

Religion

The
Herald-Sun

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Saturday

October 7, 2000

Flo Johnston, religion writer
419-6638, flo@herald-sun.com

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian marks anniversary

By **MARTHA E. SPARKS**

Special to The Herald-Sun

Seventy-five years ago, the contractor who built Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church's new sanctuary startled all of Durham's Trinity Park when he used dynamite to blast through solid rock to dig the church basement.

On Sunday, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian plans another blast to celebrate the 75 years it has been on the corner of West Trinity Avenue and Gregson Street. The first service was held in the building Oct. 6, 1925.

The 75th anniversary festival worship service at 11 a.m. will feature music by the Carolina Bass Ensemble from Greensboro, the Chancel choir and the organist. Harry Jansen is director of music ministry. The Rev. Donovan Drake, pastor, will preach.

A potluck meal served on tables in the churchyard, complete with tablecloths and centerpieces of cut flowers, will follow the church service. There will be no 9 a.m. worship service and no Sunday school.

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian began life as Pearl Mill Chapel in 1894. The congregation reorganized and changed

its name in 1921, building the sanctuary still in use on a site acquired in a land swap agreement with Pearl Cotton Mill.

The church was formed when a group, believing Durham needed a new Presbyterian church at the northern edge of Durham, left First Presbyterian with that church's blessings, to establish the new church. Perry Sloan and Rosa Beavers appear to be the only current church members who remember the move from Pearl Mill Chapel to the new building.

Rebekah Bowden, whose father, Oscar Bowden, was a charter member of the church, has a toddler's memory

of holding her father's finger as they went downstairs to the newly constructed basement.

"It smelled musty," Bowden recalls. "I only smelled that smell on Sundays, so I thought it was a 'God smell.'"

Durham's growth has turned Trinity Avenue into a downtown congregation of about 500 members. To meet continued expansion, the church added an education wing in the 1950s. The congregation now is planning to add a third building to provide much needed fellowship, office and classroom space for the growing congregation.