

50 YEARS OF TRINITY

History of Trinity Presbyterian Church,
Hendersonville NC



Compiled by members of the Trinity congregation

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40 Years of Trinity

CHAPTER ONE - 1965 - 1970

By Neena Haskins and Sarah Gilbert

With enthusiasm, joy and the certain knowledge that the Holy Spirit was leading them, Bill Gilbert and Bob Paden from First Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, approached Asheville Presbytery in the fall of 1964 requesting its support in forming a “truly Presbyterian” church (Bill Gilbert’s words) in Hendersonville. With need established and location secured, again with Bill’s untiring efforts, the new church began its life as a strong liberal voice in the community. A first service was held in the Girl Scout cabin in Edwards Park February 21, 1965; (46 in attendance). Presbytery then bought us an old house (1403 Fifth Avenue) but it took us until May 30 to clean out the grime to begin services there.

Milestone Events Came Fast: Our first “interim,” Dr. E. C. Scott arrived, appointing Bill, Bob and Phil Sellers as a Steering Committee.

July 4th - Dinner on the grounds to meet the Eichelbergers; Hugh E. eventually became our first pastor.

Choosing a name (Westminster suggested - but deemed too long).

Chartered August 29th, 1965. (This date is our actual “birthday”).

There were 70 charter members.

And then the process of becoming a church family began. Hard work from cleaning and scrubbing, sorting books left by the Peter Murphy family to start our library, mowing, creating a church office in the old servants’ quarters over the garage (complete with “bathtub” filing system), to organizing us as Presbyterians - Elders, Deacons, Women of the Church, Sunday School, Choir - we were busy!

We Set Goals:

Developing a Mission Statement. This would be our charge and a solid guide for the future.

Strong benevolence giving. Our goal was 50% of our budget; we started with an initial 25% commitment.

Being an intergenerational church. Emma and Hal Clark were invited to become our “older generation” and contributed so much more.

Migrant Council involvement and energy to see needs in the community set a standard that continues to this day. We are a church that reaches out to our community and the world as a legacy to them.

Staffing. Lois Dorsey became Hugh’s support - the consummate secretary.

Connectional affiliations. When Arthur and Jeannette Ocker joined us, we learned what it really meant to be involved in the larger church. Art and Hugh worked together to be a strong (and somewhat different) voice both in Presbytery and beyond. (Art nominated Sarah Gilbert (she was elected as our first woman Elder, the second in Asheville Presbytery).

Strengthening. The Strengthening Committee, so aptly named, found in Dr. Bob Ohmann (retired Oil psychologist) the guidance and direction to create the small groups that led to developing the leadership, intimacy and caring that we see today in our Nurture Ministry and in an endowment from which we still benefit.

With great sorrow we learned that life is both precious and transient. We joined Bill and

Sarah in their grief at the death of their son Bill IV. Wally Stoneman, Church Treasurer and Deacon, father of four, vital and vivacious, became a victim of cancer and his death brought us close again as we shared our grief with Anne and their children.

And then we built: Careful planning, financial commitments and the generosity of Tom Hunter and Presbytery enabled us to carry out an ambitious building program, a foretaste of our current building. We felt truly named when, during the dedication service (December 6, 1969) of the new building, an electrical storm blew the transformer across the street and some said that they saw three (3!) Balls of fire.

1970, our 5th year: 214 members, 112 families; and our Head Start Center opened!

The vision that we started with - to be a caring and viable voice in the community carrying God's word to all through work and worship - is with us today in all its strength and purpose.

Thank you Gilberts, Sellers and Padens!

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CHAPTER TWO - 1970 - 1975

By Phil and Julia Sellers

In our second five years, Trinity was a stable, growing church made up predominantly of young families. Meaningful worship, outreach, church school education and service to others were the focus of our weekly activities. Everyone was involved.

Leadership: As our first called pastor, Hugh Eichelberger provided strong leadership as a motivator, personal counselor and a particularly strong preacher. The church was sad to see Hugh and Priscilla and their family leave our community in 1973. The Rev. John Crawford, a religion teacher at Montreat-Anderson College, served as our interim. Later in 1973, Sandy McGeachy, whose family had a strong Presbyterian ministerial background, came from Houston, Texas to be our second called pastor. His wife Camille and their four children became an important part of the life of Trinity.

Planning: Worship services and church school attendance soon exceeded our capacity. An adequate nursery was one of our first pressing needs. In 1973, the church had reached the limits of its 1967 planning. A new planning committee did a thorough evaluation of Trinity's facility needs, as well as the future growth patterns and church needs of our community. After much prayerful deliberation, the church decided to take the pastor's and secretary's offices out of the all-purpose room and build a new church school wing to include their offices. As a result 300 people could be seated in the sanctuary (our present Fellowship Hall) at one time. The plan was to grow to about 500 members and then consider helping sponsor another new Presbyterian church in the community.

Education: Learning together continued to be emphasized. A large number of people participated in several different types of small groups – "Encounter," Bible study, personal growth and "koinonia" supper groups. Bob Ohmann, a retired psychologist, was heavily involved as an elder as well as a small group leader. The Covenant Life Curriculum was used in the church school. A communicants class of 23 youth joined the church in 1973, and the following year, 13 youth joined.

Governance: An extensive study of Trinity's governance structure was made. A sixteen member unicameral session was elected and took office in 1975, combining elders and deacons into one governing body. The church leaders had thought there was too much fragmentation of "authority" between the deacons who handled the finance and maintained the facilities, and the elders who tended the spiritual and teaching affairs of the members but who ultimately had the final authority for all decisions. The unicameral system lasted until 1984 when the deacon board was re-established. Its new mission was solely to provide pastoral care for Trinity's members.

Community Involvement: Many members participated in local community services, frequently in leadership roles. These included Head Start, Fish, Migrant Council, Mental Health Association, Sheltered Workshop, Western North Carolina Community Action, Black Mountain Children's Home, Council on Aging, Interracial Relations, Christian Needy Families and the Pardee Auxiliary.

Change: Money was carefully spent. We were pushed for dollars. The benevolence portion of our budget dropped below 20% in spite of total giving having increased. We maintained a membership of around 450 – some attrition but an equal number of new members. As we began 1975, the adopted theme for the years was "All Alive in '75." Yet by the end of that year some dissatisfaction among the congregation, the session and the pastor became evident, prompting the pastor to recommend a "Proposal for Mission Re-Design." He wrote "We need to discover the sense of unity, direction, morale, theological integrity and purpose for the next era."

Conclusion: Overall, from 1970 to 1975, the congregation could be described as a friendly, informal, family-like fellowship committed to our beliefs in the "Trinity" of God and in easing the needs of others.

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CHAPTER THREE - 1975 - 1980

By Gladys Bailey and Anne Stoneman

In the third five years Trinity struggled with:

Who we are? Who we were? Who do we want to be? as a Christian, caring congregation. Members were not always in agreement with each other, nor with the pastor, or the Session. Session continued to serve the congregation, resulting in the unicameral system, combining Elders and Deacons, unanimously approved as our governing system.

The Youth Group was very active, even organizing and preparing (in February 1977) a church supper for the congregation.

In March 1977, we began interviewing seminary students to serve here as interns, especially to assist with Youth, Christian Education and worship. Marjorie Mason was our first intern (September, 1977 - July, 1978) and being paid \$600 per month. She was well liked by the congregation and performed well with many extra duties between pastor Sandy McGeachy leaving in March 1978 and Interim Phil Dunford's arrival in July 1978. Marjorie Thompson became our second interim in the fall of 1978. Our interns truly brought a new dimension to our spiritual growth. They developed diverse short term adult study and sharing groups, and excitement abounded as they demonstrated our new A-V teaching aids.

Facility needs such as painting, playground and gardens needed to be addressed, but membership dropped to 300 and pledges were down. While some wanted to raise money through bazaars, raffles, etc. others supported the Presbyterian Book of Order which emphasized individual giving. So fund raisers were out.

The trend was away from congregations owning a manse for the pastor to live in. We decided to sell our manse with the first option to buy to be given to the next pastor. The Rev. Al Kissling was called and came to Trinity in March 1979, and did eventually buy the manse.

With new pastors come new visions and dreams. Koinonia groups (small study groups) were offered and a Long Range Planning Committee was formed to begin planning facility expansion. Single summer services were held at 10:00 a.m. Communion was taken to shut-ins on the Saturday before Communion Sunday by the pastor and an elder.

The church began to grow again and space problems led adult classes to consider meeting in homes. Sponsoring a refugee family became a real interest for Trinity and eventually a unique and significant factor in our church life. In 1979 we accepted the Cheng family from Cambodia (placed here by Church World Service). They still live here and operate the South Wind Motel; their daughter is a successful CPA. In the next decade we sponsored a family each from Romania, Poland, a second Cambodian family, and in 1991, one from Russia.

The Building Committee proposed a two-story wing with offices, classrooms and a library – and also a plan to finance \$350,000 of the cost by selling bonds. Our third seminary intern, Cathy Mason, arrived in May 1980. The congregation was divided into Parish Groups with one Elder responsible for each. Trinity also became involved with Hospice.

In conclusion, we have come through some difficult, challenging times but with many happy memories of our seminary interns and our firm belief in Trinity. This church is a strong, cosmopolitan, well-educated, open-minded, community-active church, and as Gladys notes, southerners are diminishing in numbers.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRINITY'S MIDDLE YEARS

1980 - 1985

By Fred and Kathie Van Itallie

Busting at the Seams!

With the calling of our third pastor, Rev. Al Kissling, we continued to attract new families and grew from 309 to nearly 350. The need for more classroom and office space had reached a critical point, so in early 1980 Trinity rented a mobile classroom (trailer) from the county school system. Fred recalls teaching an adult class on the Middle East conflict in that room. (How sad that peace remains so elusive.)

The mobile classroom was only a stopgap measure to provide some breathing space until a new classroom and office addition could be designed, approved, financed and built. Wow! All that space for classrooms, offices, a real library and a choir room. No longer did the choir have to meet on Sunday mornings in the closet downstairs.

Stretching the Staff: In 1980 we called our third seminary intern, Cathy Mason, and in 1982 we called our first Director of Christian Education (D.C.E.), Evelyn Worth. She provided support and professional management of our growing church school program. In 1983, she married Cary McMullen who is a frequent columnist on the religion page of the Times-News.

Other Big Changes and Events:

- To handle the growing program of the congregation, the Session was expanded from twelve to fifteen, and the church re-established a Board of Deacons to focus on pastoral care.
- The Rainbow Express, a musical extravaganza featuring nearly everyone, was a magical intergenerational moment in the life of the church family.
- The first Trinity Family Retreat at Camp Arrowhead extended the bonds of

intergenerational fellowship.

- A pulpit and choir exchange with the Star of Bethel Church demonstrated the diverse expression of God's love.

Issues Within the Church:

- Money! The church continued to struggle with how to spend limited resources. The need to serve others through Outreach is always at odds with our need to maintain and support ourselves.
- Our Mission. During this period we re-examined and re-affirmed the Statement of Mission adopted at the church's founding.
- Limits on Growth? As our numbers grew, some began to question, "How big is too big?" While not yet a serious issue, continuing growth was a cause of concern for some who looked back at the early years and remembered how easy it was to know everyone.
- Children at the Lord's Table. As we developed a program to bring children into the Sacrament, we were all enriched as we re-examined its meaning and the meaning of church family.

Lessons for the Future: Life is constant change. For the church to be alive, it (we) must struggle to find direction, hope and grace through life's ever-changing journey. We seek to understand the nature of God, to receive his Grace and Power, and to go out and work miracles that bring wholeness to His Creation.

CHAPTER FIVE: 1985 – 1990

“Increasing in Stature”

by Eleanor Beardsley

The Bible tells us nothing about Jesus’ life from his birth to his ministry, except for one episode when he was 12. When his parents found that he had stayed behind the rest of the family in the Temple, Jesus explained his absence by asking them a question: “Don’t you know that I must be about my Father’s work?” Then the following words appear: “**And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and humankind.**” This passage can be applied to Trinity during the years from 1986-1009. Trinity went about God’s work to the best of our ability, and we “increased in wisdom,” in numbers, and in favor with God and our community.

During this period, and before, **Trinity was instrumental in starting MANY organizations in the county.** Pastor Al Kissling, as well as many members, gave freely of their time and talents to make Henderson County the envy of many nearby residents. (FISH had a client who admitted that she and her husband had moved across the county line because the available services were much better than where they had lived before. Housing Assistance Corp. and Mainstay are examples.)

The congregants continued to **worship in what we know now as Fellowship Hall**, but the need for more space was omnipresent and the subject of building “reared its head” more and more frequently. Another controversial subject which came up often was the **seating** arrangement in the worship space. We had stackable chairs, chosen because of the flexibility they provided. In 1986, it was decided to arrange the chairs in a parabolic configuration from Easter to Advent and in straight rows from Advent to Easter. That decision was supposed to end the controversy, but no such luck: a fairly large celebration was planned for December 3 one year. As the first Sunday of Advent, the arrangement would normally revert to the traditional pattern, but the parabolic plan afforded more seating and better sight lines from the usual overflow in the lounge. The Session decided we should stay with parabolic seating on December 3, but do Christmas decorations in preparation for traditional worship.

Staff Changes

DCE Evelyn McMillan left TPC, replaced by **Kate Weinman**.

Bettye Young is Executive Secretary.

Marty Irving retired as Choir Director.

John Hilley (son of Gladys) is Summer Intern in 1988.

First Ohmann Seminar held in the fall of 1988 was led by Dr. Loder from Princeton.

Progress comes in many small “improvements”

- **When Presbytery began a new newsletter, *WestPres*,** Trinity was featured in several articles.
- The annual **Church Picnic** was regularly held at Camp Tekoa.
- The Finance Committee asked that all correspondence, etc., include the slogan **“Remember the Church in Your Will.”**

- The **Henry Allisons** had consistently called on everyone who expressed interest in TPC. For health reasons, they were unable to continue. A committee of several persons was appointed in their place.
- It was announced in 1989 that the Session would now use the **Brevard Plan** whereby the term of the outgoing class of Session members continues until September when the new class is installed. Thus newly elected Elders are in training during the spring and summer, preparing to take office in September. This in effect made for longer terms; seniors were often reluctant to take a Session term.
- **Parish Groups** were very important in this period, with an Elder and a Deacon assigned to each group.
- **Toddler Playgroup** began in September 1986.
- **Wonderful Wednesday Chicken Dinners** started in July 1986.
- **Kerygma** study groups and **Koinonia** fellowship groups (Sunday night suppers in homes) were discussed as possible programs at the Session Retreat in 1988 and successfully instituted in 1989.
- A new **curriculum** began to be used in the Church school.
- In 1988, the national church was reorganized with fewer synods. TPC is now in the **Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Presbytery of Western North Carolina.**
- **Jon Brown**, twice our summer intern, is called as **Associate Pastor** in 1988.
- The **Memorial Garden** was created and put to use to receive the ashes of the deceased. (The Columbarium was a later development.)
- **Peacemaking and Recycling** were issues of importance that required a great deal of study and time.
- This is the heyday of the **Youth Group** which enjoyed a tremendous program (thanks to Jon Brown) and 41 kids.
- The **organ** was paid for and a special recital held in June 1990 to celebrate.
- In February 1990 the last of the church-sponsored **refugee families, Andronovs** from the former Soviet Socialist Republic, were adopted.

In short, these were memorable years, and we are proud to be “Trinitarians”!

CHAPTER SIX: 1990 – 1995

Building and More

by Marian Lowry with Midge Mack

Two primary principles were stated by Trinity's members when the congregation was founded: that Trinity's doors would be open to any and all, and that all members were to be ministers. Trinity remains true to these principles to the time of this writing (in 2005).

As we lived into the 90s, the Strategic Plan of 1988 and subsequent six task forces culminated with a 1994 convocation to help us know what we needed in a building in order to meet our goals. More committees decided how it would be financed and what it would look like so that we could make the final commitment to building. **Ground was broken in November 1995 for an approximately \$1.4 million sanctuary unit** that included a suite of offices, music rehearsal room, atrium, conference room, and narthex. In spite of springtime rain delays the building was finished in 54 weeks, within budget, enhanced by \$20,000 in gifts of furnishings and \$18,000 in volunteer efforts by some 60 members.

But we'd been growing in other ways, as well. A mid-1990s snapshot of Trinity would include these features:

- The well-known Bible study **Kerygma** (proclamation), ably taught by pastor **Al Kissling**;
- Our **Koinonia** (times of fellowship) ranging from Sunday evening suppers to hiking, bridge, etc.;
- Our **Memorial Garden**, now landscaped and frequently used for receiving ashes of deceased members;
- A **used van** to transport youth;
- New **copying equipment** in the office;
- Growth in **numbers** (peaking at 543) as retirees from the north discovered us;
- More **commitment to our community** through service and funding of the town's social agencies, many of which we had helped start;
- Growth in **staff**: though it was hard to say farewell to DCE Kate Weinman Fisher in 1990 and Associate Pastor Jon Brown in 1994, we welcomed **Ed Forsyth** as DCE in 1991, **Gene Witherspoon** as Parish Visitor in 1993, **Margie and Frank Boyd** as Associate Pastor and Youth Director in 1995.

"Contemporary" worship (a "middle service" at 10 AM) was added to our worship schedule in 1994, led by Jon, then Ed, Gene and Margie. The work of the Deacons was now augmented by the **Trinity Angels** who adopted housebound members for special ministry. We established **The Year of the Child** as a focus in 1994, a portent of good things to come. Our Christian Education program served some 100 students and three adult classes.

Even our finances were streamlined. When **George Mack** became Treasurer, finance activities were brought back in-house and computerized. **Kathy Wilde** was hired as bookkeeper. Throughout these years, our mission dollars (22% of all monies received) supported 14 worldwide and local causes.

Yet crises began to surface: 1) We invited a noted Presbyterian lesbian, the Reverend Jane Spahr, to preach, thus learning that not all our members understood our “open to all” policy; 2) Shortly thereafter our pastor developed eye problems resulting in the loss of sight in one eye. And 3), there were those who had not wanted us to build, who were beginning to drift away.

Goals for the 1990s:

1. Every member is committed to growing as a disciple of Christ and steward of God’s gifts;
2. Each member is known and cared for;
3. Worship services are challenging, stimulating, and meeting diverse needs of the members;
4. Challenging learning opportunities exist for all our people;
5. We communicate our message (*kerygma*) through a servant ministry to the needs of a changing world, local and global;
6. We have adequate and accessible facilities available to meet the needs of our diverse programs.

CHAPTER SEVEN: 1995 – 2000

“Through Years of Struggle, Fellowship, and Grace”

by Midge Mack with Marian Lowry

The title and first line of Trinity’s 40th anniversary hymn by Mary Louise (Mel) Bringle is nowhere more relevant than in the years 1996-2000 at Trinity. All three—struggle, fellowship, and grace—were present. Out of that struggle, by the grace of our Creator God, came the vibrant congregation we are today.

It was Thanksgiving Sunday 1996 when we joyfully and thankfully processed from the old sanctuary to the new, beginning—though we hardly knew it—a new era. Our sanctuary dedication in February 1997 was likewise a joyful and momentous event, celebrated with a community-wide **Fine Arts Festival** followed by a visit from our then **General Assembly Moderator Marge Carpenter** and her message of “**Mission – Mission – MISSION!**” The struggle lay just ahead.

Minor frustrations became major, while conflict and dysfunction beset the staff, leading to the **resignations of the Boyds, Gene Witherspoon, Ed Forsyth** in the late spring, and eventually, in late summer, **Pastor Al Kissling**. The congregation was confused, unhappy and hurting, so that many members, most all of our young families, chose to leave Trinity, too.

With his church-wide expertise, our own **Rev. Mac Hart** rescued us temporarily in September while a committee sought an experienced, intentional interim pastor. **Gene Linton’s** creative gifts brought, in early 1998, challenging preaching and a measure of unity and healing to our divisions. We hosted the first **Faith Summit** meetings when representatives of all faiths began to seek solutions to Henderson County welfare problems. **Faith Link** was established and by 2000, the Trinity team was working with three families.

Session worked hard to revise and strengthen its own structure and operation, resulting in a system of ministries and subcommittees that has worked efficiently and effectively. Our exterior landscaping was expanding, maturing and thriving on special attention. A **columbarium wall**, with 68 niches to receive the cremains of deceased members, was built in the Memorial Garden and put to use in 1999.

Meantime, **Carole Ball** took over our youth program and kept it together for several years, with focus on retreats and mission trips. **Jim Vincent** became Parish Visitor. A Pastor Nominating Committee was soon at work and in September 1999, **Dr. Thomas Blair** of Doe Run, PA, became our **fourth installed pastor**.

We ended both 1998 and 1999 with a solid reduction in building debt and records in outreach and mission support. Growth and progress now took many directions. Pictures had been taken and a new **pictorial directory (Trinity 2000)** was published. We saw our petition to presbytery (1998) about **The Year of the Child as a national emphasis** become an overture adopted by General Assembly. This later grew into **The Decade of the Child** across the whole church. Our own **Faith Link** Program was growing, and we were visited by another **General**

Assembly Moderator, Freda Gardner. In May of 2000 we hosted the quarterly meeting of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina for the first time. When Jim Vincent retired as Parish Visitor, he was ably succeeded by **Linda Owens**, an ordained Presbyterian pastor and single parent of a delightful oriental daughter Jaime.

Children's Learning Hour took on new dimensions as computers and a new curriculum were added. **Wonderful Wednesday** continued with fun pot-lucks and good, varied programming. Trinity was a strong participant (both financially and with people) in **Bounty of Bethlehem** and many other local missions. Small fellowship groups thrived.

It seemed that Trinity was now more comfortable with its past, enjoying its present, anticipating a brighter future. And to reduce the at-times blinding brightness in the sanctuary (as well as create lasting beauty), our own artist Gene Carman undertook a major building project, the first of three **planned stained glass windows** that he would design and install.

CHAPTER EIGHT: 2000 – 2005

Our “Good Times” Roll

by Jean Reynolds

In the years from 2000 to 2005, Trinity saw many changes in staff and programs, but our losses (by death and other departures) totaled 185. As of June 30, 2005, membership was 454.

Staff

Vic and Marian MacAnallen served as Parish Visitors for a year when Jim and Barbara Vincent moved to Connecticut. **Linda Owens**, an ordained Presbyterian pastor, served likewise for a year, succeeded by **Joe Gernoske**, a member of Black Mountain Church who had just completed WNC Presbytery's Commissioned Lay Pastor training. Meanwhile an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee was working and in April 2002, **John Odom** joined our staff as **Associate Pastor**. In addition, **Sandie Salvaggio Walker** returned as Director of the Junior Choirs. **Leslie Zarnowski** replaced her in 2005.

Program and Events

- A monthly Healing and Wholeness Service (second Sundays at 5:00 PM) was added in the fall of 2002.
- Worship Committee commissioned four new banners from the “Great Ends of the Church” series, and these were completed in 2003 by **Jay Barr, Ruth Sampson, Judy King, and Bea Miller**. **Eleanor Reim** joined the Worship Committee to take charge of procuring frequent professional guest musicians to augment our worship program.
- **Mel Bringle** presented a “sermon in song” in November 2001 and has written hymns for Trinity, including one for our 40th anniversary in 2005. She received the Emerging Hymn Text Writer award from the Hymn Society in the US and Canada in 2001.
- **Marea Stratton** wrote “The Story Retold,” our first Christmas pageant in many years. Great success made these an annual event.
- **Rob Tolleson's** musical colleagues, occasionally musicians in our worship services, presented benefit concerts, Instruments for Peace in 2003 and in 2005 for tsunami relief.
- Trinity's first **Kirkin' O' the Tartan** celebration in November 2003 was so successful that it was repeated in 2004 and 2005, with Phil King as Beadle.
- Lenten programs features a **Festival of Faith and Arts** with exhibition of works by Trinity artists in 2003 and a series of presentations on religious art by the Rev. Barbara Miller in 2004.
- **David Sigmon**, who grew up in Trinity, graduated from McCormick Seminary. Called to be a resident staff intern at Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church, David chose to be ordained here in early 2004. He was duly “anointed” by the Trinity children that day.
- **General Assembly moderator Susan Anderson** also visited us in 2004.
- We joined Methodists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, and Roman Catholics in **Henderson County Churches Uniting**.

Mission

- Trinity's Mission and Outreach became stronger. Mission trips were undertaken to Puentes de Cristo in Mexico; Nicaragua; NC's Outer Banks (disaster relief from

Hurricane Floyd), the Heifer International Farm in Massachusetts; and after we adopted a sister church, **Fuente de Vida in Guatemala**, **Carole Ball and Bev Luzadder** visited there, where we are now part of our presbytery's partnership.

- We expanded our Faith Link mission of helping families that are striving to survive without welfare by agreeing to host **LEEP (Learning, Enhancement, Enrichment Program)** for young people as part of our Wonderful Wednesday programming.

Home "Improvement": Changes and Additions

- We revised our by-laws, developed a website (**Russ Russell** as webmaster), added voice mail and phone tree capabilities to our phone system, and redesigned *Tidings* with **LeAnn Keefer** as editor.
- Three beautiful stained glass windows, designed and created for our upper sanctuary windows by **Elder Gene Carman**, were completed, the final one for Easter 2004.
- Late in 2003 the Long Range Planning Task Force began a Congregational Visioning project led by **Dr. Edward Brenegar**. Some 200 people engaged in cottage meetings to ascertain new directions for Trinity. **Jane Swafford** chaired the committee who analyzed the results and brought recommendations to Session, which were approved for implementation.
- In March 2004, **Dr Tom Blair** left Trinity to answer a call to ministry at Second Presbyterian Church in Baltimore.
- Associate Pastor **John Odom** was acting Head of Staff until **Interim Bruce Ingles** from Michigan joined us in August. His untimely death from an aortic aneurysm in early January 2005 numbed the congregation. John Odom then served as Interim Head of Staff, truly doing yeoman's duty, until our Pastor Nominating Committee could complete its work.
- In April the Pastor Nominating Committee recommended the **Reverend Mark Stanley** from the Staunton, VA, area. He was accepted unanimously, began his ministry June 1, and was installed by Presbytery on June 26.
- Weekly catered **Wonderful Wednesday** suppers were followed by choirs and Orff instrument rehearsals, as well as meetings, education, and entertainment on specific Wednesdays. Lent was observed with a **Seder Dinner** as a Wonderful Wednesday program.
- **Pentecost** was a most joyful and spirit-filled occasion with Trinity's first recent "contemporary" service.
- Trinity's 40th year in ministry was celebrated with the creation of history chapters (such as this one) in *Tidings*, a Homecoming Picnic, a dinner and silent auction for members, guest speakers, and more. A banner proclaiming the anniversary, designed by Bob Stratton (who also designed a commemorative coffee cup) was carried in a parade of banners at a Western NC presbytery festival.

Thus our 40th year, despite its sad beginning, ended as a great one, leading into a new era of Trinity life and ministry.

CHAPTER Nine: 2005 – 2010

“New Pastor, 40th Anniversary, Burning the Mortgage”

by Edith Clark, Marian Lowry

After it was determined that another interim pastor would not be called, **The Reverend Mark Stanley became Head of Staff** on June 1, 2005. **John Odom** left (2006) to become a senior pastor of Starmount Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, NC. **Lynn Moore** resigned as choir director (2006) after twenty years of service and was replaced by **Stephen Klein**, who also continued to serve as organist. **Dwight Christenbury** became Trinity's Christian Educator in 2007 and then was Ordained and Installed as Associate Pastor on December 7, 2008. **Joe Gernoske** continued to be the Parish Visitor, staffing a very active diaconate. A Deacon attended a meeting of the Session quarterly. Joe started an Alzheimer's Support Group for caregivers and initiated having about twenty-five Trinity Friends visit regularly with members having a particularly difficult time.

A monthly **service of healing and wholeness** began and was held on the second Sunday of the month. A monthly **Taizé worship** experience was tried. **Kids Up**, a children's worship service began, as did the first **Community Vacation Bible School**. VBS continues to meet at Trinity with five congregations from Henderson County Churches Uniting participating. **Trinity Fellowship Thirty** after the 11AM service was initiated as a time to gather for refreshments and conversation and to meet visitors and prospective Trinity members.

Wonderful Wednesday supper and programming successfully began with about 20% of the membership participating. Families working with IAM trying to get off of welfare joined Trinity members on Wednesday nights and were part of a gathering with an IAM staff member while their children were tutored by Trinity members. Dwight led **Friends of Jesus** as a complement to the **IAM Learning Enrichment Enhancement Program (LEEP)**. **Suppers for 6** was re-invented, and in 2010 Trinity experienced a Seder Meal.

Members visited our **partner church, Fuente de Vida** in Guatemala, in 2005, and hosted mission partners from there in 2006. Two from Trinity went to Guatemala in 2007. Through the years, that Global mission project succeeded with thanks to Carole Ball and then Carole and Beverly Luzadder.

Continuing to uphold the principles that were established when Trinity was founded — that Trinity's doors would be open to any and all and that all members were to be ministers— Trinity hosted "**Love Welcomes All**" conferences and invited the community to participate in educating and encouraging everyone to accept LGBTQ folks into fellowship. Mark continues to meet with like-minded pastors, and the group, through their ministerial association, hosts events through the year and an especially meaningful interfaith New Year's Eve service at Trinity.

Local Missions supported Connie Moore in a new endeavor involving congregations in Henderson County to prepare and serve a Friday night meal to the children at the Boys and Girls Club so they would have a nutritious meal before two days without school or community meals being available. The need and program, **Feed the Kids** continue to grow. Local Missions placed a cupboard in the narthex for the "**Bring a Can When You Can**" food drive for IAM, resulting in 3000 pounds of food being collected in 2009. This program also continues to grow because of the economy.

The core of a **youth group** was developed by the Christian Nurture Ministry. Six members of the group were part of a **Mission Team** sent to the Baja peninsula of Mexico.

Building and Grounds replaced windows and a seriously deficient fire alarm system, Jim Beardsley designed Memorial Garden improvements, and Jim Norris led a renovation of the Fellowship Hall.

For over 15 years, **men of the church** met once a month at the Waverly Inn for lunch, fellowship and guest speakers. In 2008 they lost their main leadership. Presbyterian Women started a new tradition, naming a "**Trinity Woman of the Year**," with Mary Bell being the first.

CHAPTER TEN: 2010 – 2015 “Leading into Our Jubilee Year”

by Edith Clark, Marian Lowry

Continuing the **renovation efforts** at Trinity, the Preschool upgraded and renovated its playground with the help of volunteers, staff, and parents.

A **New Members** packet was designed and given to new persons joining Trinity. Appreciation is often expressed for **Trinity Thirty**, a time to meet and greet after the 11:00 service, and for the Origami flowers made by Ken Sugawara that are given out at the visitors table with name tags.

Trinity was blessed with a generous **gift from Peggy and Ray Hannan** to be used for the music program, particularly for encouraging music in children. “This has been a great asset to the music ministry, and determining how to best use this gift has necessitated much study and led us to pursue an ongoing season of Congregational Discernment, assisted by, noted consultant in the field of ‘Congregational Song’, John Thornburg.”

Trinity’s Stewardship process revealed the depths of the financial challenges many of our members are experiencing. This meant our Session and congregation have had to prayerfully **rethink Mission priorities**. We continue to host the HCCU Vacation Church School. When the LEEP tutoring program was terminated in 2013, participants were encouraged to continue receiving help through the Boys and Girls Club. The Beardsley Education Fund, in honor of Eleanor and Jim who oversaw the endeavor for many years, was created. Its purpose is to facilitate the development of young children through enrichment programs.

Building & Grounds replaced aging AC units and the emergency lighting system, installed new carpet, and embarked on a major remodeling of the lounge. It has replaced the roof, and will upgrade the drainage system around the church. Jim Beardsley, who died in December 2011, was an architect who served 20 years, beginning with the planning and construction of the current sanctuary, the Memory Garden, and the remodeling of the lounge. We lost Mike Cook, our cook extraordinaire for Wonderful Wednesdays and ever-willing painter, when he moved back home to Missouri.

Trinity Preschool experienced major changes when the Finance Ministry challenged the Preschool Advisory Board to reduce the amount of financial support it received from the church. When the Preschool Director resigned, Peggy Hunnicutt became Director and ably oversaw the daunting task! The granting of scholarships came under the control of the Advisory Board. Teachers were re-interviewed – with some resigning but many returning. Peggy and her staff volunteered to present a Christmas program to the congregation on Sunday, December 4, 2011 – a very special event for the church! The Preschool is now recognized for its outstanding program. In 2012 the Trinity Preschool initiated a Transitional Kindergarten, with Darlene Tribby as the teacher. The children are totally prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten.

The PW (**Presbyterian Women**) hosted the Presbytery Spring Gathering for 263 women representing 25 churches in 2011. Their Circles and Coordinating team are committed to nurturing faith, supporting the church’s mission, working for justice and peace, and building community. In 2014, they lost the Lois Circle due to age but have gained the Deborah Circle, which meets in the evening. In March 2015, they hosted a successful *Stop Hunger Now* packaging event. There were 132 volunteers, many from the community.

At the Annual Meeting, of January 2012, members were told that Parish Meetings would be held for open dialogue concerning the Mission of Trinity and Trinity's future plans. Don Widmayer headed the visioning process and coordinated the work with a professional church consultant. On February 17, 2013, there was one worship service, lunch, and table talk conducted by the **Visioning Task Force**. This led to approval by the Session in September 2013 of the *Vision Statement: Trinity Presbyterian Church will grow as a family in faith, trusting and following the compassionate example of Jesus Christ. In a diverse world Trinity will provide a safe haven by welcoming and nurturing all people while reaching out to identify and serve the needs of our communities near and far. We will strive to be a joyful and humble family believing that the greatest commandment is love.* There are six ministry initiatives the Visioning Task Force believes must be implemented in order to fulfill this vision for the future of Trinity.

The summer of 2012 saw Mark using a grant he received to share his first **Sabbatical** with his daughter Emily, and their cameras, for twelve weeks of extensive travel throughout the United States in "search of signs of ecological peril alongside great natural beauty". At the conclusion of this portion of the Sabbatical, Mark and Becky joined Emily for orientation at UNC/Chapel Hill and then celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

With Mark away, **Dwight serving as Acting Head of Staff**, assumed additional responsibilities. He prepared for this assignment by participating in Auburn Seminary's Coaching Institute.

After an especially challenging stewardship season in 2011, the **Stewardship Ministry** was formed by Session, separating it from the Finance Committee. Elder Bob Forsythe led his committee and the membership through a new approach by utilizing the 'New Consecration Sunday' strategy. The program teaches stewardship on the basis of the need for the giver to give for his or her own spiritual benefit, rather than on the basis of the need of the church to balance its budget. The first year success was a unifying source of light for all of the church family.

A **Music and Drama Camp** led by Cindy Clark, the out-of town daughter of Edie and Al Clark, was a special week-long event in August, supported by the Christian Nurture Endowment and the Hannan Fund. Eighteen children from Trinity and the community enthusiastically participated in 'The Promises of God'. After the performances, plans were immediately made for the next year's Music and Drama Camp which has continued either before or after VBS.

Beside preschool, elementary, tweens, and youth classes, there are five adult classes that meet during the **Learning Hour**. The pastors continue to lead study classes for the members. The Ohmann Lectures attract members not only because of their educational value but for the reputation of the speakers themselves.

The **library** and its handy atrium book cart added 163 new resources during 2012. Jane Presseau purchased books, DVDs and 108 gift books.

The **Fellowship Ministry**'s charge is to make 'each member feel known and cared for'. In addition to Wednesday night dinners and programming, Fellowship also sponsors an Easter Morning Breakfast, Dinner on the Grounds, an Annual Church Picnic at Camp Tekoa, Summer Pool Parties hosted by Carole Ball, and Trunk or Treat for all youth and children at Halloween.

The **Finance Ministry** is fortunate to have a dedicated and competent volunteer team led by Tom Karvonen, Treasurer. Kathy Wylde retired in 2011 after 20 years of service handling confidential financial information with sensitivity and competence.

The **Global Missions** and **Local Missions** Ministries contribute to the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly as part of their connectional church commitment. Global selects national and international causes. Carole Ball, Beverly Luzzader and the Global Missions Ministry coordinated with our partner church in Guatemala and arranged a visit to Trinity by three women in 2011. In 2012, the **Guatemala Partnership** celebrated its eighth year of partnership with Fuente de Vida and its seventh year of sponsoring children's scholarships. Trinity sponsored seven primary, four middle school, and one university student, as well as three vocational students and one seminary student. In 2014, Mark Stanley joined the group going to Guatemala.

The **Local Missions** Ministry continues to Reach Out and Serve, as its brochure states, to meet human needs by initiating solutions, volunteering, and allocating funds to over 20 agencies in Henderson County. It also seeks to address urgent community or member needs. Rather than initiating new agencies to address education, homelessness, and hunger, the ministry is focusing on collaboration and use of the church building and other in-kind giving to help people in a way that they can help themselves and then help others. Because of Trinity's openness, a Cub Scout Pack asked to meet in the church. They competed in a District Webelos Expedition and received the Presidents' Award for the Best Pack.

The **New Member Ministry** sent out "Glad you popped in" cards with a package of microwave popcorn to visitors and is now experimenting with new ideas to welcome and encourage first-time visitors. It recruits volunteers for Trinity Thirty and supports Fred Van Itallie as Trinity's Webmaster. The website is the conduit for Trinity's advertising and public relations activities. With fine leadership by Susan Mangrum, a new directory of members was published.

The **Hannan Music Task Force** evolved into a permanent committee attached to the Worship Ministry. It hired four choir section leaders to enhance Trinity's worship and it purchased a drum set for the church. Rob Tolleson arranges for a wide range of musicians to supplement Sunday morning services and to perform on Wednesday nights and at other functions. The pastors and the Worship Ministry plan services that might occasionally bother traditionalists but they are lively and meaningful for most of the congregation. The Jazz Vespers services on weekday evenings are a new addition.

On September 14, 2013, the new **Presbyterian Hymnal, *Glory to God***, was dedicated. Of special note is that Trinity's own Mel Bringle was chairman of the PCUSA committee that assembled the hymnal.

The year 2014 saw the creation of the **Community Music Center**, with Brandilyn Davidson as its head. When she left to pursue her education, Andrew Hiler took over. There are many learning opportunities open to all ages in the community. An added bonus is that Andrew meets with the Preschool.

Beginning January 1, 2015, Lynn Moore returned to the Trinity staff by assuming the position of **Parish Visitor**, which Joe Gernoske faithfully filled for thirteen and a half years. Trinity is grateful to have Ginny and Joe now as just plain active members of Trinity!