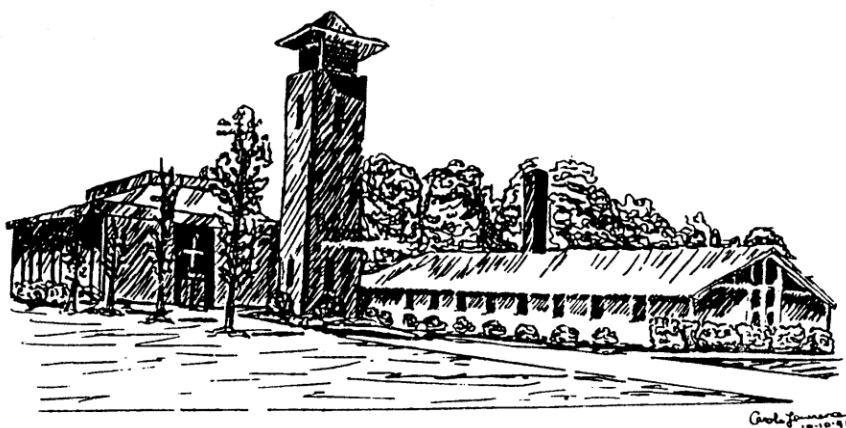


Historical Highlights
First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
1609 East Ash Street
Goldsboro, North Carolina



Celebrating 100 Years
1912 - 2012



Early meeting place of the church in downtown Goldsboro.



The congregation gathered on the steps of the "old" church at 213 East Ashe St., circa 1932.

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This history was compiled by members of the 100th Anniversary Committee: Phil Ham, A. W. Griffin, Jr., and Mary Anne Cowley, with assistance from Norma Griffin, Church Historian, and Ronnie Thompson who prepared the copy.

Historical Highlights
First Christian Church
Goldsboro, North Carolina
1911 - 1958

The following historical essay is taken from Mill Creek Story by Dr. Charles Crossfield Ware, State Secretary for the Christian Churches in North Carolina, May 20, 1959. The essay has been edited and information has been added for this history. Edits and information added are enclosed in [brackets].

GOLDSBORO

This coastal plains town was incorporated [in 1847]. It was named for [Major Matthew T. Goldsborough], a civil engineer of the railroad which occasioned this city's rise.

A Gazetteer issued more than a century ago, has:

"Goldsborough, a post village, capital of Wayne County, N. C. . . . the first house was built in 1841. About the year 1848 it began to improve rapidly, and is now one of the most flourishing places in the State. The public buildings are new and remarkably fine . . . three newspapers are published in the village, which has a flourishing seminary for each sex. Population in 1853 about 1500."

Pioneer railroad development made of Goldsboro, eastern North Carolina's most important early terminal. Three destructive fires, September 4, 1859, October 14, 1871, and November, 1884 forced new improved building. A certain historical prominence came to it with Sherman's military concentrations there in 1865. Since the war, conditions through the years have favored steady commercial growth. Establishment of religion was slow. Bill Sharpe says that Rev. John N. Andrews related his personal observation of Goldsboro, "that in 1849, a census showed only seven Christians in the village."

There were Disciples of Christ in the Goldsboro hinterland from the founding of that city, but they made no sustained attempt for the first twenty-nine years to plant their cause in that center. David H. Miller, a Disciple preacher, lived in Goldsboro from 1851 to 1885. John J. Harper said of him that he "was not an educated man . . . but was a plain, unpretentious man of strong faith and great fervency of spirit . . . a poor man in earthly estate with a family dependent on his labor for support, hence he has very little time to devote to books." Miller had a Free Will Baptist background, but was a loyal Disciple for the last thirty-eight years of his life. He lived from 1810 to 1885; was born in New Bern and he died in Goldsboro.

In 1875 William A. Brand, formerly of Farmville, lived in Goldsboro. He was a loyal member from the old Antioch, (Farmville) Church. He considered that Goldsboro was a good town in which to start a church of his faith. He led in buying a two-acre lot on time for four hundred dollars. On it stood a new, unplastered dwelling, size 18x30 feet, with six windows and two doors. It was on Hall Street, east of the cemetery, in a part of Goldsboro earlier known as Webbtown. Brand fitted up the small house for worship, had David H. Miller and others to speak in it on Lord's day, and prayer meeting was held each Friday evening. No Bible School was started. He appealed for help. Evidently sufficient funds were not given, for the Goldsboro mission, which was reported in the Disciples' Annual Minutes from 1875 to 1882, disappeared from that record. They first reported twelve members, then only six. Dr. Frank W. Dixon in 1875 joined hands with William A. Brand and appealed for the establishment of the cause in Goldsboro. He begged for adequate gifts. They never came, which occasioned his confession: "We are thoroughly satisfied that the Disciples of North Carolina as a general thing are not a missionary people." Dixon admitted that there were noble exceptions to this rule, to whom he appealed: "to inaugurate and sustain a mission in the town of Goldsboro for the year 1876." Further, he said: "We have consulted several of our thinking and observing brethren, and the impression is that, if we will concentrate our missionary efforts at some one point, we will make more impression and accomplish more decided good for the Master's cause than by scattering the labor, as we have been heretofore doing."

When the Woman's Missionary Service was first organized in the Statewide group at the Disciple's annual convention at Wheat Swamp in October, 1876, the adequate support of the Goldsboro mission was given urgently as an incentive to such organization.

The years rolled on until the summer of 1911, when some Disciples formerly of Greenville, having located in Goldsboro, asked C. C. Ware, then pastor at Greenville, N. C., to hold a short meeting at Goldsboro and make a Disciples' survey of the city to the end of discovering a nucleus for a church. A pioneer layman in this was R. L. Hill, an ardent Disciple with a large family of like faith. The Free Will Baptist church was kindly offered for the evening gatherings, and the days were used in searching and building a dependable nucleus. People of other communions were most friendly from the start. Ware was entertained in the home of such a friend, where the family also attended the services and otherwise personally contributed to the success of them. *The Carolina Evangel* was sent the roster of names of Disciples discovered in Goldsboro, amounting to about a score, and through the State paper was thus visualized the opportunity awaiting the Disciples' cooperative development there.

Early in 1912 the group began meeting in homes for prayer and communion and the church actually began. Among those earliest members were Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Hill, Thomas A. Henley, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Forbes, J. H. Moore, the Thorntons, and the Cogdells. A revival was held in June, 1912, in the Kit Holt building, corner, Center and Ashe Streets [now Circle Tire and Gas], by D. W. Arnold and J. M. Perry. After this, 64 members were enrolled. The congregation used a hall over Epstein's clothing store [later Woolworths, now a restaurant], and later one over Nash Brothers' Printery [Center Street]. In September, 1916, J. A. Taylor located as pastor, when services were held at first in the old home on East Ashe Street, later in the Fraternal Hall on John Street [over Davis Grocery - corner of John and Mulberry Streets]. In the fall of 1918, their lot on East Ashe Street was acquired, and on May 11, 1919, their initial building was dedicated by George L. Snively, with J. A. Taylor, pastor.

Taylor in October, 1920, reported: "Our State Service has spent \$1300 at Goldsboro in the past four years and made it possible to build the church home, buy a parsonage, and furnish them, making a property worth \$40,000." Deed to the site was given on March 9, 1915, by L. H. Reeves to the trustees: Charles Lutes, W. W. Ezzell, Thomas A. Henley, Richard I. Thornton, and D. W. Arnold.

During the ministry of L. M. Omer, 1923-1926, the church gave a new car to the pastor, also sent him and his wife on a trip to the Holy Land. [Omer and his wife were the first to organize a daily Vacation Bible School open to children of all churches.]

In one respect there was financial hard sledding. The original building debt was of long continuance. Finally during the extended ministry of Olin E. Fox, 1935-1944 it was liquidated. On January 24, 1939, the last mortgage note was burned. This was almost twenty years after the jubilant pledges, more than sufficient to retire the building obligation, had been recorded on their first dedication day. In 1941, an adjoining lot with dwelling on it, on the [west] side was bought, giving the church a total frontage of 110 feet, on "a fine wide street, one of the very best church locations in Goldsboro."

In 1943 the church had 20 stars on its service flag. Moreover Seymour-Johnson Airbase was in operation there bringing many new families to the community. A Disciple Chaplain at this Base was John W. Reeves.

Their Church School with excellent leadership grew until on Easter, 1950, there were 324 in attendance. To meet their need, additional rooms were improvised in vacant space on their west side. Removal to an ample

site for best modern development was desirable, indeed urgent. Fourteen blocks east of them on the 1600 block of East Ashe Street, an area divisible into eleven lots, was bought for \$5,000. On this site in April, 1949, their new \$9,000 parsonage was nearing completion, all of which property was free of debt by December, 1951.

Ross J. Allen led the fund-raising for their projected \$130,000 educational plant, first unit of construction at the new site. It was reported that the successful work of Allen on this objective, "was of great inspiration." Charles J. Betts of our Church Extension Staff was the consulting architect. R. O. Dail was Chairman of the Building Committee. [Plans called for a 13,000 square foot facility to accommodate a church school of 500, a large social hall, and a chapel. The hall was to seat 300 persons and the chapel approximately 60.]

[At the dedication of the education building on May 20, 1956, Dr. Ross Allen, State Secretary of the Disciples of Christ addressed the gathering by noting, "The earth is the Lord's and is man's only for occupation and he should use it as a trusteeship. All of the ground is holy. We consecrate it for his name, for Christian fellowship and use it as a beachhead for the gospel." The Rev. Arthur Burton was pastor of the church at the time of planning and preparation of the educational building.]

On January 18, 1952, C. C. Ware assisted by the pastor Columbus Arthur Burton, led in ordaining the following 18 officers: Elders: G. E. Cogdell, J. L. Collins, T. L. Blow, A. W. Griffin; Deacons: R. V. Whorton, H. Carl Watson, George R. Newsome, E. H. Wyman, Dr. A. R. Mallard, Roy Keene, L. Preston Johnston, M. A. Harvell, Lee Blackwell, R. P. Jones, J. T. Crumpler; Deaconesses: Mrs. J. T. Vinson, Sr., Mrs. Ed. Tyndall, and Mrs. Beulah Campbell.

Their old property in the 200 block of East Ashe Street [now BB&T] was sold at auction on June 15, 1956, to Bill Odom.

On June 22, 1958 Ross J. Allen assisting pastor, G. A. Hamlin, in his well-planned tithing campaign, delivered the stewardship address. He brought "into sharp focus the spiritual significance of tithing", as "the tithing roll" was "placed in front of the chancel." The church board had set a good example, so on that day over 50 of the congregation signed the commitment.

Membership at Goldsboro in 1957 was 385.

Historical Highlights 1959 - 2012

With the note burning for the education building in 1961, the church congregation turned to preparations for the construction of a sanctuary. On May 22, 1966, Mrs. Sallie Tyndall, the only living charter member of the church, along with members of the building committee, broke ground for a new sanctuary. Dedication of the Sanctuary and Prayer Tower took place on October 22, 1967 with Dr. Charles E. Dietze, Executive Minister of the Christian Church providing the message. At the time of the dedication, church membership was 429 and the church budget was \$62,000.

Under the leadership of Rev. Goodwin Moore (1982 - 1987), the order of morning worship was revised to reflect a suggested denominational model. Included in several changes was the moving of the communion service from prior to the minister's sermon to after the sermon. This more closely follows Christ's example in Luke 22. Rev. Moore was interested in ecumenical activities and was instrumental in bringing the Rev. Paul Crow, President of the Council on Christian Unity, General Ministry of the Disciples, to speak to the congregation concerning COCU (Consultation on Church Union) and its efforts to create awareness in the progress of bringing church leaders together to address international issues on unity.

The Rev. Fred Clarke was called in 1989 to minister to the church. As the longest serving minister at First Christian, Rev. Clarke has overseen the spiritual life of the congregation, the expansion of mission outreach, and an ongoing renovation of the church facility. In the late 1980's planning for extensive renovation to the sanctuary and education building got underway. In April 1989, a representative from the Board of Church Extension in Indianapolis visited the church to consult with the Board on methods for conducting a Capital Funds Campaign. Later in the year, the Church Board gave approval to begin Phase I renovation which included the installation of heating and air conditioning in the education building and the painting of the Narthex and sanctuary walls. A renovation funding campaign was conducted in 1990, under the leadership of Margaret Cogdell, with a goal of \$75,000 and a challenge goal of \$100,000.

At the completion of Phase I renovation, the Board in October, 1990 gave approval for the Renovation Task Force, headed by Oz Bartlett, to work with the Architectural Counseling Services of the Board of Church Extension to examine trends in church design taking into consideration the current needs and programming of the church.

In March, 1991, the services of the firm of Hobbs and Partin were secured to draft plans for the proposed changes to the church facility. Many of the suggestions made by the consultants from Indianapolis were incorporated into the final renovation plan which was adopted by the Board in January, 1993. Preparations were made for a Capital Fund Campaign to be held in the spring of 1993 with a goal of \$100,000. This was to be the first of three campaigns (1993, 1996, 1999) to finance the renovation and repay the debt, estimated to be \$300,000.

Major improvements/additions made during Phase II renovations included paving of the back parking lot, construction of a covered walkway from the sanctuary to the parking lot, installation of new restrooms in the area of the old boiler room, installation of carpeting in the fellowship hall and the hallways in the education building, and the creation of a new entrance to the fellowship hall next to the new women's restroom.

Other minor renovations involved the installation of a restroom next to the sanctuary and the relocation of the nursery to a room adjacent to the parlor for easier accessibility by parents. A restroom in the nursery was upgraded to provide a changing area, hand washing sink, and child sized toilet.

The church has continued improvements to the facility following the major renovations begun in the 1990's. Ongoing three year renovation campaigns have provided additional funding for other needed projects. Included among these projects have been a new ceiling and lighting for the fellowship hall (2004), new sanctuary carpeting and pew cushions (2002), landscaping for areas around the bell tower and sanctuary (2002), and replacement of the sanctuary roof (2010). In 2012 with gifts from congregation members and a friend of the church, the kitchen was refurbished with paint, new countertops/sinks, and remodeled cabinets. With funds from the Memorial Fund and a gift from a friend of the church, a larger sign identifying the church was purchased for the Ash Street side of the church.

In other areas of church life, the focus was on the organization of a functioning structure for church business and worship. In 1990, a new Constitution and Bylaws detailing the design of the church was approved by the Board, and this document has been followed without change until the present.

Three new endowments, Music, Major Repair and Renovation, and Chancel Endowment Funds, were established in 1993 and along with the Spiritual Life Endowment Fund provide opportunities for members and friends to contribute to specific areas of church life.

A newly published church hymnal, Chalice Hymnal, was adopted by the denomination in the 1990's, and in 1994, 225 new hymnals were purchased with contributions made by members and friends of the congregation. Additional enhancements to the morning worship service were the purchase of 70 pew Bibles in 2002 and the gift of a baby grand piano.

The church has had the honor of having two members of the congregation to be ordained into the Christian ministry, Rev. Dr. Penny Zeimer and Rev. Tommy Hill. The Rev. Dr. Zeimer has served the church as Minister of Spiritual Enrichment for a number of years and now also serves as minister of Carr Memorial Church in Clinton. Tommy Hill grew up in the Goldsboro church and now ministers to the Wendell Christian Church. A third member, Rev. Melissa Acres, is now a licensed minister at Macclesfield Christian Church.

The church also had the honor of having one of its members, Mrs. Mary Helen Wyman, serve as Regional Moderator for the Christian Churches of North Carolina. Mrs. Wyman was also the first woman elder for First Christian Church elected during the ministry of Rev. Leslie Wilkins (1974-1981).

In order to identify itself and its beliefs to both members and nonmembers, the church has developed materials which speak to some of the denomination's (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) historical theological positions and reflect the local church's thinking. A mission statement was adopted in 1999 and after revision in 2007 speaks for the church in the community and the wider world. A welcome statement and vision statement are also included in materials for new member packets and used along with the mission statement in church bulletins and newsletters.

Following a changing trend in ministerial benefits to provide the minister with a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage, the Church Board took under consideration the sale of the church parsonage. After assessing the needs of Rev. Fred Clarke and his family and the costs associated with the maintenance of the property, the decision was made to sell the parsonage and provide a housing allowance to Rev. Clarke. In 1998 the parsonage was sold for \$62,000 and the funds invested with the Christian Church Foundation.

Rev. Fred Clarke is the longest serving minister in the history of the church and the congregation has been a part of many milestones in Rev. Clarke's life. The church celebrated with Rev. Clarke the completion of his Doctorate in Ministry from Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, Kentucky in 2001. This was the culmination of several years of study and travel to Kentucky. In 2004, the church

received a Clergy Renewal Grant of \$45,000 from the Lilly Foundation to send Dr. Clarke on a sabbatical for study and travel in Israel, a travel/study tour with his family to Ireland, Scotland, and England and attendance at the World Convention of the Churches of Christ in Brighton, England. In 2009, the church honored Dr. Clarke on the twentieth anniversary of his ministry at First Christian Church, Goldsboro.

Over the years and continuing into the present, the church has been involved in a number of outreach activities in the community. First Christian was a founding member of United Church Ministries, a citywide organization which ministers to the needs of low-income individuals/families who are in need of food or money for electric bills, medicine, etc. The church contributes annually to the budget of the Ministries and has volunteers who serve on the board. The church has its own food pantry which provides food assistance to persons referred by the local health department. The Last Saturday Supper program provides a bag lunch to low-income individuals the last Saturday in each month from the church parking lot.

The church is a Partner in Education with Edgewood Developmental School located across the street from the church, contributing money and other items needed by teachers at the school. In 2011, the church was recognized as the Partner in Education of the Year for the Edgewood School as well as for the county.

Community churches, including First Christian, join together to sponsor a citywide Thanksgiving service as well as a series of noon services during Advent and Lent. Dr. Clarke is an active participant in both the planning and the services themselves. He also serves as an on-call chaplain at Wayne Memorial Hospital.

The church was a member of GAAIN (Goldsboro Area AIDS Interfaith Network) from its founding until its dissolution. Churches were assigned as partners for individuals with AIDS, helping them with daily needs and providing comfort as needed.

First Christian is also a supporter and Board Member of the Protestant Preschool Program. This is a half day child care program located in a local church. Services are available to any child in the community and scholarships are available to families needing tuition assistance.

Special events which have become part of the annual church calendar include "Homecoming" celebrated each year in October. "Coming Home for Christmas" is also a family centered luncheon in December and "Hanging of the Greens" is a special Sunday morning

worship event in December. Each November the church men cook barbeque and the women prepare baked goods and collect items for the Christmas Attic for the annual barbeque fundraiser. This is a time for good food and fellowship.

Among the guest speakers during the centennial year was the Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

In 2012 the church had a participating membership of 162 and a budget of \$187,983.

Roll of Ministers First Christian Church, Goldsboro

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1912-1916 | D. W. Arnold | 1956-1957 | Stanley V. Hovatter |
| 1916-1920 | J. A. Taylor | 1958-1961 | G. A. Hamlin |
| 1921-1922 | O. A. Smith | 1961-1968 | Alvin B. Amos |
| 1923-1926 | L. M. Omer | 1968-1973... | Melton M. Bonner, Jr. |
| 1927-1929 | R. A. Atkins | 1974-1981 | Leslie L. Wilkins |
| 1930-1932 | R. H. Jones | 1981-1982... | W. C. White (Interim) |
| 1933-1934 | Carl R. Cheek | 1982-1987.. | Goodwin C. Moore, Jr. |
| 1935-1944 | Olin E. Fox | 1987-1989. | Frank Leggett (Interim) |
| 1945-1948 | C. W. Riggs | 1989- | Frederick W. Clarke |
| 1949-1955 | C. Arthur Burton | | |

Church Musicians (Organists/Choir Directors)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mrs. Louise Johnson Spain | Mrs. Antoinette Parks |
| Mrs. J. I. Vinson, Sr. | Sid Willoughby |
| Mrs. Margaret Long Lewis | Bill Sawyer |
| Mrs. Smoot | Gordon Fletcher |
| Ms. Peggy Hill | Tom Casey |
| Gordon Forehand | Mrs. Elaine Getchell |
| Robert Mayberry | |

Mrs. Getchell is the longest serving Organist/Choir Director in the history of the church. She began on an interim basis in 1989 and later moved into the permanent position.

Endowments of First Christian Church Goldsboro, North Carolina

The church has four endowment funds that have been established for the benefit of the church since 1989. These endowments are held by and managed by the Christian Church Foundation, Indianapolis, Indiana. Contributions to any of these endowments may be made at any time by the church or individuals. Distribution of income of these funds beyond the initial investments shall be made upon a formal request presented to the Church Board and approved by a two-thirds majority.

Spiritual Life Program Endowment Fund (1989)

Established with an original gift of \$50,000. Funds from this endowment are specifically designated for programs which will enrich the spiritual life of the congregation. Such programs could include, but not be limited to, youth camps and conference scholarships, clergy training, lay training, and honorariums or fees for guest resource persons.

Major Repair and Renovation Endowment Fund (1996)

Established to create income for major repairs and renovation of the buildings and/or the campus of First Christian Church.

Music Endowment Fund (1996)

Established with intent to create income for the purpose of enhancing/enriching the music budget. Appropriate expenditures would include the enlargement, renovation or replacement of the organ, purchase of additional musical instruments, and provision of funds for special concerts or recitals.

Chancel Endowment Fund (2000)

Established with the purpose of creating income for chancel improvements such as choir robes, stoles, baptismal robes, paraments, repair or replacement of the communion service, church refurbishment, and symbolic appointments.

Realizing that Endowment can be either a blessing or a curse in the life of a Congregation, and also recognizing that changing circumstances and demographics can create significant obstacles in an unknown future time, it is not the intent of the funds to eliminate the need for members to participate in any future campaigns in the life and witness of the church. In establishing these funds it is hoped that any future Congregation will be deeply involved in responsible ways in all endowed areas; that income from these funds can be a help in their respective areas leveling peaks and valleys in income as compared with need; that income from these funds help provide extra ordinary program and witness until the Congregation is able to finance same through regular budgeting process.