

# Trinity brings back homecoming festivities

By MARTHA E. SPARKS  
Special to The Herald-Sun

For only the second time in its 77-year history, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church will celebrate a homecoming on Sunday. The other such observance was 25 years ago in 1973.

The Rev. Donovan A. Drake, pastor, will preach at the 11 a.m. service. There will be no 9 a.m. service, and Sunday school will be held for children only at 9:45 a.m. Senior high and adult Sunday school classes are canceled for this Sunday.

The church at the corner of West Trinity Avenue and Gregson Street has grown from 480 to 507 in the past few months, according to Drake, who came to Durham from Morganton in March.

"I feel like what is good about the church has always been there, and we have tapped into it with God's help," he said.

"We're all excited about this homecoming and expect a full, full house," said Rebekah Bowden whose father, Oscar Bowden, was a charter member of the church.

Preparation has included mailing written invitations to about 295 former members and church staff. Florence Bivins, now retired after many years as church secretary, assembled the list.

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian began life as Pearl Mill Chapel located near the corner of Duke Street and Trinity Avenue. The congregation reorganized and changed its name in 1921, building the structure still in use on a site acquired in a land swap agreement with Pearl Cotton Mill.

The deal was struck in the office of the textile company's president, W. A. Erwin. Dr. Frank S. Hickman, minister to the Chapel at Duke University, spoke at the first church service held in the new church on Sunday, Oct. 6, 1925. It was considered a suburban location, close to a new residential development called Trinity Park.

Judy Johnson and Jane Porter, co-chairwomen for the homecoming, plan a church history display in the church parlor using the theme, "I Love to Tell the Story." Among the stories that will be recalled is the answer to that painful question, what connection is there between BC Headache Powders and Trinity Avenue Presbyterian?

Beyond a top-of-the-head response that churches create headaches for members, the answer involves a unique gentleman's agreement remembered by Perry A. Sloan Jr., Durham octogenarian and church member.

His father, Perry A. Sloan Sr., was a member of the building committee in 1924 when Trinity Avenue Presbyterian's present building was under construction. A short walk away, Watts Street Baptist church was being built at the same time. A Durham pharmacist, C.T. (for Commodore Thomas) Council, was a leader at the Watts Street church.

Council and his partner, pharmacist Germain Bernard, owned the then-flourishing downtown Five Points Drug Store where they formulated a headache remedy, naming it with their two initials, BC. The product was successful, to say the least.

Council and the elder Sloan, an official at Liggett and Myers Tobacco Co., agreed that if either man died before their respective churches had paid off building debts, the survivor would help the other church.

Sloan died shortly thereafter at age 50, when his son was 12 years old. Honoring his agreement, Council, the Baptist, made donations to help the Presbyterians pay off their debt.

Dr. William C. Bennett, pastor emeritus, who was senior minister at Trinity Avenue for 40 years, has been invited to be an honored guest.

A covered-dish dinner will be served under tents in the churchyard immediately after the worship service.

See

Commodore  
Thomas Council

HERALD SUN - 10/10/98



DRAKE