

September 17, 2015

Dott Faulkenbury

MEMORIES of Trinity Avenue Presbyterian

Perry Sloan Jr., grew up at Trinity Ave. Presbyterian Church. In fact his father was one of the 55 members from First Presbyterian Church who moved their membership to start the new “suburban” church in 1924 when Perry was just a youngster. Perry remembers sitting on his front porch on Gregson St. watching them pour the foundation for the building.

About seven of those new members were named Kirkland. There was one of them called “Uncle John” who was known for his long prayers at Wednesday evening prayer services. Someone would yank on his coattail to get him to stop.

Perry and Dukie were married in Chevy Chase, MD right before World War II before Perry entered service. When he came home after the war, Dr. Kerr reminded him that he needed to get more involved in the church as his father had been. He did so and was on the Pulpit Search Committee that called Bill Bennett as pastor in 1948

Another of the founding members of TAPC was **Mary Lou Carr**. Her daughter, Frances and her sister, Eleanor, were rather at “loose ends” during the services since her Mom played the organ and her dad sang in the choir. Rev. George Cooper was the minister and his son, George Jr., was about their age. Both Frances and George Jr. were known to cut up a bit. Their parents told them that if they were good and quiet during service they would pay them. That was a super incentive. So from then on each Sunday they marched down to the second row on the right and took their places. It wasn't long before they got bored and went to sleep!! At least they WERE quiet!!

Eleanor also remembered marching up the street from the corner to the new church when she was about five years old. The kids had baskets of flowers to sprinkle on the sidewalk or throw in the air.

The Youth Group was also another favorite memory of **Frances Carr**. She recalled that they all loved Mac McCoy. She thought the times they went to Conferences at Peace College and to Davidson College were highlights of her teen-age years.

Rosa Beavers also remembers going to the “little church” and then moving to the new church down the street. She remembers Sunday school classes in SMALL rooms in the basement. She was very happy when her husband, Irvin and later sons, Tom and Joe, joined the church .She also thought it wonderful when the grandchild, Beth was christened in the same dress that Tom was christened in. She also has happy memories of the softball teams that the church sponsored.

Reggie Hunnicutt Jr. also remembers growing up at TAPC. His father, Reginald Hunnicutt Sr. let him help many Sundays with various duties. He got to push the button that notified the organist (Agnes Skillen) that it was time to start the processional hymn. He was allowed to hand out bulletins in the balcony and count the nursery. Also very important he would cut on the air conditioner s for the sanctuary, which had to be cut on in a timed sequence or they would overload the circuit. He always felt that the evening Christmas service was a highlight. He doesn't remember much about the music but does remember the wonderful punch and those delicious cheese straws, which he and Kennard Blake would see how many they could eat.

Many of our older church members will remember **Luther Barber**. He was a trustee, a long-time elder and a popular teacher of the Men's Bible Class. Luther was a big man in size as well as character and spirit. It was impossible to hide the fact that he really enjoyed eating. At a homecoming luncheon he went around and cut himself a slice of cake from all the uncut cakes. To justify his actions he said, “I didn't want any of the ladies who baked these cakes to be offended.”

Most of the children at TAPC only knew Luther as the “Candy Man”. They also knew exactly when he would amble across the parking lot to his car. Due to his shape, he wore a large coat with large pockets that held lots of candy that he gave to any child with whom he came in contact.

Many people will also remember **Frank Satterfield**. He was an elder and attended church well into his 100's. He was also a smoker and would light up a cigarette upon leaving the church. One day when he was in his later years Reg Hunnicutt observed him throwing down a cigarette before entering the church and said to him, Mr. Satterfield, don't you know those cigarettes will kill you?” The response was, “At least they won't kill me young.”

One Sunday following the church service two ladies slipped and fell on the ice, which has accumulated on the steps following some earlier frozen rain. The following Sunday Dr. Bennett told of two fallen women in our congregation.

During the World War II years of 1941-45 many young men in uniform came into the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Many members of the congregation invited them to Sunday dinner. When the war with Japan came to an end in August of 1945 the church held a big service in which the congregation gathered to sing together hymns of thanksgiving and praise.

Many years ago a tree, apparently struck by lightning, had fallen on the church grounds. The deacons were meeting and a large portion of their business was struggling to come up with a plan for removing the tree. When they adjourned, however, they discovered that **Mr. Cecil Timblin**, a member in his 80's had cut up the tree and loaded in on his truck. Actions are much better than words sometimes!

One time during a church meeting one of the prominent male members of the church who was short in stature stood up on a pew in the sanctuary in order to make his point. Everyone got the message!

Everyone could always be assured during **Dr. Bennett's** tenure that the Sunday morning service never went over-time. Mrs. Bennett, Dr. Bennett's mother, always sat on the back row and when it neared 12 O'clock she would wave her handkerchief and he would immediately end the sermon.

Many young people growing up at TAPC remember the children's choirs led by **Mrs. Agnes Skillen (Winsted)**. Janis Blake Aghjayan, daughter of Bob and Hildur, remembers loving to sing. However, she was not blessed with the ability to carry a tune. Lovingly Mrs. Skillen told her "to just sing softly" When the church acquired the English hand bells and started a youth bell choir, Mrs. Skillen enthusiastically encouraged her to ring the bells!

She always gave the older members of the choirs their own hymnbooks inscribed with their name.

When **Jake Kincaid** was an associate minister at TAPC a little girl really shook things up when during the time with the children, she suddenly

blurted out, “Guess What? My mama’s an alcoholic.” Finally after what seemed like an eternity of 15 minutes, the silence and tension were relieved when she continued, “You know, an alcoholic for chocolate.” “Oh, a chocoholic”, Jake exclaimed in genuine glee.

From 1963-1969 **Jerri Swanson** led Cadet Girl Scout Troop 149 at TAPC. It was an exciting group of 32 girls from all over Durham. The troop went camping and also volunteered at Lenox Baker Hospital and had yard sales and did other tasks to earn money for a trip to Williamsburg.

For many years the church sponsored a Family Camp at Presbyterian Point on Kerr Lake. Families could camp in the campground or beside a lodge or stay in the camp cabins. People took turns preparing the meals for the group. During the day everyone enjoyed swimming and boating. Sometimes a program was planned that included discussion groups and plays. Every evening Vespers were held at Vesper Dale on the lake. At night both children and adults enjoyed playing games together in the dining hall. It was during one of these outings that **Lou Swanson** tied his motor-boat to the sign that read “No boats allowed”.

Many Scouts enjoyed and received good instruction from the God and Country class with **Dr. Bennett**. Each Sunday one Scout was assigned to place a glass of water under the pulpit for him. One fun-loving Scout one Sunday also put a cherry in the glass. Before the sermon Dr. Bennett held up the glass and commented on the cherry. He then held up a prescription bottle and announced that the culprit had left a clue to his identity. After a pause, he then read out, “Kerr Drug”. The Scout and his parents gave a sigh of relief.

Another group of very early God and Country Scouts learned a lesson the hard way. Each time they met **Dr. Bennett** had them do chores around the building and then took them out for ice cream. One day he couldn’t be there but left them their list and money for the ice cream. They decided to skip the chores and just go get the ice cream thinking he’s never know. The next week Dr. Bennett asked them for his money back.

Agnes Skillen Winstead had many happy memories from the time that the new, shiny, expensive handbells were donated to the church by Mr. and Mrs. Perry Sloan. The 18 bells were made by the White Chapel Foundry

in London, England. We were among the first churches in the area to have bells. She went to a conference at Montreat that year on bell-ringing.

She also remembered when the secretary's office in 1946 was in the little storage room off the ramp into the sanctuary. She also remembered when 2 adult Sunday School classes met in the sanctuary for whispered Sunday School lessons.

John Faulkenbury, then Scoutmaster, was very concerned when the troop returned to the church from a camping trip to find that there had been a fire in the educational building while they were gone. He was afraid that one of the boys might have left a candle in a bottle burning when they got logs out from under the church. As it turned out the fire was started by an electrical shortage in the ceiling between the two floors.

Many years ago, **Bob Blake** taught what was at that time called the Junior Dept of the Sunday School. It was composed of boys and girls in the 5th and 6th grades. Everyone loved that class because as he taught the lesson Bob also illustrated it with his "chalk talks". A picture really is worth a thousand words.

In 1963 the Presbyterian Church introduced a new curriculum called the Covenant Life Curriculum. TAPC started a class thereby called the Covenant Life Class. The first book studied was entitled "Into Covenant Life". The class was the first discussion class at the church and became very popular. In later years the class discussed many current religious books chosen by the members and contributed to many community benevolences. It was disbanded when the Educational Building was being renovated.

Years ago under the auspices of the Home and Family Nurture Comm. the church had a Covered Dish Supper one Sunday a month. Each month there was some type of program such as Hobby Night, Ice Cream Social, etc. Once during a Talent Night program, **Carol Van Hise** gave a marvelous imitation of Minnie Pearl complete with the hat with the price tag on it.

There are many plaques around the church in memory of different church leaders. Once the church presented one of the student assistant pastors with a bicycle as a going-away present. He was very pleased and after looking it over very carefully announced in a very serious voice, "I'm surprised it doesn't have a brass plaque on it."

The first Homecoming at TAPC was held in Sept. 1971 while **Dan Durway** was Associate Pastor. Tents were erected and lunch was served on the lawn. Many former members returned for this special occasion. Another homecoming was held in 1998 and enjoyed by many.

Years ago the Christmas cantatas were held on Sunday nights. After each the Women of the Church put on a special candlelight reception. Punch was served in silver punch bowls and the women wore long dresses.

Most people knew that Dr. Bennett had a prize collection of canes. In the 1990's when he was moving to the Forest at Duke, he obtained the help of **John Grotz**, the student asst. at the time. John had all 15-20 of the prized canes locked in his car. On the way, it was time for lunch so he stopped at home for a quick bite. While he was eating he got a phone call from Dr. Bennett saying. "John, what are you doing?" He said, "I was eating lunch." He asked, "Do you have my canes?" He said, "They're locked in the trunk of my car." He said, "Do you know they are worth xxx thousands of dollars? You get them over here right now." He said, "Yes sir" and left his half eaten sandwich.

Dr. Bennett always loved the cloister garden which was begun in 1956 under the direction of **Dr. Lee Chaiken** from the Forestry Dept. at Duke. A variety of Japanese Holly that was placed in the center came from Hiroshima. A Japanese doctor by the name of Tachashima had been befriended by Dot Bersabach. She started him attending TAPC even though he was a Buddhist priest. After he returned home he sent the tree with the idea that it represented new life from what had been killed. By the time the truck was 4 ft. tall it had divided into three. Dr. Bennett always said he thought of them as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The church renovation that brought the refectory with the Spanish furniture into existence, was directed by **Jean Brumley**. She was also responsible for the Christmon tree, which of course reminds us all about Bob Blake climbing to the top of the ladder and reaching out and putting the crown on the top when no one else would. The cross hanging behind the pulpit in the sanctuary was also given by the Brumleys.

Charles Knott, who became the church architect, designed the Bell Tower by taking three church windows and intersecting them to form the final design.

Bob Blake had many interesting memories of life at TAPC. He remembers always going to the Wednesday night prayer meetings held by Bill Bennett for many years after he came. Bob always claimed that was where he received his Christian education development and understanding of Presbyterianism. He said that a few times a young blind lady came with a seeing-eye dog, which lay quietly by her chair. He noticed his eyes closed. He said he never knew whether he was asleep or just a very pious dog.

Judy Johnson has many special memories of TAPC over the years. She especially remembers that during earlier years the Sanctuary Guild Chairman didn't have a committee to help, but she was expected to have fresh flowers on the altar every Sunday. As a result many Friday afternoons she would show up at the church. Dear, sweet Malica, who was the sexton for many years, would always help her bring from her car all the necessary things to fix the arrangements. He would take a seat in the center front row to offer suggestions. She claims she could not have done it without him.

Judy also has a wonderful memory of refurbishing the sanctuary while Kent Clise was minister. **Dukie and Perry Sloan** had generously given the church a wonderful, much-needed pipe organ. Following the advice of Mr. Bedient, the designer of the organ, a committee was formed that led to the refurbishing of the sanctuary.

Wade Johnson told an interesting story about how the nursery came to have a Dutch Door. In the summer of 1961 Wade dropped daughter Carolyn (now Mrs. Scott Andrews) off at the nursery which had a solid door with no window. When returning to pick her up after church and opening the door he discovered that there was NO CAROLYN! Search groups immediately fanned out inside and outside the building. Someone eventually located her down at the corner of Duke and Trinity Ave. After that the door was cut in half so that the top could remain open for all to see in but the little ones could not sneak out.

Frances Clement mentions many memories of her family's years at TAPC. She remembers the adorable choir booklets made by members of the Children's Choirs led by Agnes Skillen Winstead. Another is their son, Tim

asking Dan Durway why he and Dr. Bennett didn't sit on each side and let God sit in the middle.

On another occasion their daughter, **Liz**, whispering to her in the sanctuary, "Are we going to have punch in the Oyster Garden?" She also remembers the Sunday that Travis Porter delivered the message at the last minute one Sunday morning due to Dr. Bennett's sudden illness.

Trinity Ave. has had a continuously active Boy Scout Troop since March, 1954. The Christian Education Committee formed a Troop Committee and Bob Blake agreed to be the first Committee Chairman as well as the Assistant Scoutmaster for W.B.Kirkland, the first Scoutmaster. **Robin Blake**, son of Bob and Hildur received the first Eagle Scout Award in 1960. Following several other leaders, Bob Blake served as Scoutmaster from 1966 until his retirement in 1974.

John Faulkenbury was Assistant Scoutmaster to Bob and then served as Scoutmaster from 1974 to 1976 and again from 1984-1990.

As of 2015 the Troop has had over 90 Scouts reach the rank of Eagle. Troop 412 has distinguished itself within the council and the region with many of his youth becoming outstanding leaders. The Troop has celebrated a 50th year reunion in 2004 and a 60th one in 2014. Both reunions were well attended by some of the charter members of the troop.

About the Author:

Dott Faulkenbury joined TAPC in 1964 and she and her husband, John were married there in 1968 after he joined the church. They raised two sons there also. Dott and John were Chairmen for many years of the Home and Family Nurture Committee and planned the first Homecoming the church had in Sept. 1971. Dott served as Moderator of the Covenant Life Sunday School Class, many offices in Women of the Church including Moderator and led an Arthritis Support Group at the church for many years. John served as a Sr. High Sunday School teacher, a Deacon and an Elder at TAPC and served two stints as Scoutmaster of Troop 412. Dott prepared these memories of TAPC at the encouragement of the ministerial staff and presented them for a Prime Timers program on September 17, 2015.