



## GRACE UMC'S HOMECOMING HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2022

### CELEBRATING 160 YEARS OF GRACE UMC'S HISTORICAL MILESTONES

#### Rev. Jeremiah Brown (Father Brown)

Methodism was brought to Chapel Hill, Maryland by Rev. Jeremiah Brown (known as Father Brown), who migrated to this area from Petersburg, Virginia. (Some of his descendants--great granddaughters--were Alethea Shorter Jackson, Martha Shorter Slaughter, Adelaide Hawkins Barnes, Thelma Hawkins Carter, Alma Roberta Henson Haywood, Clara Shorter Plummer, and Carrie Shorter Travers. Father Brown served as the pastor for this Chapel Hill community, along with assigned circuit preachers.

#### Two Acres More or Less

The forcefulness of Father Brown's work was recognized and respected by many to the extent that the land, "Two acres more or less," on which we would build church buildings was deeded to the church by these words "from Jesse R. Edelin, et. al. to William H. Shorter, et. al, Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Chapel Hill, October 24, 1883.

#### William Shorter, Exhorter

William Henry Shorter was licensed an exhorter by the Quarterly Conference in 1899. Exhorters in the early Methodist societies challenged and encouraged church members in their spiritual growth. The term exhorter has been replaced by lay servant in today's UMC.

#### Construction of First Church Building

After getting the deed for two acres of land, more or less, in 1902, Grace began the construction of its first church building in 1902 under Rev. A. H. Tilghman. The building, Grace Methodist Episcopal Church of Chapel Hill, was completed in 1905 under Rev. William H. Dean.



Grace Methodist Episcopal Church of Chapel Hill

#### Deed to Parsonage

Under the pastorate of Rev. J. E. Roberts, in the year of 1920, Grace received the deed to the church parsonage property, from William T. Thorne and Catherine Thorne of Silesia, MD, for the consideration of \$10.00.

#### Tithing Initiated

Tithing was begun in 1924 as a new approach to meeting the church's financial needs under Rev. Bradley Johnson. James Henry Shorter initiated the request to ask each member and friends to participate in the venture.

#### Local Church Preachers

Rev. Jesse Colbert received his license as a local preacher in 1929. Rev. George Bolden, William Bolden, and Rev. James Smith became licensed local preachers in the 1930's.



Rev. William Bolden



Rev. James C. Smith



Rev. George Bolden

Not Pictured: Rev. Jesse Colbert

## FIRST GOSPEL CHORUS



### 1945 Young People's Spiritual Chorus

From a conversation of four men at Grace, one evening in April 1944, plans for a gospel chorus began. Rev. G. A. Thomas installed a group of 18 men and women in 1945, who were known as the Young People's Spiritual Chorus.

### Church's First Anniversary

In 1952, under Rev. Benjamin F. Hall (1948-57), Grace Methodist Church observed its 50th anniversary from the beginning of the first church building started in 1902.

### Second Church: Chapel Hill Methodist Church

In 1959, Grace became incorporated as "Chapel Hill Methodist Church," under the pastorate of Rev. Irving A. Sherman, as there was a record of another Grace Methodist Church (Fairmont Heights, MD)

### Old and New Parsonages

The old parsonage was sold for \$325 to Mary (Mayme) Eldridge (mother of Grace member Araminta Anderson). The building was moved at Mrs. Eldridge's expense. Edward Thomas, building contractor, turned over the keys of the completed parsonage to the board of trustees on July 1959. The cost for the new parsonage was \$9,000.



### Every Member Commitment (EMC) Program

Rev. Howard Hinson, appointed pastor of Grace on June 1963, introduced the first Every Member Commitment Program (EMC) in September 1963. Grace's first proposed budget was \$17,979.

### Grace's Library

Grace opened its first library on February 1965 with Alberta (Julia) Govan [Harlaque] serving as librarian.

### New Sanctuary: Grace United Methodist Church

In October 1965, Rev. Donald Adams, who was legally blind, was appointed pastor. With the EMC in place, Grace now concentrated on getting a new sanctuary. On Sunday, August 24, 1975, the first service in newly named Grace United Methodist Church, the new pre-fab sanctuary (labeled the Instant Church), was held. A mass choir consisting of members of the choir and gospel chorus supplied the music with Eunice Hooper, organist, and Hope Parker (Lee) as pianist.



## Mansfield Scholarship

Rev. James O. Waters, stepfather to Grace member Dennis Lee, became pastor in June 1975. Rev. Waters initiated the children's sermonettes given by a lay person, began acolyte training, established policy and hospitality committees, and reactivated the youth choir. Rev. Waters also recommended the establishment of the Mansfield Scholarship. The Mansfield Scholarship began in 1978 in honor of the late Emanuel Mansfield, a renowned musician and member of Grace.

## Purchases Made

Under Rev. Edwin Williams in 1979, the gospel choir purchased a Baldwin upright piano for the sanctuary. The Youth Ministries, under the leadership of Celestine West, spearheaded a drive to purchase a bus for church school and youth ministries' use. The trustees aided financially in procuring the bus in November 1980.

## First Mortgage Burning

On September 1984, under Rev. Milton King, the church building mortgage was liquidated in 9 years instead of 15 years, which resulted in saving more than \$30,000 in interest.

## Fourth Church Building

Rev. Hal T. Henderson, appointed in 1987, faced an overwhelming problem of drugs throughout the metropolitan area of DC, which included Prince George's County. He partnered with the United Methodist Church in the fight, and the conference assigned Bishop Felton May with "The Bishop's Initiative Against Drug Use," which included a summer program "The Tent Ministry Saving Station."



The trustees decided to build a new sanctuary seating 340 persons and use the present sanctuary for the multipurpose building/fellowship hall. On Sunday, January 5, 1992, a Consecration service was held for the newly constructed Sanctuary that included a Model 820 Hammond Organ with Leslie speakers.

## 2nd Mortgage Burned

On March 10, 2002, Grace once again celebrated the burning of its mortgage—its 2nd burned mortgage "free of debt." Bishop Felton May and district superintendent, Mary Jane Coleman, joined Rev. Conrad Parker, Rev. Dr. Diana Parker, and the congregation to lift up this momentous occasion.

## Involvement Grows

Under Rev. Robert E. Slade, 2011-2020, Grace experienced growth. Within a 3-year period, Grace's attendance at church doubled in numbers so that it received an additional lay members to the annual conference. A tribal leader program was initiated to include small group membership, and 38 youth were confirmed in the church. The building program for a new church was reactivated, and work began for building a new edifice; however, work paused during the pandemic. The annual Grace's Equestrian Camp included up to 60 young people who learned to ride and care for horses at the Slade Farm.

## Technology

With the onset of COVID-19, churches discovered a new way to do business. Rev. Dr. Rodney T. Smothers, 2020-2022, increased Grace's technological presence by adding hybrid worship services (in-person and virtual). Moving beyond YouTube, Grace advanced to in-person streaming services as well as online viewing (YouTube, Facebook, and website).

## Connectivity

Rev. Dr. Marvin R. Wamble was appointed to Grace July 2022. Under his leadership, in-person streaming and virtual worship services continue. Focus is on multi-media—enhancing technology and upgrading the website. New ministries are being developed such as technical support and communications for the elderly, greeters' program, and a community garden project. A combined worship service was held with Grace's sister church, Providence-Fort Washington UMC for World Communion Sunday, and such connectivity is expected to continue. Accelerated talks are in place for reactivating the building program.



**PASTORS SERVING GRACE UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH  
1862 – Present**

**PICTURED PASTORS WHO SERVED  
GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**YEARS SERVED PASTORS**

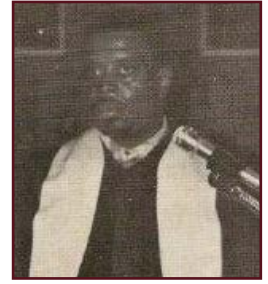
1862 – 1868	Pastors Unknowns
1869 – 1871	D. Wheeler
1871 – 1873	G. T. Pinkney
1874 – 1876	P. H. Matthews
1876 – 1877	A. J. Reems
1878 – 1880	Noble Watkins
1881 – 1883	N. C. Brown
1883 – 1900	Jeremiah Brown
1884 – 1885	G. R. Williams/T. A. Brooks
1885 – 1886	C. Price
1887 – 1889	D. Wheeler
1890 – 1892	E. Hammond
1893 - 1894	W. R. Davis
1895 – 1896	M. W. Robinson
1897 – 1899	G. H. Booze/R. R. Riggs
1899 – 1900	E. Ayers
1901 – 1905	A. H. Tilghman/W. H. Dean
1906 – 1910	Lewis W. Nash
1911 – 1912	George H. Booze
1913 – 1919	Victor E. Johnson
1920 – 1921	J. E. Roberts
1922 – 1924	J. C. Love/Bradley Johnson
1925 – 1927	T. A. Thomas
1927 – 1928	Walter A. Dorsey
1929 – 1938	A. T. Middleton
1938 – 1940	C. E. O. Smallwood
1941 – 1943	Rufus Reid
1944 – 1945	G. A. Thomas
1946 – 1947	E. L. Taylor
1948 – 1957	Benjamin F. Hall
1958 – 1962	Irving A. Sherman
1963 – 1965	Howard Hinson
1966 – 1975	Donald Adams
1975 – 1979	James O. Waters
1979 – 1983	Edwin Williams
1983 – 1987	Milton King
1987 – 1993	Hal T. Henderson
1993 – 1996	John Roger Brown, Sr.
1996 – 2011	Conrad D. Parker/Diana Parker
2011 – 2020	Robert E. Slade
2020 – 2022	Rodney T. Smothers
2022 – Present	Marvin R. Wamble



**Rev. & Mrs. Benjamin F. Hall**  
1948-1957



**Rev. & Mrs. Howard Hinson**  
1963 - 1965



**Rev. Donald Adams**  
1966 -1975



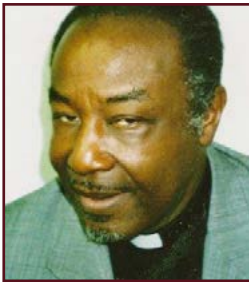
**Rev. James O. Waters**  
1975 – 1979



**Rev. Edwin Williams**  
1979 – 1983



**Rev. Milton King**  
1983 – 1987



**Rev. Hal T. Henderson**  
1987 – 1993



**Rev. John Roger Brown, Sr.**  
1993 – 1996



**Rev. Conrad D. Parker/  
Rev. Dr. Diana Parker**  
1996 - 2011



**Rev. Robert E. Slade**  
2011 – 2020



**Rev. Dr. Rodney T. Smothers**  
2020 – 2022



**Rev. Dr. Marvin R. Wamble**  
2022 – Present



**GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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**Rev. Dr. Marvin R. Wamble, Senior Pastor**

Historical Newsletter Compiled by Frances P. Robinson, Lay Leader  
Photos by Allen Colbert and the late Clifton (Chip) Yorkman