

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

Winter, 2023

Spring Tour, 2023

Exploring Our Heritage! Montreat and Asheville, April 14-15



We are really excited about our two-day tour this spring! On Friday afternoon we will be given a great introduction to the riches of the **Presbyterian Heritage Center** at Montreat. The Center occupies the purpose-built archives building on Georgia Terrace that was constructed for the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. After reunion it became the Montreat branch of the Presbyterian Historical Society. In 2006 it was decided to close the facility and transfer records either to the PHS in Philadelphia or to Columbia Seminary in Decatur GA.

However, many people, including our society, felt it was important to maintain a center for Presbyterian history in the Montreat Conference Center. Over the years the facility had been a place of education for conference-goers as well as a place for historical research. Artifacts from churches and missions, private collections of letters, other materials for research, and many books were still there, and fundraising began for the creation of a center for the study of our Presbyterian Heritage. The center is independent from any one denomination. It collects and preserves records and materials of all Presbyterian and Reformed Church denominations. It also is the repository for records of the conference center, which will be celebrating its 125th anniversary.

Director Ron Vinson, the board, staff, and dedicated volunteers have done a great job of building up the Center and providing a vibrant place for learning about our Presbyterian Heritage. We should all support their efforts.

While there we will learn about their many printed and manuscript sources, photographs, and the tools for research into Presbyterian history that they have been developing. We'll hear about original research done into the work



of an early woman photographer. The exhibits at the PHC are one of their best tools for education. In 2021 Dr. Nancy Midgette spoke to our society on

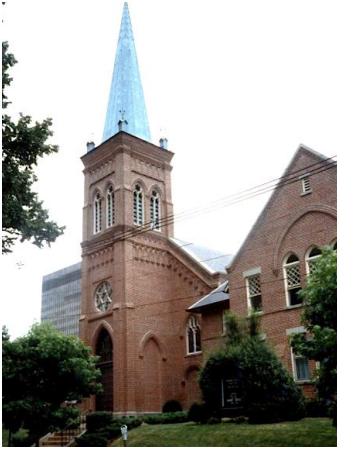
“Native Americans and Presbyterian Missionaries,” the subject of an exhibit she created for the PHC. We'll also have a behind-the-scenes tour.

An important point is that if you would like to spend more time at the Presbyterian Heritage Center, it will be open both Friday morning and Saturday afternoon.

Later in the afternoon we'll also visit the **Chapel of the Prodigal Son** on the Montreat College campus to commune with the large fresco by Ben Long.

Saturday morning we will leave for **Warren Wilson College** in the beautiful Swannanoa Valley. Established by the Women's Board of Home Missions (PCUSA) in 1894 as the Asheville Farm School, it became a junior college in 1942 and a four-year liberal arts college in 1966. It remains dedicated to “learning by doing” with a universal work program and emphasis on original student research. Environmental sustainability is of key importance.

First Presbyterian Church in Asheville will be our next stop. Founded in 1794, the congregation grew along with the city and has many interesting stories to tell, especially when the small town boomed with the coming of the railroad. Asheville became a resort for the wealthy and a therapeutic health center. The Great Depression actually saved many of its beautiful buildings.



The registration form for this trip is on p. 7 of this newsletter. We hope you can come!

Meet our new Newsletter Editor!

We are thrilled that Rebecca Turner has agreed to take on the task of putting together and sending out our newsletter, as well as serving as an

appointed member of our Board of Directors. Rebecca retired last fall from White Memorial Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, where she served for 28½ years, first as the Pastoral Assistant for Congregational Care, Outreach, and Music and then as Pastoral Assistant to the Minister. She was described as “an anchor and linchpin for both the staff and members of White Memorial.”



The eldest of 9 children, Rebecca grew up in Lincolnton, NC, where she still has lots of family. In 1999 she and her mother joined our tour of Lincolnton and Lincoln County at the invitation of Charles Latimer. After graduating from high school, she served in the U.S. Army for 20 years, stationed in Germany and stateside assignments as a personnel records specialist, then a dental hygienist, then as manager of dental clinics! We hope she won't be too bored by our newsletter!!

Historic Churches Celebrating Anniversaries in 2023

This year, our society is recognizing a dozen churches for having reached a significant anniversary of their founding. Representatives plan to bring recognition and sincere congratulations from the North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society to the following churches celebrating anniversaries in 2023:

200 years

Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, Oxford
First Presbyterian Church, Washington

150 years

First Presbyterian Church, Wadesboro
First Presbyterian Church, Monroe
First Presbyterian Church, Hickory
Flat Branch Presbyterian Church, Bunnlevel in Harnett County

100 years

Flat Rock Presbyterian Church, Mt. Airy
El Bethel Presbyterian Church, Eden
Hepzibah ARP Church, Bessemer City
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Raleigh
Ernest Myatt Presbyterian Church, Garner
White Oak Presbyterian Church, Fremont
Several churches that were missed during Covid shutdowns will also be visited this year:
Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church, Durham (100 years in 2021)

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Whiteville (100 years in 2020)
 Dothan Presbyterian Church, Maxton (100 years in 2020)
 William and Mary Hart Presbyterian Church, Leggett in Edgecombe County (100 years in 2021)
 Community Presbyterian Church, Pinehurst (100 years in 2021)
 Lake Waccamaw Presbyterian Church (100 years in 2021)

This anniversary year is a great time for each of you to begin or update the history of your church. It is truly worth recording the heritage on which you build. The records and the memories are too easily lost. Make scrapbooks of clippings about members, take lots of pictures, and celebrate the Good News at every opportunity. Congratulations to each congregation.

Historic Asheville area Church Ends Ministry

Oak Forest Presbyterian Church in Buncombe County has closed after a 150-year history of service to the Sand Hill Road area of southwest Asheville. The final service celebrating worship and the love of the congregation was held on January 15, 2023, ending a ministry that started in 1873. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is assisting members as they transfer to other congregations in the area.

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The Church Triumphant

In the past year we have lost some of our older members whom many of you will remember: Mary Boyer, Sheila Brewer, John Gordon, Connie Hudson, and Esther G. Wall. Our sincere sympathies go to their families.

Meeting of the Board of Directors January 23, 2023

On January 28, 2023, Sam Martin, President, opened the board meeting with prayer. Meeting again on zoom, all the board members were present except Sarah Alexander. The agenda included hearing from committee chairs and planning for the spring and fall meetings.

John Myhre, Treasurer, reported that the accounts had suffered from the fluctuating stock market. The full treasurer's report will be attached to the minutes.

Don McLeod, Program Chair, confirmed that the society's annual spring meeting will be in Montreat, April 14 -15, 2023. On Friday we will tour the Heritage Center and the Chapel of the Prodigal Son, both in Montreat. Saturday morning, we will visit First Presbyterian Church in Asheville. Rev. Dr. Byron Wade, General Presbyter of Western Carolina Presbytery, will be invited to the meeting. Accommodations in the area will be recommended. The fall meeting will be at West Raleigh Presbyterian Church on October 14, 2023.

Peter Fish, Awards Chairman, suggested creating a two-tiered book award: the book would remain as is; brochures or pamphlets added. This addition might encourage smaller churches to submit materials they create for celebrations. Peter will contact the Historical Society in Philadelphia about brochures. Lois Stickell, author of the *History of First Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC*, will be invited to the spring meeting to receive recognition for her book.

Sally MacLeod Owens, Historian, had an inquiry from Lisa Brown, whose family with long time connections to the church wanted to plant a tree at Little River church so that they could place their mother's ashes under the tree.

The list of churches that Sam Martin visits across the state as they celebrate major anniversaries will be attached to the minutes. Barbara Cain has asked for the society to find someone to take over her long-held position as newsletter editor. The society will contact Rebecca Turner, former assistant to the pastor at White Memorial Presbyterian Church, to see if she will become our editor, as a paid, part time position. In addition to editing the newsletter, the position would include keeping records and updating the membership lists as John Myhre gets membership dues each year.

The date for the next Board meeting has not yet been determined. John Myhre closed the meeting with prayer.

History Awards given by NCPHS

For fifty-five years, the Society has recognized meritorious books or projects on North Carolina Presbyterian church history completed during the previous calendar year. The 2023 Annual Book Award accompanied by a small stipend is conferred on the author of the best book published during 2022. Published church histories include such subjects as church founding, building(s), leaders, governance, worship and the arts, Christian education, missions, community relations and a bibliography of sources used.

An additional award category has been established to recognize the best printed pamphlet(s) which may include one or some or all elements found in a published church history book. Pamphlets may also report on a particular church history project with illustrations. Subjects included in such pamphlets or guides may report on the establishment of a church history room or illustrated historical display, works of art or drama featuring church history or event(s), a study of a church graveyard or a church plot in an off-site cemetery.

The Society's spring 2023 meeting will recognize Lois Stickell, the talented author of a monumental book: *200 Years in the Heart of Charlotte. A History of First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte* (privately printed, 355 pp, 2021). The work is well researched, carefully documented, and lavishly illustrated. It provides a comprehensive history of the church from its founding to the present day in peace and wars, economic prosperity and depressions, all in the midst of a village transformed into a great city. The book is an uplifting story of a flagship Presbyterian church situated in the urban core of the Old North State. It is the story of a church that resisted the attractions of suburbia and remained as a lamp of hope in a busy metropolis "where cross the crowded ways of life."

Church history books published during 2022 and printed pamphlets issued during 2022 are eligible for recognition at the Society's spring 2023 meeting to be held at Montreat, North Carolina on April 15, 2023. A copy of a book or pamphlet on the subject of North Carolina church history should be sent to the Society's Awards Chair: Peter G. Fish, 1006 Urban Avenue, Durham, NC 27701.

Fall Meeting in Hillsborough October 8, 2022

Last October we held our fall meeting in the Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, where we were greeted by their pastor, Rev. Alex Fischer. Built in 1814, the structure replaced a Church of England sanctuary where a Provincial Congress, three legislative sessions, and a state convention to ratify the US Constitution had met between 1775 and 1788. The new Presbyterian congregation (1816) continued to be active in education, politics, and the general welfare of the community.

Today's congregation is smaller but still active in reaching out to the community. Mrs.



Cam Cover spoke to us about several activities in which the church is involved. In 2020 the Session appointed a working group to report on the history of race relations in Hillsborough Presbyterian Church from its beginning to

the present day. This comprehensive and very well researched report is available on their website.

Our main speaker of the morning was our own program chair, Don McLeod. His topic was "Presbyterians and the Founding of the First Public University." Presbyterians had tried to start a university during the colonial period, but the Crown did not approve one that would be Presbyterian in nature.

Later, with the leadership of several notable Presbyterians, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was established by the state General Assembly. Prominent sites on the campus are dedicated to Samuel E. McWhorter, a Presbyterian minister and educator who first proposed the state university and William R. Davie, a Presbyterian and Revolutionary War hero who marshalled the successful university petition. The early university presidents and faculty were all Presbyterians educated at the College of New Jersey, soon renamed Princeton University, Princeton was a Scots-Irish institution strongly influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment.



After lunch the society's annual business meeting was held without President Sam Martin, who was out with Covid. Barbara Cain called the meeting to order. Minutes were read, the treasurer's report was handed out, and the passing of three members was noted. Former President John Goodman has moved out of state and will no longer be on the board. Program Chair Don McLeod announced that the Spring Tour will be held on April 14-15, 2023. It will be centered in Montreat, with a visit to the Presbyterian Heritage Center there. The tour will also include First Presbyterian Church in Asheville. Since Barbara Cain is stepping down as newsletter editor, the Board of Directors will be searching for someone to take over this work.

Directions to The Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat

From I-40, exit onto NC Hwy 9 North toward Black Mountain. Follow Hwy. 9 to Montreat where it becomes Assembly Drive. The Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat is located at 318 Georgia Terrace. The main entrance is indicated by the flags at the front of Spence Hall, which has Historical Foundation carved over the door. For more information call (828)6556. Parking may be available adjacent to the Center, across the street at the Anderson Auditorium parking lot or along Lake Susan.



Photo of the entrance to the Presbyterian Heritage Center.



Lodging: The beautiful Assembly Inn at Montreat waived their usual requirement for a two-night stay and have given us a rate of \$105 plus tax per room. Buffet dinner Friday night will be \$12 and breakfast the next morning will cost \$10. For reservations, call (828) 419-9844 after Monday, March 13.

**North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society
2023 Spring Tour**

Friday, April 14

Lunch (On your own)

- 1:30 - 2:00 p.m. Registration at the Presbyterian Heritage Center, 318 Georgia Terrace, Montreat, NC 28757 (828-669-6556)
- 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Presbyterian Heritage Center, Ronald W. Vinson, Executive Director
Resources available for research
Exhibits
Presentation on original research project
Tour of facility
- 4:00 p.m. Visit Church of the Prodigal Son at Montreat College
View the beautiful Fresco painted by renowned artist Ben Long
- 5:00 p.m. Hotel Check In
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner

Saturday, April 15

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Drive to Warren Wilson College, 701 Warren Wilson Rd, Swannanoa, NC 28778
- 9:00 a.m. History and Tour of the Campus
- 10:30 a.m. First Presbyterian Church Asheville, 40 Church St, Asheville, NC 28801
Welcoming and History of Church (local church member)
- 11:45 a.m. Catered Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Depart/Visit Asheville sites (optional)

Registration Fee \$25.00, includes morning coffee and lunch on Saturday. Please send the form below and a check (payable to NCPHS) by **April 8** to: NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804. If you have questions, contact our Program Chairman Don McLeod, donaldcmcleod@gmail.com, or (910) 695-5550.

Registration Form for Spring Tour, April 14 15, 2023

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **Email:** _____

Registrations: _____ @ \$ 25.00 = \$ _____ Transportation needed? _____

Dues if included (Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125): \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____ Please send this form **by April 8** with a check (payable to NCPHS) to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804.

If you can do so, please put the following announcement in your church bulletin or newsletter:

The North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society's Spring Tour will be in Montreat and Asheville on Friday and Saturday, April 14 & 15. We will spend time exploring the research resources of the Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat and will visit the First Presbyterian Church in Asheville (1794).

Registration fee is \$25. The schedule, registration form, and address are on the Historical Society's website at www.ncphsociety.org, or contact (910) 695-5550 for a copy.

REMINDER

If you haven't paid your 2023 dues yet, please send them in. The form is on p. 7.

**** Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125 ****

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society
P.O. Box 20804
Raleigh, NC 27619-0804

Spring Tour, Friday - Saturday, April 14 & 15
Montreat North Carolina
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