

Fellowship Presbyterian Church (USA)

A Brief History

As early as 1959 the Greater Greensboro Council for Church extension expressed its interest in Northwest Greensboro by acquiring a 3.2 acre site for development. This land was located at the intersection of Westridge Road and Whitehurst Street. Interest in starting a Church was expressed by 1963, and Orange Presbytery recruited John Caffey (an Elder from Presbyterian Church of the Covenant) to help lead this effort. What began as a committee assignment soon became a faithful calling for John and Pat Caffey. The following year (September 20, 1964) fifteen families met at the First Presbyterian Church to express their willingness to form a new congregation. Orange Presbytery favored the work, and gave its leadership to develop the Church.

On September 27, 1964 regular worship services began at Claxton Elementary School, with the Reverend Linwood Cheshire, Jr., Executive Secretary of Orange Presbytery, serving as organizing pastor. It was called the Northwest Greensboro Presbyterian Chapel. A mid-week fellowship hour in the homes, (which was well attended) Church school classes, a Church nursery, choir, youth fellowship, men of the Church, and women of the Church were included in the program. According to Reverend Cheshire, some of the influential people who served in establishing this Church were: John and Pat Caffey, Tom and Eda Canady, Jack Futrell, Jim and Anne Gilliam, and a host of others.

On March 14, 1965, at their meeting in Siler City, Orange Presbytery accepted the petition of 87 charter members and on April 11, 1965, Palm Sunday, Fellowship Presbyterian Church officially began. The Reverend Marrion H. Currie was called as the first minister. With the quick initial growth of the congregation, the original lot was deemed too small and sold. Soon after this, 11.9 acres of land was purchased in August 1966, from Michael Weaver. This new lot on New Garden Road was ideal for growth of the Church's program.

From 1966 through 1968 James Earhart and James L. Doom came from the General Assembly office to offer their assistance with Church development and building plans. By 1968, architect J. Hyatt Hammond developed a comprehensive "campus style" design for the Church. A building campaign was launched. But the population of the area had not grown. Development in the area was delayed because of the lack of water and sewer facilities. With the stagnant growth, frustration emerged and financial resources postponed plans. The beautiful plans were put on hold. One of the Elders, Tom Canady, championed the efforts to build the original building on Richfield Road.

The Fellowship/Education Building on Richfield Road was built in 1968 and dedicated in April of 1969. The lower level was used as the Sanctuary. The original Communion Table, which was made by Benson Black is in the narthex of the current sanctuary.

Reverend Marrion Currie led the Church in an aggressive effort developing the infant Church and its program. He stayed until 1974. The location of the building became a problem because of its lack of both visibility and accessibility.

The Reverend Joe Garrison filled in as interim pastor. Then Fellowship, with the assistance of Orange Presbytery's Church Development Committee, called the Reverend Bob Button, who served creatively developing new programs (that included theater) from 1975 to 1978. After Reverend Button left, Joe Garrison filled the interim period again until the Reverend M. Gray Clark was called as pastor in June of 1979.

The Church underwent a renewal in leadership and programs and, after a great leap of faith, this congregation of 125 built the current sanctuary in 1984 and was eagerly supported by all.



In June of 1986, Reverend Clark took a six month sabbatical. During this period, the Reverend Cindy Higgins served as pastor. In late 1986, Reverend Clark returned and has led the Church to the present.

Increasingly, the congregation felt a strong sense of calling to help make a difference in our community; therefore, we continue to be involved in a number of mission programs that include the Greensboro Urban Ministry, Appalachian Service Project and others. The Church has been especially active in Habitat for

Humanity, through the superb leadership of Bill Cooke, Consistently members have been workers in the efforts to build homes for families in poverty. These missions have been a very significant part of our calling to serve this community.

In the late eighties, we began efforts to emphasize to the community stewardship of the environment. We started our recycling program, (with the help of Toni Lindahl and others), which has grown into the City of Greensboro recycling program. The Church started the program from a small effort with seven trash cans to the point where the City of Greensboro took over the program and expanded it into the current city wide recycling program. At one time we were one of the largest receiving centers for recycling other than the municipalities in Guilford County. The tonnage of recycling received was astronomical. Several years ago the Churches' on site recycling center became so large the Church had to give it up and we no longer accept recycled articles. Recycling served more than just trash collection. During our tenure, we were known throughout the area as the Church with the recycling center.

Congregational care became an important concern for the Church in 1993. The Session responded by organizing the Church into caring groups, which active Elders maintain communication about personal and prayer needs of the congregation.

In recent years we have also chosen to emphasize both the Christian Education and Music programs of our Church. Our Christian Education and Youth Director is responsible for developing programs that lay the foundation for strong faith. The educational programs include a variety of classes and programs for children and adults of all ages. Our music program includes Adult Choir, Children's Choir, and Handbells. Increased interest in fellowship has given us the SAGES (for our older members) and will continue to be a fundamental need in the life of this Church.

In 1994 the congregation took another leap of faith when it was decided that the time had come to add on to the sanctuary. For the next 3 years a very active and successful building campaign was undertaken and in 1998 our current fellowship hall, church offices, and classrooms was completed.



The new addition was dedicated in September 1998. As a result of our new building we have been able to further serve our community through such new

programs as our pre-school program and Wednesday night dinners. There is hardly a day that goes by that there is not some activity at the Church or some group using the facilities.

The future of Fellowship is bright. We are on the cutting edge of faithfulness in this community and have become very influential in our leadership in many areas. God has richly blessed us in this Church. This blessing causes us to hold high the light of faith, for the world today so desperately needs to know the love of God, the healing power of the Holy Spirit and the compassion of Christ.