

Blair Road United Methodist Church

Our Church History



In 1958, the Charlotte Mission Society was told a new rural church was needed in the Clear Creek area. With the help of Rev. Glenn Lackey a search was made. They found a Spring Mills sharecropper who was a lay leader. He share cropped during the week and preached on Sunday. Rev. Poindexter was offered the challenge to start a new church for a salary of \$1,000 per year.

By September 1958, 13 people – 8 families – were meeting in William Elliotte's home on Highway 51. By October 1958, they met in a small rented house with two pews and a piano. The rent was \$40 per month.

February 1, 1959, Blair Road Church was chartered with 30 members. It was the first rural church to be chartered in Mecklenburg County in 40 years. Rev Poindexter stayed five years. Membership growth was very slow. Some years only 11 new members joined. Under his leadership, the first church building was built with monies from the Charlotte District Mission Society, Belmont Park Methodist Church (now known as University City United Methodist Church) and the Duke Endowment Fund.

Rev. Robert Forward was pastor from 1964-1965, and the parsonage was started. It was ready for Rev. M. B. Lee (a female). Rev. Lee saw the need to start a building fund for a larger church. Members bought bricks for building where each stamp represented a brick. They were called Brick Books, one of which is in the Corner Stone of our Heritage Building.

The United Methodist Men (UMM) was started in 1966. The Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) was formed October 15, 1968. It was later chartered as the United Methodist Women (UMW) in 1974.

Next, to receive the call to Blair Road Church was Rev. Herbert Blackmon, who was at that time an Assistant Fire Chief in the Charlotte Fire Department. He was a supply minister until he received his degree in ministry. In Rev. Blackmon's time, we had 175 to 200 members.

The present sanctuary was built in 1975 for about \$175,000. In 1977, there was a mortgage burning – seven (7) years ahead of time. Blair Road was debt free.

In 1973, Young at Heart (Senior Citizen's group) was formed by Peggy McGalliard and Gracie Helms. They cooked for this group for twenty-six (26) years. Jean Holloway served for two (2) years and Marcus and Kaye Hamilton served for two (2) years. Rev. Dr. Nelson Melvin took over Young at Heart when he came to Blair Road. At that time, Janet Ketch took over as cook. In 2008, Dr. Melvin retired and Carol Whisnant took over as program chair. Young at Heart has now been a part of our church for thirty six (36) years.

In the early 1970s, Mint Hill re-incorporated making property taxes lower than Charlotte. Mint Hill exploded with people. That meant that more and more people needed a church home; thus, our membership was rapidly growing.

In 1976 a banner was designed and made by Becky Hill, Peggy McGalliard, and Gracie Helms. It was taken to Duke University by the 1976 Confirmation Class and displayed at the celebration of 200 years of Methodism in North Carolina.

In 1979, Rev. Wannamaker Hardin came. Our membership grew and we again needed to expand. This time, members and friends were asked to buy church bonds for five years at 5% in order to build an education building.

Ground was broken for the Fellowship Building in 1980. The building was finished in 1981, at a cost of \$350,000. With this building, we grew again adding space for Scout programs, Athletic programs, and Youth, Sunday school and church office space.

In the spring of 1981, BRUMC Preschool began as a Mother's Morning Out program to accommodate infants under the leadership of Lorraine Griffin and Kay O'Flagor, with only four (4) children. In the second year of the program and under the guidance of Wanda Wiley, the program evolved into a true Preschool, serving eight (8) students, to prepare children for a successful year in kindergarten. As of December 31, 2009, we serve ninety (90) students; aged 2 years thru 5 years in 11 separate classes five mornings per week. The preschool employs a staff of ten (10) teachers and one non-teaching director and is governed by a committee which includes the Director of Christian Education, the Preschool Director, and representatives of the teachers and parents, the Board of Trustees and the congregation of BRUMC. August 2010 will mark the 30-year anniversary of the outreach ministry of BRUMC Preschool. In the past 30 years, six (6) directors have led the ministry: Lorraine Griffin/Kay O'Glakor – 1981 (co-directors) Wanda Wiley - 1981-1982, Carole Jaeger – 1982-1998, Beth Coccia – 1998-2003, Smokie Brawley – 2003 – 2004 and Angie Lord – 2004 to present.

In 1982, the United Methodist Women (UMW) established the UMW Memorial Library. When a member of the UMW passes away, a book is purchased in their memory and placed in the library. The UMW was instrumental in purchasing the first church van in 1984. The UMW also purchased a beautiful funeral pall cloth to be used when a funeral is held at the church.

In 1985, the first Girl Scout troop was chartered, followed by the first Boy Scout troop in 1987.

We were growing fast when Rev. Frank Stith came. Frank brought a spiritual growth to the church. Many members participated in the Walk to Emmaus and Conference Building Teams were strong, going to Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Croix and Africa to build and repair parsonages and churches. Also 1st Methodist University in Africa where our missionaries, Sonny & Sharon Reavis, spent 8 years in mission.

We needed a Youth Director. David Elsey was hired. After he left, Rev. Susan Norman-Vickers was appointed as Associate Pastor and Youth Director. After Susan, Mary Lou Roller took over as Youth Director.

In 1990, Rev. Paul Lowder was appointed as our pastor. Membership was up to around 800 members. He was the last pastor to live in the parsonage. It was sold in 1994 for \$82,000. Appalachia Service Project (ASP) started by the youth began at this time.

Operation Warm-Up was started in 1990. Our youth collected warm clothing and blankets for people in the Appalachian Mountains. When Rev. Lowder left our church, he retired.

Rev. Jacob C. (Ted) Troutman, III came in 1994, as our eighth pastor in forty years. In 1995, Marcus Hamilton and Rev. Troutman designed our Church Logo. They used teal as the background color with a white descending dove.

In 1996, we started our Mid-Week Manna meal and program, with members preparing the meals until 1999 when Kay & Albert McMicken took over as coordinators. They took the reservations, planned the menu, and did the shopping. In 2007, Dee Worthy and Glenda Flowe began preparing the meals. Various help teams volunteer to assist with preparations and clean up. Then a Contemporary Worship service was started along with Faith Break (a time of fellowship between services). Faith Break ended in 2001, due to change in our worship times. We now have a Welcome Coffee.

In 1997, a new church van was purchased to replace the one formerly purchased by the United Methodist Women in 1985.

In 1998, we needed more education and nursery space. We purchased 27 acres surrounding our facility for \$264,368, bringing our property up to 35 acres. This is also the year the master plan was completed.

On February 1, 1999, we celebrated our FORTIETH Anniversary with Homecoming and a covered dish meal. We have Homecoming every five years on the Sunday closest to February 1st. The gymnasium was converted to a Family Life Center when it was totally renovated at cost of \$175,000.

Rev. Jenny Stewart came to us in 2000 as our Pastor of Discipleship and Associate Pastor. She was with us until 2002.

By April 2000, ground breaking took place and in April 2001, the new Christian Education Building was dedicated at a cost of 1.6 million dollars. It houses a Preschool, adult and children's Sunday School Classes, a Library, offices, and meeting rooms. Worship for the Contemporary Service was moved to the Family Life Center because the sanctuary was no longer large enough.

In the year 2002, there was a worship attendance of nearly 500. A part-time pastor for Senior Programs and Visitation, Rev. Dr. Nelson Melvin, was hired.

A major renovation of our sanctuary was completed. A parlor for brides and for families to meet during weddings and funerals was created in the Heritage Building.

Our youth groups were increasing and restarted participation in the Appalachia Service Project (ASP) each summer.

The last year the United Methodist Women held a Bazaar was 2002. The UMW began having Kids Consignment Sales to generate money for missions.

By this year, we had more than 175 in Sunday school. We now have more than 240 attending Sunday School each week in adult, youth, and children classes.

English as a Second Language (ESL) began in 2003. This program was established by Ann & Alex Smythers. Classes are held two (2) nights each week. The UMW provides snacks once a month for the students. ESL has Latino, Hmong, and Russian students coming to learn English as well as American customs. The students have expressed a desire to blend in better in their new world.

In 2003, the UMW hosted the Charlotte District Meeting for over 250 women. The UMW also held a Mother-Daughter Banquet. It had been a number of years since the last one was held.

The United Methodist Men (UMM) broke ground for the pavilion. They held a golf tournament, a Barbeque, Fish Fry, and Valentine's Dinner/Dance.

In May 2003, our pastor, Rev. Jacob C. (Ted) Troutman, III, received his Doctorate of Divinity degree. He had been serving our church for ten years at this point.

We paid off the mortgage (\$100,000) on the covered walkway (portico), which left the church ready to pay the remainder of the mortgage owed for the Christian Education Building (CEB).

In July 2003, Johnny Lord was hired as a part-time Pastoral Assistant and Youth Director.

The Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs continue to be strong with a number of Scouts receiving their Eagle Award and Gold Award.

The Basketball and Softball programs also continue to be strong and well supported. We have two classes of Disciple Bible Study, two classes of Companion in Christ and one class of Christian Believer.

We continue to have our weekly Mid-Week Manna meals, followed by Bible Study. It also provides a time for our children's music program to meet, as well as Handbells. We serve an average of 125 each week.

In 2004, The Missions Committee, under the leadership of Ken & Donna Holloway and Al & Gail Beisiegel started Room in the Inn (RITI). This is a program where homeless men, women, and children are brought to the church to eat dinner, spend the night, and eat breakfast. They are then given a bag lunch to take with them.

In 2005, we began offering Financial Peace University (FPU) classes to teach people how to manage their finances.

2007 saw the beginning of our Latino Ministry. This ministry is led by Rev. Candido Albino and his wife, Pilar Perez. Also in 2007, the Evangelism Committee started the Greeters program. Their initial training was held on

March 24, 2007. The United Methodist Men (UMM) elected Ed Holloway their Man of the Year and Gail Beisiegel their Woman of the Year for their work in missions.

In 2008, our long time minister, Rev. Dr. Ted Troutman was transferred and Rev. Dr. Nancy Burgin Rankin came to be our Senior Pastor. Nancy is the second female pastor to serve Blair Road UMC.

Feb. 1st, 2009 was the 50th anniversary of our church. We began the celebration with a covered dish homecoming. Mike Elliotte, one of the original charter members, graciously provided much of the food and supplies for this special event. We had about 600 in attendance that day. We had numerous honored guests such as our previous ministers, our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. George Thompson, the Mint Hill Mayor, and council members of the town of Mint Hill.

May 15, 2009 a butterfly garden was established in honor of Preschool teachers, Sandy Hieronymus and Robin Haulsee. Sandy & Robin retired after serving for 24 years (Sandy) and 26 years (Robin).

July 5, 2009, Rev. Candido Albino, our Director of Latino Ministries, received his license as a local pastor in the United States, and was named an Associate Pastor of Blair Road UMC.

Bill McGalliard built a cabinet for the shovel used in the April 16th, 2000 groundbreaking for the CEB. It is on display in the foyer of the building. We also have a history cabinet in the foyer of the CEB that houses various historical artifacts collected by our Historian, Jean Holloway.

In August, 2009, the African Children's Choir performed at our church. They are a group of African orphans who travel around the country performing in different venues. It was their second time at our church.

2009 saw the beginning of Book Bags of Love. This program provides food for 35 Lebanon Road Elementary School students and their families to take home for the weekend. These are students that, otherwise, would not have food to eat. 2009 also saw the start of the Job Search Ministry. This ministry assists people out of work in preparing resumes, hints on applying for a position, and pastoral counseling.

We carried the 50th anniversary celebration throughout the year, recognizing different groups and ministries within the church. We also completed a pictorial directory with a "Then and Now" theme. We participated in the Mint Hill Madness in September 2009. We had representation in the parade and had a booth at the park to generate interest in our church.

Sales of Dennis the Menace Calendars personalized by our very own Marcus Hamilton, a nationally recognized artist, over the past three years, have generated income of about \$14,000. This money has all been applied to the debt of the Christian Education Building.

We cannot list all who have served in many ways for Blair Road United Methodist Church to become what it is today.

May God continue to bless and keep us on our journey to the cross.

Jean Holloway, Church Historian, 2010

Peggy Dulin, History & Records Committee, 2010