

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

Summer, 2019

Raleigh, Saturday, October 12

Davie Street Presbyterian Church – 151 Years! Celebrating the History of African-American Presbyterians



Davie Street Church from Person Street.

Thus fall we will be meeting at Davie Street Presbyterian Church, a very historic church in the heart of Raleigh. In 1872 it was only the second Presbyterian church to be organized in Wake County. When African American Presbyterians began to form their own churches after the Civil War, it was often with the help of missionaries from the North. In 1868, 150 years ago, the idea of establishing an all-black Presbyterian church in Raleigh was explored, but it was felt there was still too much hostility. Instead, Elder Godfrey Rainey of the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen and his wife established a church school on the corner of Davie and Haywood streets. They were joined in teaching by H. Spencer, a free-born African American. The focus was the prescribed curriculum for NC schools, plus Bible studies, industrial education, and music.

According to Elizabeth Reid Murray in her history of Wake County, the Congregational missionary teachers at Washington School allowed

the Presbyterians to hold monthly church services there in early 1872. Regular worship began later that year, probably at the school. In the city directory it was first listed as the “Presbyterian Church, Colored” and then as the “First Colored Presbyterian Church.” Some years later, land for a church on the corner of Davie and Person streets was secured from the Person Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Dr. L. E. Fairley, formerly pastor of Kinston White Rock Presbyterian Church and head of the State Colored Normal School (now Fayetteville State University) directed the building of the brick structure.

Davie Street Church has long been an important church in the African-American community in Raleigh and statewide. After 1887 it was in the Cape Fear Presbytery in the Catawba Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Since reunion it has become an integral part of the Presbytery of New Hope, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Just this year it has completed a sizeable addition to the church, with a new Fellowship Hall. In November they will celebrate their postponed 150th Homecoming!

The pastor of Davie Street is the Rev. Dr. Byron Wade. Originally from California, he earned his Masters degrees from PSCE and Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, and his Doctorate of Ministry from McCormick Seminary in Chicago. He has filled numerous positions in New Hope Presbytery, and nationally served as Vice-Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA). He is pictured here with his wife Regina and their son Andrew. ♦



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April Board Meeting

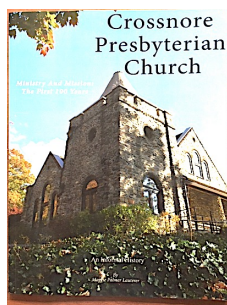
After dinner in Charlotte, the officers of the society held a brief meeting at the Clarion Hotel. After opening prayer, the minutes of their January meeting and the treasurer's report were distributed and approved. Brief reports followed by various officers.

As the book award this year for the first time included a check for \$100, Barbara Cain moved that a similar check be given to Peter Fish, whose remarkable history of First Presbyterian Church in Durham won the award last year. The motion was seconded and approved. It was agreed that guidelines for this award will have to be drawn up, and Connie Hudson, Sally Owens, and Barbara Cain were appointed a committee for this purpose.

Plans for the fall meeting were discussed, although the program chairman was unable to be there. Barbara Cain agreed to ask Davie Street Presbyterian Church in Raleigh to host the meeting and several ideas for the program were put forward. The meeting ended with comments about the very interesting tour this year, and with a closing prayer.

News from the PHS in Philadelphia

If your church has original records that need to be preserved, you can apply to the Presbyterian Historical Society for a [Heritage Preservation Grant](#) of up to \$500 for digitizing the records. Applications are due October 31. PC(USA) congregations with less than 250 members and more than 50 years of history are strongly encouraged to apply. Further information can be found at their website, www.history.pcusa.org/services.



2019 Church History Award given for history of Crossnore Presbyterian

At our Spring Meeting in April, President John Goodman presented the Rev. Margaret (Maggie) Lauterer with the Society's award for an excellent church history. Maggie Lauterer's family had been a part of the church since before its official beginning in 1918. However, the early church records had been destroyed by fire, and information had to be found in other sources, especially through interviews. The result is a very readable book that covers the history of the community as well as the church.

In January our Executive Board decided to continue giving award certificates for worthy church histories or history projects, but to add a monetary award for excellence when merited. This year a \$100 check was awarded to Rev. Lauterer for her book, and the board voted to give a check retrospectively to Dr. Peter Fish, who won the award last year for his very scholarly history of First Presbyterian Church in Durham.

If you know of a recently published church history or a completed church history project that you feel is worthy of consideration for an award, please send the book or a description of the project to Awards Chairman Mrs. Connie Hudson, 501 Whitaker Mill Rd., Apt. 406A, Raleigh, NC 27608; ibchudson@webtv.com. Awards may given either in the spring or the fall for works published or completed in the previous year or in a recent year. ♦

Together, Apart, and Together Again – African American Presbyterians in North Carolina

CHURCHES.	Colo. Comm.	Colo. Comm.	Colo. Comm.	Total Comm.
Marion, S. S., and Siloam, S. S.	3		1	23
Estele Creek, P., and Pleasant Hill, P.	13	13	93	363
Lincolnton and Long Creek, S. S.	4	4	31	117
Sugar Creek, P.	5		10	125
Hopewell, P.	11	2	72	276
Concord Town, P.	56	13	65	244
Philadelphia, S. S.	17	4	17	162
Morganton, P.	5		70	271
Franklin, P. E., and Ebenezer, P. E.	3	3	1	78
Concord, P., and Shiloh, P.	2	1		80
Black Creek, P.	5		4	42
Prospect, P., and Bethel, P.	15	2	17	216
Unity, P.	4	1	11	43
Franklin, P., and Jopps, S. S.	30	4	76	167
Hendersonville, S. S.	10	1	50	280
	1		10	58
	21	4	16	95
	1	5	4	44
		2	20	40
				15

Excerpt from *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, v. 15 (1859), Statistical Reports, Synod of NC, Concord Presbytery. The third column shows the number of colored communicants. The fourth shows the total number of communicants.

Did you know that before the Civil War most Presbyterian churches in North Carolina had African American communicants? After the Nat Turner slave rebellion in 1832, it was made illegal for slaves to assemble on their own, so those who went to church went with their masters. Although they sat in the balcony or in a separate section of the church, many were baptized, were catechized, and became communing members of Presbyterian churches, although not voting members. From reports made to the General Assembly in 1860, almost 15% of communicants in the Synod of North Carolina were “colored,” both slaves and free blacks.

At the end of the war, some former slaves continued for a while to worship in their same churches. Until at least 1874 the roster of the [First] Presbyterian Church in Raleigh included colored members. Most, however, wanted separate self-governing congregations. Some may have joined the Baptists or the African Methodist Episcopal church, which was already a thriving African American denomination organizing churches and schools in the South. Others were steeped in the Reformed faith and wished to remain Presbyterian. In some cases, members of white Presbyterian churches donated land or supplies to help their former members build a separate Presbyterian church nearby. But most of the work of organizing Presbyterian churches and schools for the freed slaves was done by Presbyterian missionaries from the North, organizing churches in North Carolina as early as 1864. Presbyterian teachers who were sent would teach both school and Sunday School.

Education has always been very important to Presbyterians. For many years almost every African American congregation had a school attached, usually taught by the pastor. Biddle Institute was founded in 1867 in Charlotte under the auspices of Catawba Presbytery expressly to educate preachers, catechists, and teachers among the freed people of the South. It has now become Johnson C. Smith University. Scotia Seminary, founded in Concord in 1867 as a school for newly freed young women, became Barber-Scotia College.

In North Carolina, African American presbyteries in the PCUSA were formed as early as 1866 – Catawba, Yadkin, and then Cape Fear – and the Catawba Synod in 1887. However, these all black governing bodies continued to be under the administration of the white Freedmen’s Board in the national church until 1923, when it became the Mission for Colored People under National Missions. The Catawba Synod was the leader in achieving status as a freestanding synod in 1952 and in working for integration in the national church structure. It was also significant in the Civil Rights movement, especially in Charlotte.

Some African American Presbyterian churches chose to remain in the Southern denomination. In 1963 there were four in the PCUS Synod of North Carolina: Amay James in Charlotte (dissolved 1986); Beulah in North Wilkesboro; Dellabrook in Winston-Salem; and College Heights in Fayetteville. Following reunion of the northern and southern branches of the Presbyterian Church, completely new presbyteries were drawn that then became part of the Mid-Atlantic Synod. The reorganization was important but brought a certain sense of loss on both sides. Reunion brought North Carolina Presbyterians back together again, but only after over 120 years on separate paths. It is important to appreciate and celebrate both our mutual heritage and our separate histories. ♦

An important source for this article was *The History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies in the Predecessor Denominations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, published by the Office of the General Assembly in 1996. It can be found online with a Google search for “All black governing bodies” and is well worth reading.

A Great Tour Last April in Charlotte!

(photos by Barbara Cain)

This year's Spring Tour was a real education for us on the historic importance given to education in the Presbyterian Church and on its past, present, and future in the Charlotte area. At each stop we learned so much about the work of the church.

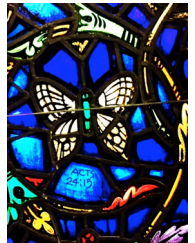
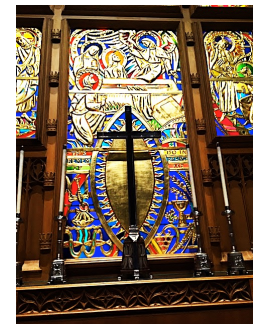


We began with a visit to Johnson C. Smith University, founded by Presbyterians in 1867 as The Freedmen's College of North Carolina. In their large modern library the college archivist, Brandon Lunsford, gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation on the school's history, how it's doing now, and interesting personal papers and photos they have in the archives. Lunch was then brought, and some of us sat outside to eat on the patio.

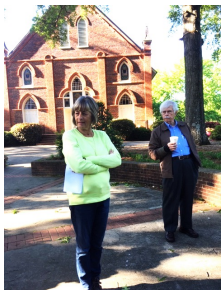


We then drove across town to Queens University, where we met in the Belk Chapel on campus. It was Alumni Day, but despite her busy schedule, we were greeted by President Pamela Davies, who was about to retire from her post. The past and present college chaplains then told us about the ways that Queens is still influenced by its Presbyterian heritage. Their archivist had put out a number of historical photographs and documents and talked to us about them. We then visited one of their original buildings, Burwell Hall.

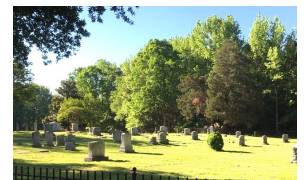
When we were leaving Queens the sky was pretty black, and we just made it into nearby Myers Park Presbyterian Church before the deluge. Michael Aycock welcomed us and took us on a tour of their extensive structure. The sanctuary has a stunning golden and stained glass window behind the altar and stained glass windows full of images from Scripture. The congregation has always been very active in the community and in Christian education.



Friday evening we gathered at the Smokehouse for an excellent meal. We were joined there by the Rev. Margaret Lauterer and her husband Zack Allen. Maggie was a well-known TV broadcaster in Asheville before she went into the ministry. She then served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Burnsville. Last year she published a beautiful history of the Crossnore Presbyterian Church in Avery County where she grew up. After dinner the NCPHS president, Rev. John Goodman, presented her with our 2019 book award (see p. 2).

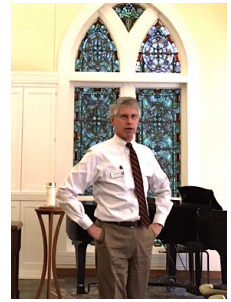


Saturday morning we met Mrs. Susan Grills at Sharon Presbyterian Church. They have a campus of 23 acres, including the original building of 1831, a new more contemporary sanctuary, a large cemetery, a weekday school, a chapel where a Korean congregation worships, and the site of the former Sharon community school. In a portion of the cemetery, it was moving to find this marker: **"Here Rest God's Children Who During Their Mortal Lives Were Slaves And Members of the Sharon Church From 1831-1860 Who Now Are Free With Our Lord."**





One corner of the Sharon Church property is now the campus of the Charlotte Branch of Union Presbyterian Seminary. Beth Ferguson, Assistant to the Dean, welcomed us, and Dean Richard Boyce came to speak to us in the chapel. It was a real treat to have him talk to us informally about the history and mission and future of the Charlotte branch of the seminary. Unfortunately we did not then have time to tour the buildings, but we had been given a much better understanding of the challenges faced by the seminary, including more second-career students, greater diversity, and the need for distance education.



Our travels in Charlotte then took us to Covenant Presbyterian, where we were met by Martha Isaacs. She told us about the history and missions of the church, organized from the merger of Second Presbyterian and Westminster in 1947. As a very large church, Covenant supports a great many local and worldwide missions. Their latest is investment in an affordable housing project being built nearby and the building of a 24-hour daycare center open for children of night-shift workers as well as day workers. We also enjoyed seeing their impressive Gothic sanctuary, stained glass windows, and carved wooden pulpit.



Caldwell Presbyterian was our next stop, and what an amazing place it is. Rev. John Cleghorn greeted us, told us a bit about the church today, and showed us videos about the church seven years ago when it almost died and was revived by the diverse community around it. Now a diverse congregation of about 250, it strives in both worship and action to be a compassionate community and to live the statement on the bulletin, "God Invites. We Welcome. All." In one area quiet



spaces are provided to anyone for prayer, reading, inspiration, and for leaving written petitions, confessions, or thanksgivings. A capital campaign is underway to convert its large education building into affordable housing. And this summer the sanctuary has been repainted, stained glass cleaned and protected, rug and cushions cleaned, and pews sanded. The videos about Caldwell and also videos of their Gospel Choir can easily be found on YouTube and are well worth watching.

Lunch at Caldwell was provided by the Community Culinary School of Charlotte, a nonprofit providing adults with workforce training. After a brief business meeting and closing prayer, some of our group went on to visit the Old Settlers' Cemetery in central Charlotte. It was the first municipal burial ground and many prominent people were laid to rest there, with graves dating from 1776. It is a restful square with lovely large trees, across from First Presbyterian Church. ♦



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Connections: It was interesting that Burwell Hall at Queens is dedicated to Margaret Anna Burwell, who with her husband Robert founded the Academy for Young Ladies in Hillsborough. Established in 1837, it was one of the earliest schools for girls in the state. Robert Burwell was the Presbyterian minister in Hillsborough, and Anna Burwell, who was energetic and well educated, managed the school and taught classes along with her husband despite having 12 children of her own. The young ladies were given a broad course of academic studies. In 1857 they moved to Charlotte to open the Charlotte Female Institute, which has now grown into Queens University. They were the directors there until Anna died in 1871. Robert and his son then moved to Raleigh to open Peace Institute, a Presbyterian school for women planned before the Civil War but not opened until 1872. A portrait of Anna Burwell hangs in Burwell Hall at Queens. ♦



Church shown from Davie Street, showing parking lot behind the church.

**North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society
2019 Fall Meeting
Raleigh, NC**

Saturday, October 12

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 9:30 – 10:15 | Registration, coffee, and social time, Davie Street Presbyterian Church
300 E. Davie Street, Raleigh, NC 27601 |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | Greetings and opening prayer, President John Goodman
Welcome to Davie Street by the Rev. Dr. Byron A. Wade
Music by the Davie Street Choir
History of the church, presented by members |
| 11:15 – 11:45 | Comments by Dr. Robert J. Cain on the history of African-American
Presbyterians before and after the Civil War. |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30 – 1:15 | Business meeting |
| 1:15 | Adjourn |

Motels: If you wish to stay the night before or after the meeting, there are numerous motels in Raleigh. There also are many Airbnb homes in the area.

Registration fee is \$16. This includes coffee and refreshments Saturday morning and lunch. Please send the form below and check (payable to NCPHS) by October 5 to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804. If you have questions, please contact our secretary, Flo Durway, 919-977-8897, floanddan74@gmail.com.

Registration, Fall Meeting, October 12, 2019

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Registrations: _____ @ \$16.00 = \$ _____

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

Total enclosed: \$ _____ Please send this form with your check (made out to NCPHS) **by Oct. 5** 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 will hold its Fall Meeting on **Saturday, Oct. 12**, at **Davie Street Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, N.C.** We'll be celebrating the very interesting 151-year history of Davie St. and the early history of African-American Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina. Registration is \$16, including morning coffee and lunch. The schedule, registration form, and address are on our website at www.ncphsociety.org, or contact our secretary, Flo Durway, 919-977-8897, floanddan74@gmail.com.

**** If you haven't paid your 2019 dues yet, please send them with the registration form. Individual \$15
Family \$20; Individual Life Membership \$125. ****

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

Fall Meeting: Saturday, October 12, at Davie St. Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, NC.

Celebrating the History of African American Presbyterians!

See articles on pp. 1 & 3. Registration form is on p. 7.