excavation for the building was immediately started by L. L. Hackney who completed it at a small cost to the church on February 14, 1925.

Contract for construction of the sanctuary building was awarded March 14, 1925 to the Goode Construction Company of Charlotte, and actual work was begun April 1, 1925. After the concrete foundations were laid, the church's pastor, the Rev. Mr. Gaines, laid the first brick at 12:30 p.m., April 7, 1925.

The cornerstone ceremonies were conducted on May 3, 1925 in the presence of a large assemblage of church members and their friends. These services began with the invocation by Dr. J. E. Abernethy, president of the Charlotte Ministerial Association, and included reading from the Scriptures by the pastor, the reading of the list of contents in the cornerstone by Dr. C. N. Peeler, an address by Dr. M. L. Kestler, superintendent of the Baptist Orphanage at Thomasville, placing of the cornerstone by the pastor and the chairman of the building committee,



Dr. Joseph A. Gaines
Pastor, 1922-1928

Dr. Chauncey W. Durden
Pastor, 1929-1944



and the benediction by Dr. Clay I. Hudson, pastor of Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church.

Contents of the cornerstone include the Holy Bible, copies of the Church yearbook for 1923 and 1924, a list of contributors and subscribers to the building fund, the names of the building committee, architect and contractor, the prospectus of the new building, the church calendar for May 3, 1925, minutes of the Mecklenburg-Cabarrus Baptist Association, accounts of the organization of the Women's Auxiliary and the Men's League of the Church, a photograph of the Community Building, copies of the *Charlotte News*, the *Charlotte Observer*, the *Mecklenburg Times*, the *Biblical Recorder*, and *Charity and Children*, and coins of the United States then in circulation.

Exercises formally opening the building, representing an investment of more than \$200,000 were conducted in the sanctuary on July 11, 1926. The exercises began at the morning worship service with the sermon preached by Dr. Thomas W. O'Kelly, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N. C. A community meeting was held in the afternoon with the invocation given by Dr. W. H. Frazer, president of Queens College; reading from the Scriptures by Dr. Luther Little, pastor of the First Baptist Church; prayer by the Rev. W. L. Griggs, pastor of Ninth Avenue Baptist Church; greetings to friends by Dr. Gaines; greetings from neighbors by Dr. G. F. Bell, pastor of Caldwell Memorial Presbyterian Church; greetings from a sister church by Dr. Clay I. Hudson, pastor of Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church and the benediction by Dr. D. G. Phillips, pastor of the First A.R.P. Church.

The evening worship service concluded the day's celebration with Dr. O'Kelly preaching again.

Seven years of growth and progress by the church were noted when Dr. Gaines presented his resignation to the congregation on December 16, 1928 to become effective in January, 1929. He accepted the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Glasgow, Kentucky.

A committee to secure a new pastor was appointed December 30, 1928. It was composed of D. W. Fink, chairman; J. C. Hutto, secretary; John L. Dabbs, J. P. Hackney, Dr. C. N. Peeler, W. Carey Dowd, Jr., S. V. Pitts and Fred B. Helms.

A CALL TO DR. DURDEN

On March 3, 1929 the committee recommended that Dr. C. W. Durden of Newnan, Georgia be extended a call to come to St. John's. The committee described Dr. Durden as "a preacher of outstanding ability, a splendid pastor, and the best loved man in his town."

The congregation extended the call, and on March 5, 1929 Dr. Durden accepted with a letter which read in part, "This entire movement has been so manifestly of the Lord that I have been both humbled and strengthened by the consciousness of His leadership. So deeply have I felt all this that one text has been in my mind these days: 'And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting.' Then next came Peter's concluding words, 'Who was I that I could withstand God?'"

On April 7, 1929 Dr. Durden conducted his first service as pastor.

The official record says that he received a warm welcome from all those who were present.

A significant milestone in the life of St. John's was the tenth anniversary, which was fittingly observed by the congregation. As a prelude to the formal observance, special evangelistic services were conducted by Dr. Zeno Wall, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Shelby. The celebration began at the morning service on May 1, 1932. Dr. Gaines was present and read the Scripture. The anniversary sermon, entitled, "The Conquering Christ," was preached by Dr. Durden.

At the close of the service, an announcement was made of pledges totaling \$10,000 for the coming year. Between the morning and afternoon services, the worshippers were served a complimentary luncheon in the Community Building by a committee of women, headed by Mrs. W. Carey Dowd, Jr., president of the Woman's Auxiliary and Mrs. I. W. Williams, chairman of the luncheon committee.

The celebration ended with services in the afternoon when Dr. Gaines preached and Wade H. Williams presented a historical sketch. Eighty-two of the original members of the church were present for the service.

YEARS OF CRISIS

A season of crises began with the economic depression in the fall of 1929 that unleashed financial woes on St. John's and the entire nation. The first crisis for the church came in the fall of 1929 when at a conference on September 22, J. P. Hackney, chairman of the Finance Committee, reported that a note of \$10,000 against the church was due and unpaid, that its renewal had been denied and that it must be paid by October 31. He further notified the church that other notes with interest amounting to approximately \$20,000 would be due and payable on December 1.

It was then announced that an anonymous offer had been made to donate \$10,000 to the church on the condition that a similar amount be raised among the church membership. The offer was accepted by the church and October 6 was designated as "Ingathering Day" in pledges. Subsequent developments revealed the spirit of the St. John's membership, for before the October 31 deadline, more than \$12,000 had been raised and \$20,000 was applied on the debt.

In a resolution adopted December 2, 1929 by the Board of Deacons, Dr. C. N. Peeler was revealed as the donor of the \$10,000 gift.

"Hard times" increasingly became more evident as the depression deepened and the financial crisis worsened for the nation. The situation became further threatening for St. John's because on November 1, 1934 it was disclosed that the church had only \$40.43 in its current expense fund, and its debt stood at \$78,090.

The picture was gloomy for the church; its current bills were 60 days past due, salaries for the pastor and staff were 30 days in arrears, and interest in the amount of \$1,512 was due in ten days.

After earnest prayer and long consideration the church, in the hope

of solving these pressing problems, in March, 1935 launched the "Belmont Tithing Plan."

This plan, originated by a small church in Virginia, provided that every member would pay into the church treasury 10 per cent of gross income for a period of 13 weeks.

The church rallied to meet the crisis, and 325 members signed up for the plan. As a result, more than \$6,000 in additional funds were contributed. This made it possible to pay off the second mortgage on the pastorium, to re-roof the Community Building, to pay the May and November interest obligations and to meet all current expenses.

After these 13 weeks the offerings increased three-fold, and at the end of the year the mortgages on the pastorium and the church were re-financed at a lower interest rate. Above all, the church showed a balance in the bank of \$1,550, and the Finance Committee was able to consolidate the current expense and debt service requirements into one budget, thus eliminating the frequent drives and appeals for funds.

By the fall of 1941 the church debt had been reduced to \$17,800. It was decided that an effort should be made to pay off the debt in full and set a budget of \$33,802 which represented an increase of 35 per cent over the budget of the previous year. The membership responded so generously that not only was the debt paid in full, but \$3,000 additional was spent for redecoration of the church.

OUT OF DEBT

By July 27, 1942, the last payment of \$1,000 was made on the church debt.

The next significant development in the history of the church was the announcement on September 12, 1943 by Dr. Durden of his intention to resign as pastor on April 1, 1944 when he would have completed 15 years of service.

In recognition of his services as pastor and in expression of the congregation's "love, loyalty and unceasing devotion" to Dr. Durden, members of St. John's in church conference November 23, 1943, formally adopted a resolution "agreeing that we will of our own free will and accord give to him without obligation to him as long as he lives the amount of \$150 per month."

On April 2, 1944 Dr. Durden celebrated that fifteenth anniversary and preached his last sermon as pastor, based on the text from II Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He informed the congregation that he was presenting to the church his personal library. A love offering in the sum of \$1,500 was presented to Dr. Durden by Dr. C. N. Peeler on behalf of the congregation.

A committee of 40 members had been appointed on January 2, 1944 to search for another pastor. At its first meeting, the committee selected an executive committee, consisting of seven members with H. A. Hogewood as chairman.



Dr. Claude U. Broach
Pastor, 1944-

BROACH YEARS BEGIN

After about four months of work, both the executive committee and the larger committee voted unanimously to present the name of Dr. Claude U. Broach to the congregation. Dr. Broach was recognized as one of the outstanding young ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention. For the previous three years he had served as associate secretary of the Department of Student Work of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Broach, a native of Georgia, was graduated from the University of Georgia and had attended the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he had received Th.M and Th.D. degrees.

When the congregation heard the report of the selection committee with a motion by Mr. Hogewood and a second by B. Arp Lowrance, the motion was adopted unanimously.

In a letter dated May 23, 1944, Dr. Broach formally accepted the call to become pastor of St. John's. He wrote in part, "We shall enter upon this new relationship in a time of universal sorrow and turmoil. This shall not discourage us . . . It is my prayer that the ministry of this church may have a throbbing reality which will touch the whole of life . . . May the God of grace and glory be with us as we enter upon our new relationship. Yesterday is radiant with achievement; today is full of duty; tomorrow is abundant in promise and faith is the victory!"

In anticipation of the arrival of the new pastor, the church sold the Park Drive parsonage to Dr. Durden as his personal residence and authorized the purchase of a residence at 2516 Sherwood Avenue as a new parsonage at a price of \$12,000.

Another great milestone in the life of the church came on July 23, 1944 when Dr. Broach preached his first sermon. It was during the great polio epidemic, and children under 15 were not present, but there was a full house.

Dr. Broach in his opening remarks said, "I covet the privilege of being proud of you." His sermon topic was "Bethel Is Before Us."

In discussing his call to St. John's, Dr. Broach later said that the prospect of developing an outstanding youth program had a strong appeal to him. The pulpit committee had also expressed enthusiasm for this, "and this may have been the thing that brought us together," Dr. Broach said.

Dr. Broach began his work in earnest and soon many new plans were initiated, new programs were outlined, and additions to the church staff were made. Woodrow W. Wall was added to the staff as minister of music in the fall of 1944, and Mrs. Virginia Burkhead became youth director in the summer of 1945. Under her leadership the idea of a youth council was initiated. It was basically to involve young people in their own program. The expanded music program tied the two aspects of church life together.

An expansion committee reported on March 24, 1946 with suggestions that the offer of L. L. Hackney of a site in Paw Creek township for a recreation camp be accepted and that \$1,000 be appropriated for beginning work there. At the same time, Mr. Hackney's offer of a lot at

Ridgecrest was accepted, a church building fund was initiated, and a building committee was named. On September 22, 1946, L. L. Hackney donated another tract of more than 13 acres in Crab Orchard township as the site for the church camp. In ensuing years, a great deal of volunteer labor went into the preparation of the camp for use by the church family.

25 YEARS

St. John's Twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated on March 23, 1947 when Dr. Chauncey W. Durden preached the anniversary sermon. At the evening service a spectacular pageant outlining the history was presented. Written by Virginia Burkhead with the assistance of Mrs. W. E. Ruppelt and directed by Euticus Renn and Elizabeth Shelton, the pageant, "Not By Might," was presented in six scenes as follows:

Scene I—"Looking Eastward." Atop the Realty Building; Scene II—"The Name and the Call." organizational meeting in the Community House; Scene III—"Built on a Rock." Laying of the Cornerstone; Scene IV—"Despair and Hope." Church Conference; Scene V—"God's Plan," Finance Committee Meeting; Scene VI—"I Am Your Church," St. John's and the Church Universal.

The anniversary service was on Wednesday night, March 26, when Dr. Louie D. Newton, pastor of the Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, brought the message.

Elizabeth Shelton, director of youth work, left the position to be married in the summer of 1947 and was replaced by Miss Lois Edinger.

In February, 1948, the church purchased an apartment building on Fifth Street for use by the Sunday School, and in March of 1948 launched a building fund campaign with a goal of \$20,000 to add to almost \$38,000 raised during the previous three years.

The church began a program of outreach in January of 1949 when it launched the Westover Baptist Church work. Under St. John's sponsorship, the first minister at Westover, the Rev. Jack Southard began his duties in January of the following year. Since that time, the work has grown and Westover Baptist is now a full-fledged church.

St. John's responded to a critical world need in March of 1949 by agreeing to sponsor several Latvian refugee families. Mr. and Mrs. Jazeps Teilans and their daughter, Vija, were the first to arrive, and the church's compassion was shown in their sponsorship of twenty other families.

In August of 1949, Euticus Renn resigned as minister of music and was followed by William Kenneth Dooley in September of 1949. Also in 1949, Miss Bea Herring came to the church as summer youth worker.

In July of 1950, the Rev. Coit R. Troutman, Jr. assumed the pastorate of the Westover Baptist Chapel, and late that summer Bea Herring returned to St. John's as Director of Youth Activity. In October of 1950 a lot was purchased for a new parsonage and the parsonage at 2516 Sherwood was put up for sale.

Plans were moving rapidly toward erection of a new educational

building to cost approximately \$220,000, and cash on hand was determined to be in the amount of \$70,000.

St. John's paid tribute to a faithful servant on April 15, 1951 when it celebrated "Durden Day" in honor of the beloved retired pastor, Dr. Chauncey W. Durden, and his 15 years of service.

It was also in April of 1951 that the church almost lost the services of Dr. Broach. He had his resignation written out, because he had been elected to the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as professor of preaching. He said later, "I called the deacons to meet on a Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock, expecting reluctantly, after many hours of agonizing decision, to read my resignation. I couldn't eat dinner that Sunday; Katherine and I sat out in the car while the children ate. We talked, prayed, and cried. I went to the meeting, and when I walked in I knew what I was going to do—I apologized for getting them out on a false alarm and told them I had my resignation in hand but had changed my mind, or had it changed for me. Anyway, I couldn't read it, and the resignation was all off unless they wanted to ask for it. Well we stayed around and laughed and cried some more. That's when a certain deacon made the statement I've quoted many times, 'Well, Parson, I'm glad you're going to stay with us, and I think you've made a wise decision. Those that were mad with you have left the church and there ain't nobody left but your friends—now where else could you be sure of that?'"

That was a significant spring in other ways. The church had reached its goal of \$35,000 to add to the Building Fund, so in April it was decided to order steel and brick for the new building to avoid the delays and shortages caused by a war economy. The following month work was begun on the new pastorium at Colville Road.

EDUCATIONAL BUILDING

A long anticipated dream was realized in August of 1951 when the contract for the new educational building was let. The building was clearly needed because of the dramatic growth shown by the Sunday School, which had reached a high of 937 in attendance in the spring.

A significant addition to the life of the church was made in September of 1951 when the congregation approved the recommendations of the Board of Deacons that a Board of Associate Deacons be formed. Each deacon was to choose an Associate from a list of names prepared by the committee for nominating Deacons. The Associates were charged with working with Deacons in visitation and special ministries.

Cecil D. Rathel became Minister of Education in December, 1951, to replace Edward Kissiah who left to enter the School of Religious Education at Southwestern Seminary.

The dramatic growth of St. John's in 1951 and 1952 made necessary the inauguration of dual services on Sunday morning, March 2, 1952. There was concern that the plan would not work, but more than 300 persons attended the 8:45 a.m. service and more than 500 attended the

11 a.m. service. The dual services continue even now as a regular feature of the church's worship.

Two key figures in the life of St. John's died in the summer of 1952: J. P. Hackney, who had been a charter member and first chairman of the Board of Deacons, and the beloved former pastor, Dr. C. W. Durden.

In September, 1952, the church added an indebtedness of an additional \$35,000 to accomplish the following objectives: 1. Furnish the new educational building, 2. Remodel the nursery department, 3. Remodel the downstairs area of the main building, and 4. Alter the office floor to provide space and facilities for the church staff.

The church occupied the new educational building in November, 1952. The formal dedication and open house were held on Sunday, March 29, 1953 with greetings by Dr. C. C. Warren, representing the Southern Baptist Convention; Dr. R. A. Ellis of Salisbury, representing North Carolina Baptists; the Rev. R. A. Kelly, representing Mecklenburg Baptists and Dr. W. M. Boyce, representing the churches of Charlotte. The building was officially presented by Jonathan Gullick, chairman of the Building Committee and accepted by W. W. Crymes, chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Mr. Dooley resigned his position in March, 1953 to accept a call to First Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, and in April the church called Paul T. Langston to replace him, thus inaugurating a most fruitful ministry of music. In December of that year, Miss Mary Ellen Anderson was called as Youth Director.

In May of 1954, the community was pondering the results of the Supreme Court ruling banning segregated schools. Dr. Broach preached a sermon on "The Christian Conscience and Segregation" which drew an outpouring of endorsement and appreciation. To those who opposed his position of support for the Court decision, Dr. Broach said, "For their right to differ, I will contend heartily and cordially. The freedom of dissent is vital in our Baptist heritage. It is a sign of life. If we maintain the spirit of love, our differences are stimulating but not divisive. So may it be!"

However, the groundwork for a progressive position on the racial question was laid much earlier. In 1946 the Mecklenburg Baptist Interracial Commission was established with Dr. Broach as chairman. He was encouraged in his efforts by the Board of Deacons. The Association employed the Rev. James R. Holloway to work with the black churches. Dr. Broach now says that the idea was rather paternalistic, but it was a worthy idea in its time. "Today we work with rather than for the black community," he said.

The church's missionary spirit was illustrated again in 1956 when it was decided to purchase a new Moller organ for the sanctuary at a cost of \$30,000, but at the same time they voted to accept responsibility for the Sunset Road Baptist Chapel in the northern section of the county. Into this Chapel and its program, St. John's has poured many hours and many dollars. Through the Missions Committee and especially through the faithful work of Mr. Lewis Burgess, this Chapel has become a strong, cooperating Baptist Church. This balance between spending for local

needs and giving for missions causes has been characteristic of the St. John's spirit.

Mr. Rathel resigned as Minister of Education in February of 1956, and was replaced by Frank L. Perry, Jr., who only remained until December of that year.

EXPANSION CONTINUES

The church bought the Honeycutt property with its apartment building on Hawthorne Lane in September of 1956 for \$80,400, and began to use parts of the building for children in the Sunday School program.

In March 1957, the church celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of St. John's with a month of special activities, including an anniversary pageant, and a message by Mrs. J. T. McRae, missionary to Israel. The Building Survey Committee made a report on future needs, and the possibility of a new sanctuary was discussed. This proposal was soon discarded however, with a decision to continue indefinitely with the dual services of worship.

John Totten came as Minister of Education in April, 1957, and in the same month, the last note was paid on the education building. Mary Ellen Anderson resigned as Youth Director in September, and Virginia Burkhead once again stepped in on a temporary basis. In October, Mrs. Ruth Rodgers became the full-time elementary director on the church staff. She had been giving almost full-time work on part-time pay for the previous year.

The denominationally sponsored "Forward Program of Finance" was adopted in November, 1957 with a great deal of promotion, and an overly ambitious goal of \$201,077 was set. However, only \$186,000 was pledged. The budget for the previous year had been \$152,275. This disappointing development led to a very significant decision two years later when the church decided to ask its people to make pledges as an act of worship before a budget was prepared. This "bold new plan" was tried as a venture of faith and was remarkably successful. Since that time, budget figures have grown from year to year, and giving totals have exceeded the adopted budget in every year except one.

1958 was the year in which a decision was made to install air-conditioning throughout the church buildings, and in that year the Children's Division began the "extended sessions" for young children during the hours of worship in the sanctuary. In April, leadership of the ever-increasing youth program passed into the hands of Miss Jo Anne Setzer.

1959 saw the purchase of some strategic pieces of property—the Fort property on Lamar Avenue, and the Willis property at the corner of Lamar and Fifth Street.

In November of 1959, Dr. Broach noted two key problems in the life of the church: 1. Changing residential patterns of the community and 2. The need for a more adequate pastoral ministry. In January of 1960, the church responded to the second problem by approving a recommendation that the nature of the Minister of Education position be

changed and that the person filling it be designated, "Associate Pastor" rather than "Minister of Education." Shortly thereafter, the Rev. Roberts C. Lasater was called to the new position, beginning a happy relationship for the pastor and the congregation. A new division of responsibilities was established with Mr. Lasater sharing substantially in the pastoral ministry, as well as giving leadership to the adult program of education.

Paul Langston resigned in July, 1960 to accept a position on the faculty of the School of Music at Stetson University, and the church called Albert B. McClanahan of First Baptist Church of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, another strong addition to the staff.

In the fall of 1960 the church began a program of training for its teachers, instituting a Leadership Training Class for them at the Sunday School hour. Each person taking the class pledged to make himself available for teaching upon its completion. St. John's had always had a high quality of leadership in the Sunday School teaching program, but the training sessions made a further improvement.

In the same year, the church voted to undergird the work at Sunset Road Chapel and bring in a full-time minister, and in September, 1960 the Rev. Marion T. Lineberger began his ministry there.

Another of the steps contributing to St. John's uniqueness was taken in October of 1960 when the church began a "Sunday Evening Experiment." Instead of just "another worship service" in the evening, a time for discussion of vital issues in the lives of Christians was established. Continuing until the present, this evening hour of teaching study and discussion has played a vital role in the program of the church.

Jo Anne Setzer resigned as Youth Director in January of 1961 and was replaced by Miss Clyde Templeton, and a highlight of the following year was the arrival of a set of handbells. Purchased and cast in England, they arrived in March of 1962 after two years of waiting, adding a new dimension to the music program.

DREAM PROGRAM

The Dream Program was announced on October 14, 1962—a plan to remodel the sanctuary, enlarge the choir area, complete the basic organ and begin an educational building for Sunset Road Chapel. The total cost was set at \$93,800. One member gave a challenge gift of \$10,000, and advance pledges of \$55,700 were received, leaving \$38,100 to be raised, and this was over-subscribed.

The Sunset Road Chapel broke ground on Sunday, July 21, 1963 for their new educational building. The building was completed and dedicated on December 29, 1963.

After months of careful planning, under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Peacock, chairman of the project, the contract for the remodeling of the St. John's sanctuary was let in February, 1964, causing a great deal of relocation. Offices were moved to the educational building, and worship services were held in the Fellowship Hall. The first day of worship in the remodeled sanctuary was held on July 12, 1964. Dr. Paul Langston returned to give a dedicatory recital on the completed organ



The St. John's Sanctuary
Result of the Dream Program

on July 26, 1964. The sanctuary was dedicated on that day with the dedicatory sermon by Dr. Stewart A. Newman, professor of theology at Southeastern Baptist Seminary.

In the church newsletter, Dr. Broach explained that in the new sanctuary the pulpit occupied the center, because of the conviction that preaching the word of God is central in the life of the church. Two lecterns were placed to the side so that the service could be conducted there except for the preaching of the sermon. The arrangement and the appointments of the sanctuary have received favorable comment from far and wide.

The Rev. L. Guilford Daugherty who had assumed duties as the first Minister to Youth on December 14, 1962, resigned in June, 1964 to accept a position as Director of Alumni Affairs at Campbell College. The calling of an ordained minister to this work had been an indication of the growing importance which the church attached to its work with young people and their place in the life of the church. The Rev. James (Skip) Anderson, Jr. began his duties as the new Minister to Youth on October 1, 1964.

A budget for 1965 of \$175,250 was established, but in early 1965, there was an overage from the previous year of \$2,036.47. Again this money was given to the Mecklenburg Baptist Association with the suggestion that it be used this time for the child care program at Bethel Mission.

MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP

Another of those milestones which was to make St. John's more relevant to people of the Twentieth Century was marked in March of 1965. At that time the church decided to require the completion of the Membership Conferences for acceptance into the church family. The conferences had previously been optional. Under the new procedure, a person wanting to become a member must present himself as a candidate for membership, and then complete the membership conferences with a commitment to the church covenant. Having done this, he is presented to the congregation as a new member in a special service at the time of the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Two basic reasons were put forward for this change: 1. It was to indicate to members the seriousness of the church's interest in them and in their growth as Christians. 2. It was to safeguard for the church the sacred meaning of "belonging" to the church, the body of Christ. At the same time, however, the church made it clear that membership is "open to all people" who demonstrate the relevant spiritual qualities of repentance and faith and who fulfill the requirements provided in the membership conferences. It was by this declaration that the church answered positively any uncertainty which might arise over the matter of race.

1965 was indeed an eventful year for St. John's. When Marion Lineberger left Sunset Road for the mission field in Argentina, the Rev. James A. Lewis was called to fill his place. But the most remarkable event of the year came when Dr. Broach was named as a "Visiting Theologian" to witness sessions of the Vatican Ecumenical Council in

Rome in November of 1965. His visit was symbolic to Baptists of a new spirit between Protestants and Catholics as a result of reformations in the Roman Catholic Church under Pope John XXIII.

In 1966, the budget had grown to \$187,227, and the year 1965 was finished with a surplus of more than \$8,000 which was applied to needed repairs to church property.

The church took a forward step in service to its pastor in February of 1966 when it approved the sale of the parsonage at 226 Colville Road and made arrangements for Dr. Broach to move to a new one more suited to his current needs and which he could purchase for himself upon his retirement.

At the end of April, 1966, Mrs. W. E. Ruppelt had completed 30 years of service as a secretary at St. John's. She had long been the financial secretary for the church as well as the personal secretary of Dr. Broach, but in 1966 illness necessitated that she take the position of financial secretary on a limited schedule.

MISSION ACTION

The development of the term "Mission Action" at St. John's took place in 1966. Under that program the old type of "community missions" in the Woman's Missionary Union was to be replaced by a "face-to-face ministry" to people of the community. St. John's was chosen as one of four churches in the Southern Baptist Convention to take part in a pilot project using the "Mission Action" program and the church elected its first Mission Action Committee in April, 1967. It was composed of J. Frank Gilreath, Jr., Dr. Ralph E. Guerrant, Mrs. Carl Phillips, Don Millsaps, Mrs. Cates Snell, James Watson, Mrs. Henry Engle, Mrs. Ashley Hogewood, Jr. and Mrs. David Olive.

BAPTISM

The following historical and controversial position on baptism at St. John's was adopted on March 19, 1967 by a vote of 178-19:

- I. *We consider baptism* to be an act of obedience following conversion, which symbolizes the believer's identification with the Christian faith and with the whole Church as the Body of Christ. Such baptism is "believer's baptism."
- II. *We will baptize new converts by immersion* because we believe this to be. 1. The mode used in New Testament times. 2. The mode which most fully portrays the symbolic meaning of baptism—death, burial, resurrection. (Note. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the ministers and deacons in hardship cases involving advanced age or problems of health.)

III. *In the reception of candidates from other denominations:*

1. We are primarily concerned about the reality of the candidate's experience of conversion and commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

2. In keeping with the earliest Baptist tradition, we, upon majority recommendation of the pastor, associate pastor and officers of the deacons, will accept a candidate's baptism as valid, without regard to mode, if it was for him an act of obedience which followed conversion and symbolized his identification with the Christian faith and the whole Church as the Body of Christ.

3. If the candidate's baptism was other than believer's baptism, the candidate will be immersed.

IV. We intend that this affirmation of belief and practice shall lead to a deeper appreciation for the historic and present meaning of baptism in the life of the believer, and in the life of St. John's Baptist Church.

As a result of this action a controversy arose in the Mecklenburg Baptist Association in August of 1967 over the issue of baptism and the larger issue of associational authority in the policy and procedure of the local church.

The association on October 20, 1967, by a vote of 214 to 130 changed its By-Laws to affirm that "All churches affiliated with this Association shall be churches who use the New Testament as the statement of their faith and church polity and require that all candidates, who are physically able, be immersed in water, on the basis of belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, to qualify for membership." Along with many others, the St. John's representatives felt that this marked the assumption of creedal authority by the Association, and vigorously opposed the change. But when it became obvious that the Association was intent on excluding St. John's and other churches by this action, the church sent this message to the Association in October of 1968:

"Last year, messengers present for the annual meeting adopted a bylaw which imposes a creedal or doctrinal test as a condition of membership or affiliation with the Association. We deeply deplore this action, and we remind you of the unhappy years of Baptist history when similar efforts were the occasion of the 'Landmark Controversy' which introduced discord and division into Baptist life. Christians cannot win a lost world by fighting among themselves. However, we will not struggle against those who have brought about this action. Although the wording of your bylaw is ambiguous, we are well aware of its real intent. We acknowledge that by this action you have excluded the St. John's Baptist Church from your fellowship. Throughout the 46 years of her life St. John's Baptist Church has enjoyed a full and appreciative participation in the work of the Association. Through the current year we have maintained our full support of the work we have shared together. When the day comes, as we are confident it will, that the Association returns to the simple principles of Baptist cooperative work which have bound us in mutual love and respect for many years, we will be eager to resume our fellowship in service with you."

SERVANT CHURCH

A new emphasis in the life of St. John's was becoming apparent when on July 23, 1967, Dr. Broach preached on the need for the church to become a "Servant Church" in the community. In a recent statement, Dr. Broach amplified the "Servant Church" concept.

He said that in the decade of the sixties St. John's faced up to the fact that it is no longer a neighborhood church. No longer is it assured the almost automatic growth that comes to the suburban church which gains members as the community grows.

Families attending St. John's in the sixties were driving past several other Baptist churches on their way to participate in worship and other activities. Would they continue to follow this pattern? St. John's faced some crucial decisions. It could have fled to the suburbs or it could have gone all out in frenzied promotional schemes to whip up enthusiasm and maintain members.

It did neither. What St. John's did, in fact, could be interpreted as making it more difficult to become a member, through the requirement of completion of membership conferences and commitment to the covenant. As Dr. Broach put it, "We have challenged people to join us not because of where we stand geographically, but because of what we stand for—spiritually, doctrinally."

But what is the ministry of St. John's if not to serve its own members and the surrounding neighborhood? There is no vacuum surrounding St. John's. On the contrary, the church is surrounded by people in schools, in hospitals and medical offices of all kinds, including nursing facilities for the disabled aging.

All these people have spiritual needs, but they also have unique physical needs which often must be ministered to before they are open to approach about their spiritual lives.

Out of the realization of this relationship grew the Servant Church concept. Dr. Broach described the awakening to the role of the Servant Church in the following words:

"In our concern for those whose lives are handicapped by a ghetto environment, we must look honestly at another ghetto which stands as an indictment of the Christian Church in the world today—it is the 'stained glass ghetto'. Behind the lovely windows of the churches people have met to study, sing, preach, and pray—but all too often this has been all there was to it. This ghetto was comfortable—heated against the cold, air-conditioned against the heat, congenial in the company of the like-minded people, comforting and ego-building with its doctrines of the chosen people who are special objects of God's favor.

"But the spirit of God has moved in his Church—the ghetto has been challenged, rejected, thrown into ferment. Get out of the stained glass ghetto! Go to the world around you, at your doors! How can you love God and ignore the poverty and the injustice with which your neighbor lives? This has been the cry which has been heard throughout the church."



Youth-Ministries Building on the Left
Fruition of the Advance Program

St. John's began living the definition of a Servant Church even before it began discussing that terminology. This was done through the Mission Action program. This church pioneered in this breakaway from the old, out-dated concepts of "community missions." The pioneering was done largely through the leadership of the Woman's Missionary Union.

After some pioneer work had been done, the national leadership of W.M.U. asked St. John's to be one of a few churches which would carry out a pilot project, involving a new structure for W.M.U. The church did just that, and the results were so satisfactory that the whole structure of W.M.U. was changed on a nationwide basis.

ANOTHER GIANT STEP

The budget for 1968 at St. John's was set at \$219,153, which included an item of \$12,000 for the Youth-Ministries Building Fund. Under the chairmanship of Donald Voyles, a Long Range Development Committee had for some time been studying the church's program needs and its physical needs. The program needs were reflected in the Servant Church concept. The building needs were becoming quite obvious as the children's building (the remodeled apartment building on Hawthorne Lane) was becoming even more inadequate and unsafe.

The Long Range Planning Committee made a report to the congregation on October 6, 1968. They revealed tentative plans and received approval of the general building arrangement and exterior appearance of a new Youth-Ministries Building. This was a decisive step ahead. In the following year, the church voted on April 13, 1969 to release Sunset Road Baptist Chapel so that it could become an autonomous church. At the same time, St. John's assumed \$13,984.96 in debt on the Sunset Road educational building so that the church could build a sanctuary. On the same day St. John's also voted to become a participant in a new organization called Baptist Metropolitan Ministries, whose purpose is to "encourage Baptist churches to participate in a program of cooperative Christian Mission Action in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and to coordinate the involvement with one another and with other groups." Eleven churches, white and black, were members of this organization.

The Long Range Development Committee on June 15, 1969 reported and received approval for two recommendations: 1. That the church begin a capital funds campaign in the fall to raise the cost of the building in cash and pledges payable over a three-year period. 2. That the building committee be authorized to employ professional fund raising counsel at a cost of \$15,000.

A gala occasion came on July 19, 1969 when the church observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Broach. Members of the church family and friends totaling 643 honored him at a dinner at Park Center. A festive program was enjoyed, and Dr. Broach was presented with a replica of the corporate seal of the Claude U. Broach Foundation, which the church established in his honor. Initial funds contributed by more than 400 persons came to more than \$3,300. The Foundation was created to provide loans for college students.

Dr. Robert McCaslin, director of the church's capital funds campaign, set up office at the church on October 20, 1969, and the campaign for the new building was soon underway. Harold E. Crawford was named general chairman for the campaign, called the "St. John's Advance Program," and by December 19, 1969, a total of \$514,323.29 had been pledged. These figures represented much work and great generosity on the part of many people. With financial support assured, a contract was signed with the firm of Wilbur, Kendrick, Workman and Warren to complete the architectural plan for the new building.

The church honored Mrs. Ruth Rodgers for over 12 years of ministry to children on April 26, 1970. On May 24, 1970 the church paid tribute to Roberts Lasater for 10 years of service, and on September 20, 1970 to Albert McClanahan for 10 years of service.

Property owned by Kings College and needed for the new building was acquired in June, 1970, and in October of 1970, Laxton Construction Company presented the low bid for the new building. Construction began November 2, 1970.

In other land matters, Mrs. W. E. Outen notified the church in October of 1970 of her decision to leave the 322 Hawthorne Lane property to St. John's in her will. Mrs. Outen was the first church secretary for St. John's, and her loyalty has been inspiring. The Bradford School Corporation, owner of Kings College, deeded to St. John's a small strip of land to round out its property, a further indication of the good spirit which has marked St. John's relationship with its neighboring institutions.

In the spring of 1971 two faithful workers celebrated anniversaries. Mrs. W. E. Ruppelt completed 35 years of service on April 18, 1971, and Mrs. W. J. Wortman completed 25 years of service as volunteer librarian, having built the library into a vital part of the life of St. John's.

The Advance Committee announced a goal of an additional \$50,000 in April, 1971 to meet conditions placed on borrowing for the Youth-Ministries Building. This was to be added to the total of \$515,000 which was the total pledged at the close of the Advance campaign in 1969. Again, the campaign was successful with a total of \$54,595 pledged by Victory Day, and construction of the building moved ahead with W. W. Crymes, Sr. as chairman of the Building Plans committee.

In order to make the new Youth-Ministries Building come alive, the church voted on Sunday, September 26, 1971 to begin a program of day care ministry by making the facilities available to the Department of Social Services for the establishment of a Child Development Center. A Week-Day School for three and four-year olds under the direction of Mrs. Ruth Rodgers was also announced.

The church began moving into the new quarters the last of October, and four church basketball teams began practicing and playing in the gymnasium in December.

A record budget of \$257,815 was adopted for 1972. Gifts in 1971 exceeded the budget by \$11,533, and the surplus was to be applied against the budget for 1972, which was unusually high because a large debt had to be carried pending the receipt of additional pledges on the Advance Program.



Day Care Ministry
In Youth-Ministries Building Facilities

Senior High Basketball Team Practice
In Youth-Ministries Gymnasium



TODAY

Today St. John's stands deeply committed to the Servant Church concept and to the Mission Action program, both enhanced by the completion of the Youth-Ministries Building.

The membership of the church invested heavily of its financial resources in the new building which will enable it to minister to the youth in nearby colleges and medical education programs. However, the building does not serve youth only. Through the day care center, working parents are able to have the assurance that their children are well provided for and are freed to bolster their families' income. Parents will be assisted in the important task of bringing a spiritual dimension to their children's education through the Weekday Church School.

Through the new building the church is also ministering to the physical needs of young people who in today's society have difficulty in finding outlets for energy and opportunities for the development of coordination and physical skills. Through the Mission Action concept, members of St. John's are finding spiritually rewarding opportunities for "face-to-face" service to people with very real human needs. These services include the hospital visitation ministry, tutoring in schools in the St. John's neighborhood and in members' neighborhoods, counseling at the Open House, Nursing Homes visitation, ministry to non-English speaking persons in the community, assistance to Miss Anita Stroud's vital Bible-teaching program for children, work with prisoners, and many other such activities which involve an ever-growing number of people who derive genuine joy from this ministry.

All of this adds up to a deep commitment to be the servant church of Christ in the community where the church stands, and to minister in His name at home and abroad.

Thus, St. John's completes fifty years of achievement and confidently looks forward to the future at this anniversary date.

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

A word of special tribute is due to the women of St. John's. They have made their indelible mark on its history and, particularly in recent years, have helped to determine its direction.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized in April of 1922 with a group of 31, headed by Mrs. L. L. Hackney as the first president. Vice-President was Mrs. M. L. Ross; treasurer, Mrs. J. C. Patton; and secretary, Mrs. J. C. Hutto, who is still making a significant contribution to the women's work.

From the beginning the women were mission-minded. At the second meeting they voted to "support for a session, a girl at South Mountain Institute." This was the beginning of hundreds of such projects.

Mrs. W. R. Cornell served as president in 1928 and 1929 and has remained dedicated to her work. She is today the oldest member of the church at 96 and has passed on her enthusiasm to those who followed her in office.

The women of St. John's were prodigious fund raisers in the dire

financial circumstances of the thirties, selling suppers, magazine subscriptions and Christmas cards. There were aluminum demonstrations at which everyone was paid 25 cents for attending. Prospects sent to the Willys Knight Overland Motor Company who bought cars brought \$10 each into the treasury. And for each one who visited a new funeral parlor downtown, they were paid 25 cents for the treasury! Then there was the constant sale of pure vanilla extract at 25 cents per bottle, netting \$30 per gross. Together these women with their husbands saved the church in those dark days.

As president, Mrs. O. G. Bain helped lead the women into a full-fledged Woman's Missionary Union, reorganizing youth groups at all levels. Under her supervision the first Forward Steps recognition service was held in 1953, called a Coronation, with 19 from Girls Auxiliary participating. Four of this number became Queen Regents. Since that time, under the direction of Mrs. C. L. Alexander, who also served as Mecklenburg Baptist G. A. Director, more than 170 girls have been recognized for various levels of achievement, 23 having reached the highest step. The church has the distinction of having had two young ladies, Frances Gilreath and Donna Browder, complete a sort of "graduate degree step"—Queen-Regent-in-Service.

Under Mrs. J. T. Hasty, the W.M.U. investigated avenues for broader service. As the result of a conversation between Mrs. Hasty and Mrs. R. L. Mathis, who was a guest foreign mission speaker, St. John's was invited to become a pilot church in trying the "Mission Action" concept. Mrs. David Olive was also a key person involved in the Mission Action direction, having researched and started many of the present projects. Under Miss Jo Gwin, St. John's received the formal invitation to begin Mission Action, which she accepted with church approval.

The W.M.U. celebrates its 50 years under Mrs. C. L. Alexander, assisted by Baptist Women Presidents, Mrs. R. L. Newman, Mrs. Paul McGarity and Mrs. Marcus Collier.

ST. JOHN'S STAFF PROFILES

Dr. Claude U. Broach

Senior Minister

A native of Georgia, Dr. Broach grew up in Athens where his parents were members of the faculty of the University of Georgia. He attended Georgia Tech for a year and completed his A.B. at the University of Georgia. He received the Th.M. and the Th.D. degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and was awarded honorary degrees by Mercer University (D.D.) and Belmont Abbey College (L.H.D.) He has served as pastor of Covington Baptist Church in Virginia, Associate Secretary of the Department of Student Work of the Southern Baptist Convention and has been Minister of St. John's since July, 1944. He married Katherine Terry Sellers, and they have three children, Mrs. J. Frank Bragg, Jr., Mrs. J. Sears McGee, and Claude, Jr.

Roberts C. Lasater

Associate Pastor

Born in Durham, Mr. Lasater is a summa cum laude and B.A. graduate of Wake Forest College and holds the B.D. degree from Southern Baptist Semi-

nary. His experience has included employment with the American Tobacco Company, teaching English at Wake Forest, serving as chaplain at Louisville General Hospital, serving as director of the Baptist Student Union at N. C. State College, serving as visiting professor at N. C. State, serving as assistant to the Pastor and director of youth activities at First Baptist Church in Raleigh and interim pastor there before becoming associate pastor at St. John's in January, 1960. He married Harriet Ratcliffe, and they have a daughter, Jean.

Albert B. McClanahan

Minister of Music

Mr. McClanahan is a native of Springfield, Tennessee. He attended Vanderbilt University and received the B.S. degree from Peabody College and the M.S.M. from Southern Baptist Seminary. He also has studied at Eastman School of Music. For seven years he was Minister of Music for First Baptist Church of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and joined the staff of St. John's in 1960. He married the former Betty Jo Martin of Dover, Tennessee, and they have four children, Martin, Mike, Melody and Marcy.

James Anderson, Jr.

Minister to Youth

Mr. Anderson is a native of Taylors, South Carolina and is a graduate of The Citadel, where he played on the basketball, baseball and golf teams. He served in the Infantry in Korea for 18 months, leaving service with the rank of First Lieutenant. He worked three years with an engineering firm in Greenville, South Carolina before entering the ministry. He holds the B.D. and Master of Theology degrees from Southeastern Baptist Seminary. He served as Minister to Youth at Wake Forest Baptist Church in Wake Forest, N. C. before coming to St. John's in October, 1964 as Minister to Youth. He is married to the former Carolyn Ingle, and they have two children, Jill and Jim.

Mrs. Gilliam (Ruth) Rodgers

Director of Children's Work

Mrs. Rodgers is a native of Bethune, South Carolina and graduated from Berry College. She taught in the public schools of South and North Carolina for five years. When her two children, Reginald and Mary, were born she became interested in the children's work at St. John's. In the fall of 1956 she accepted part-time responsibilities for children's work, and in 1957 she joined the staff as a full-time Director of Children's Work.

Miss Cheryl Hamilton

Organist-Music Assistant

Miss Cheryl Hamilton, a native of Missouri, attended MacMurray College and received the B.M. and M.S.M. degrees from Southern Methodist University. She served as organist and choir mistress at First Methodist Church in Marion before coming to St. John's in June, 1969. She went abroad on an organ study tour in the summer of 1971.

CHARTER MEMBERS STILL ON ROLL

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mrs. J. R. Barkalow | Mrs. Theresa P. Nelson |
| Miss Cleo Blackwelder | Mrs. W. C. Patrick |
| Mrs. E. J. Caffrey | Mrs. C. Ray Phifer |
| Mr. Fred S. Conrad | Miss Etta Pittman |
| Mrs. Fred S. Conrad | Mrs. Mary Justice Sherrer |
| Mrs. W. C. Ferguson | Mrs. Lucille H. Pyron |
| Mrs. Charles H. Fortson | Mrs. W. B. Renfrow (non-resident) |
| Mrs. J. C. Hutto | Mr. Richard L. Young |

CALL TO COMMUNION AT ST JOHN'S

The table around which we gather is the Lord's table—it is not ours. We are guests, and He is host at His table. We therefore build no fences of prejudice about our Lord's table but we welcome all who love Him to share with us in the remembrance of His love.

Come to the Lord's table, then, not because you must but because you may. Come not because you are confident of your strength but because you know your weakness. Come not to boast of righteousness and claim Heaven's reward but to confess your sin and to seek Heaven's mercy. Come not to express a prejudice but to seek a Presence.

To all who love Christ and have committed their hearts to Him in discipleship we extend our invitation: Come to the Lord's table.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Steering Committee | Mrs. John T. Hasty, <i>Chairman</i> Dr. Claude U. Broach J. Frank Gilreath |
| Promotion | Mrs. Chandler Arndt |
| Staging | Mrs. L. D. Burkhead, W. W. Crymes, Jr. |
| Music | Al McClanahan |
| Projects Research | Mrs. David Olive |
| Founders | E. T. Anderson |
| History | Kenneth Sanford, <i>Chairman</i> Bill Burton Edwin R. Johnson Mrs. Joe Patterson Bonson Hobson Roy Kendrick |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A note of appreciation is extended to the following persons for their assistance in the preparation of this publication: Dr. Claude U. Broach, Roberts Lasater, Al McClanahan, James Anderson, Mrs. W. E. Ruppelt, Mrs. E. C. Bolt, Mrs. John T. Hasty, Mrs. C. H. Fortson, Hazel B. Steele, John Parker, Mrs. Charles L. Alexander, Joseph C. Bowles, and Mrs. J. K. Sanford.

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Young, Richard L.

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