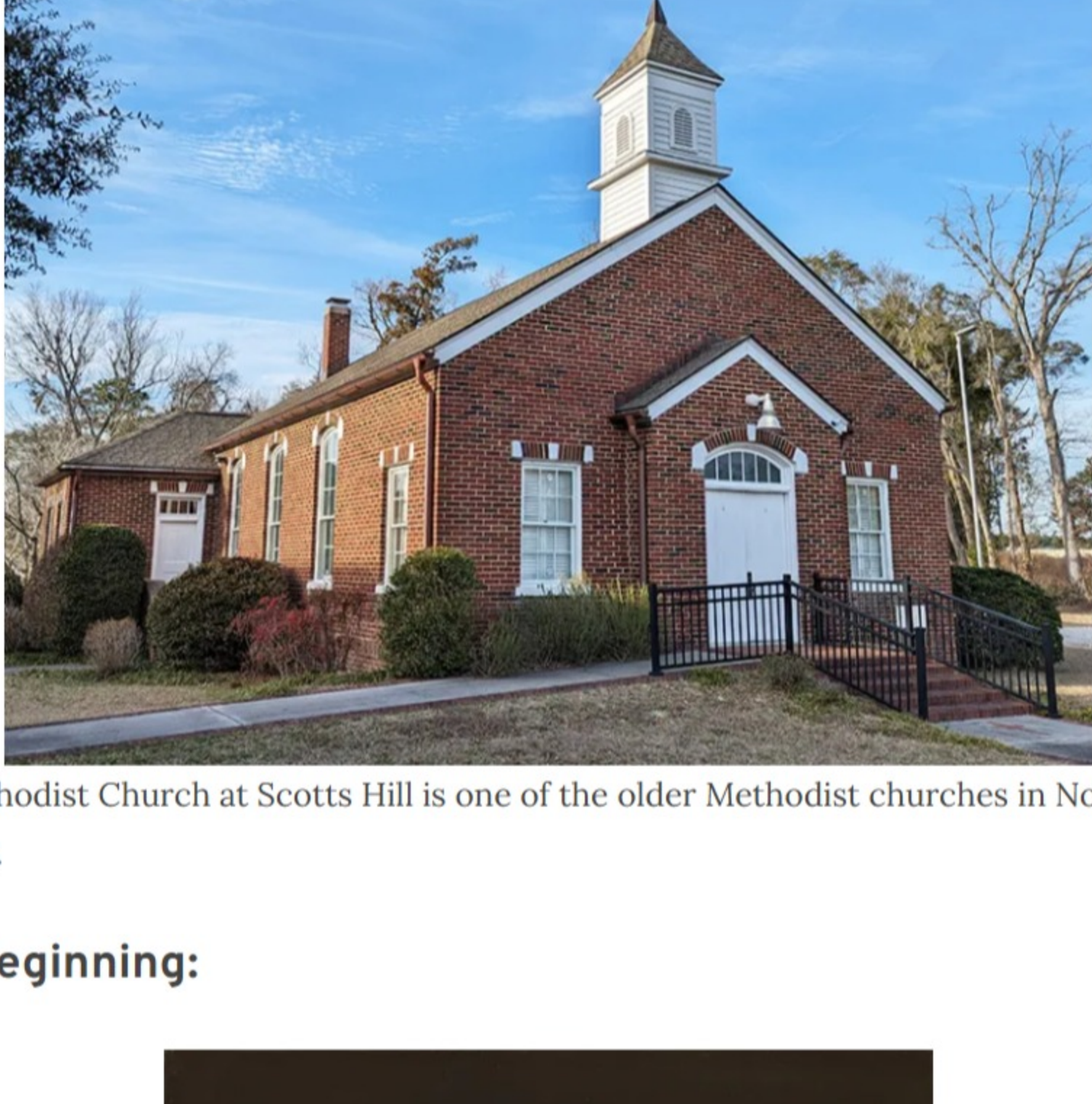
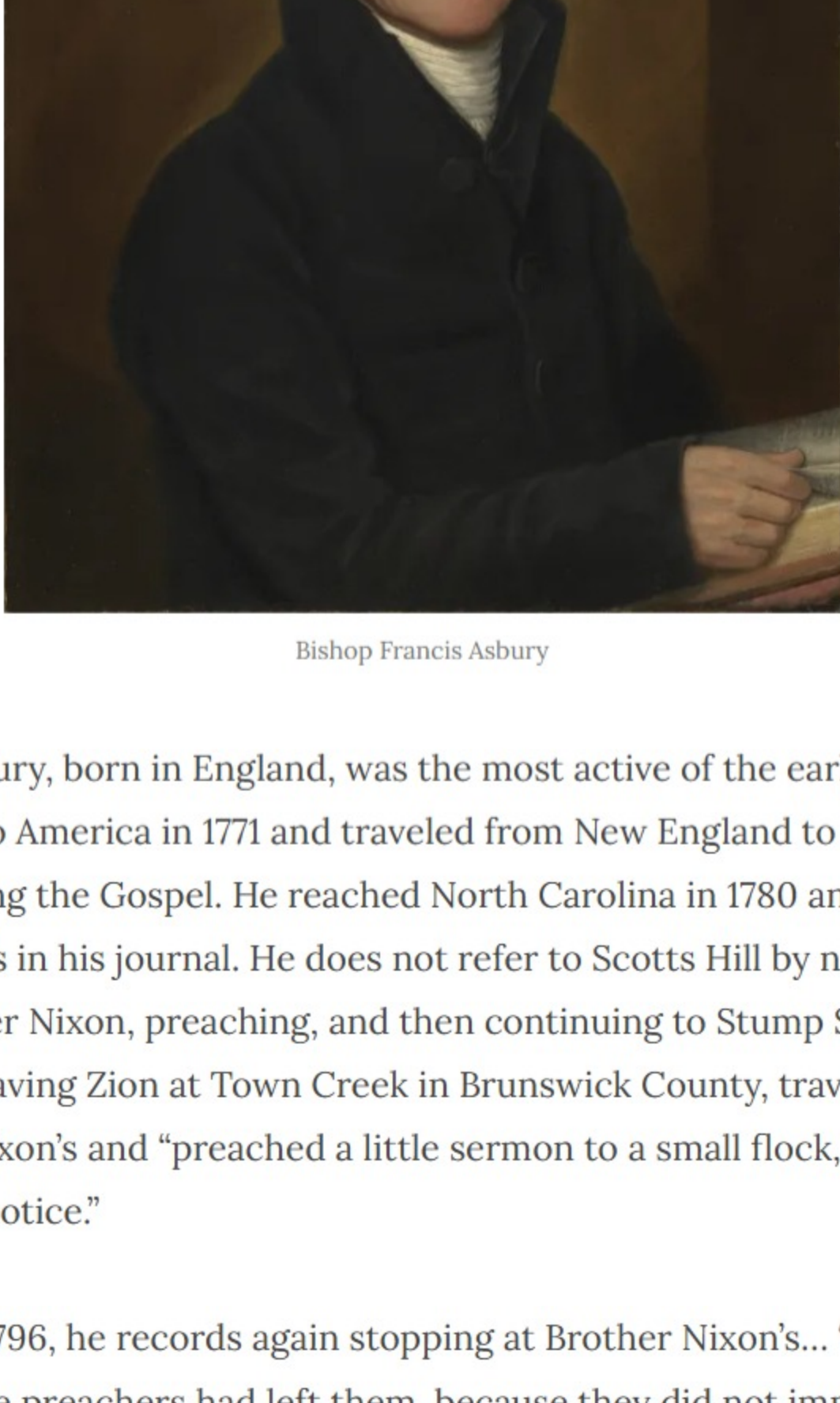


Our History



The Methodist Church at Scotts Hill is one of the older Methodist churches in North Carolina.

The Beginning:



Bishop Francis Asbury

Bishop Francis Asbury, born in England, was the most active of the early Methodist leaders. He came to America in 1771 and traveled from New England to Georgia on horseback preaching the Gospel. He reached North Carolina in 1780 and records the events of his travels in his journal. He does not refer to Scotts Hill by name, but mentions staying with brother Nixon, preaching, and then continuing to Stump Sound. At another time, he records leaving Zion at Town Creek in Brunswick County, traveling about 20 miles to Brother Nixon's and "preached a little sermon to a small flock, since they had only one-half day notice."

On December 22, 1796, he records again stopping at Brother Nixon's... "here I found a kind people, but the preachers had left them, because they did not immediately join in fellowship." Bishop Asbury also refers to staying at Brother Nichols. As both the Nichols and Nixon family lived at Scotts Hill at his time, it shows without a doubt that there was a congregation here prior to 1796.

A deed, recorded in 1815 in New Hanover County, transferring property from James Foy to Frederick Foy, exempts one acre of land on which the 'Meeting House' stands. In 1819, another deed recorded that the same piece of property was transferred from Frederick Foy to Lewis Loftin. The Meeting House stood on the west side of the what is now Hwy 17 North on Scotts Hill Branch (now the location of the Scotts Hill AME Church).

The earliest Conference records at Scotts Hill are from 1824 when Joseph Carle was named pastor of the church at Scotts Hill (126 white and 131 black members). The church belonged to the Virginia Conference. Since it was the only Methodist church in the area, people came many miles by horseback, wagons, carts, and by foot to worship here.

1840-1930:



Old Scotts Hill Methodist Chapel: Built in 1874, it burned in 1930.

In the early 1840's The Scotts Hill Methodist Episcopal Church, as it was now called, appointed a committee to calculate the cost of building a new church or compared to having the old one renovated. In January 1850, Joseph M. Foy gave the church a parcel of land with a house to be used as a parsonage. In 1873, a parcel of land was secured from R.K. Bryan, Sr. and his wife, Susan Loftin Bryan, and a new sanctuary was built (on the site of the present chapel). The new church was dedicated on August 23, 1874 and named Wesleyan Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church South.



Sunday School Picnic- November 27th, 1904. Members of the congregation posed solemnly for the camera before they began their picnic.

1931-1983:

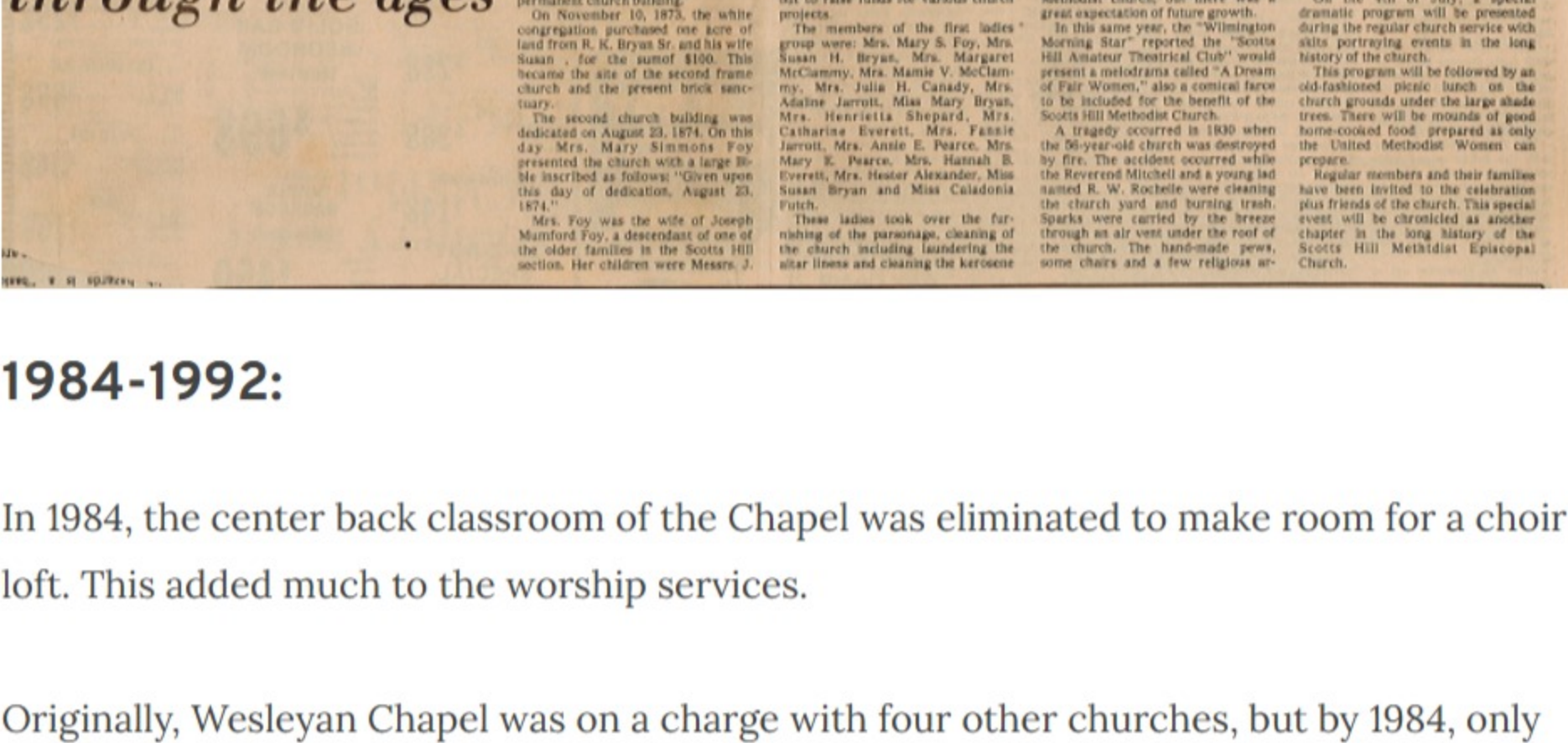
On January 27, 1931, the Wilmington Morning Star reported "church building razed by flames on Monday." Plans were made immediately to rebuild. Construction started on April 1, 1931 and in August 23, the new chapel was dedicated. It cost approximately \$5,000 to build out of brick veneer, consisting of "auditorium to seat 150 people and five classrooms." This building served as the main sanctuary until 1988.



In 1945 the parsonage was destroyed while attempting to move it away from the railroad tracks, which came close to the building. A new parsonage was built on the same site (where the present sanctuary now stands).



In 1963, an old store building, donated by Arietta and Wesley Grant, was moved from the Grant's property to the back of the church property. It was used as a community gathering place. Many of the older Scotts Hill residents remember the wonderful socials given there. Scotts Hill was a rather small community but was beginning to grow. With growth came change. The building was used less and less and eventually became to the church's activity building.



1984-1992:

In 1984, the center back classroom of the Chapel was eliminated to make room for a choir loft. This added much to the worship services.

Originally, Wesleyan Chapel was on a charge with four other churches, but by 1984, only it and Union Chapel remained. Both churches were struggling due to lack of young members. Then Wesleyan Chapel was given a chance to have a full-time pastor with financial aid given for three years. On faith, the church accepted the challenge.

In June 1985, Rev. David Goehring became our first full time pastor. During the first year, 21 members from Union Chapel became affiliated with Wesleyan Chapel. In the summer of 1986, we had our first Duke Seminary student working with the pastor. Throughout this period, Scotts Hill experienced great growth and so did the church. In June 1986, a Building Committee was appointed and worked diligently for a year with Frank Ballard, architect, and the Finance Committee. A Building Fund drive was started. The parsonage was removed, and ground breaking was held in May 1987. The construction, by Waldkirch and Saunders Co., started in January 1988. It was an exciting year as we struggled along in our small chapel facilities. It became necessary to hold two morning worship services. Sunday school classes were held in every available space.

The new sanctuary was dedicated on December 11, 1988. It was designed to complement the Chapel. It seated 285 people, including the balcony, and had a choir room, a nursery, and two bathrooms. At the same time, the Chapel was repaired and painted.

By the time we were in the new facilities, we were outgrowing our classroom space, and fellowships could no longer be accommodated in the Activity Building. Building and Steering Committees were appointed in 1990. Together with the Finance Committee, they brought a long-range plan before the church. The first phase was to build a Christian Education/Fellowship building, to remove the choir loft in the Chapel, and to open the balcony in the sanctuary. Plans by John Stirewalt, architect, were presented and approved. William R. Morris Construction Co. was chosen to build.

In August 1991, the old activity building was torn down to make way for the new. Kitty and Fitzhugh Lee had previously donated approximately two acres of adjacent land, therefore expanding the building site. The new building was to contain a large Gym/Fellowship Hall with an adjacent two-story section (the lower floor consisting of a kitchen, two classrooms, storage room and bathrooms-the top floor consisting of 5 classrooms). Dedication was held on March 8, 1992.

1993-2000:

Lack of space continued to be a problem as our membership and activities increased. The Building Committee was addressing these concerns when we learned that Rev. David Goehring was being moved to New Bern. During his appointment at WCUMC, Rev. Goehring had resided in a parsonage at Wrightsville Beach, belonging to Mrs. Rev. Goehring's church. A suitable house to be used as a parsonage was now being sought. In May 1996, a contract was signed on a new, three-bedroom house in New Hanover County; just in time for our new pastor, Rev. Curtis Campbell to move in upon his June arrival.

Thomas Ballard, architect, and the Building Committee presented sketches of a proposed addition to the present Education Building (single story with three offices, five classrooms, and a multi-purpose room. Also proposed was to remove a wall to enlarge the choir room. A vote was taken on June 1, 1997 and pledges were to be made over a three-year period.

Groundbreaking Super Sunday took place on January 25, 1998. To put a spark in the fund drive, the 'Parable of the Talents' was put to a test. Members received a certain amount of money, put their talents to work in May, and the money returned was almost tripled.

During the summer of 1998, the United Methodist Men built a shelter and picnic tables for our outdoor activities.

In the fall, bids were solicited on the addition. In November, a bid by William Morris Construction Co. for \$602,000 was under consideration. A group of seven church members, all with construction expertise, then proposed doing the addition at a big savings. In December 1998, the job was given to the newly formed WWJD Construction Co.

Construction started in the spring of 1999. A beautiful facility was dedicated on February 27, 2000. A plaque is mounted on the building, naming the seven WWJD members.

In March 2000, the wall between classrooms on the second floor of the Education Building was removed to make more room for the Youth groups. Also removed was a wall to expand the choir room. A sink was moved, and a closet was built for storing the hand bells.

In April 2000, the library was moved from the front of the Chapel to the back rooms, recently vacated by the church staff. The Chapel bell tower proved beyond repair and was replaced. The roof shingles were found to be brittle, so new shingles were put on to match those of the sanctuary.

This brief history cannot give credit to all the people who have volunteered their time, talent, and money to bring us to this point in out history. They are numerous and God knows them by name and that is what counts.

(Sources: "Histories" by Mrs. N.R. Skipper, Sr., Wilmington newspapers on microfilm, newspaper clippings, "The Christian Advocate," and minutes from church meetings. Historical photos published by Wilmington Star News, Sunday, June 27, 1976, photos by M.S. Skipper and historical text by Bill Reaves. Added by Emily Jefferys, June 2023)

Submitted by Mary Frances Sanders, June 2000