



# A YEAR-BY-YEAR HISTORY OF CENTRAL UMC



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## **2021**

This document you are reading was created as a working guide to direct attention to the many ministries of Central. It is a reproduction of excerpts from the minutes of mostly Charge Conference Minutes through the years as recorded in our Schofield Library Archive Room. They include comments by pastors and committee chairpersons. Library Volunteers through the years have maintained records, organized them, and are in the process of archiving them. The archiving process involves electronically scanning the documents so that we all can have access to these documents. This document was made possible by all these actions. To continue this, process all committee chairpersons need to make sure their minutes are archived at the end of each year. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **1949**

During the past quarter the most significant step of progress in our church program has been the institution of a full-time program of music under the direction of a full-time minister of music, Miss Alice Anne Ayers.

Weekday Kindergarten opened for the first time.

In planning the work of the new year, we look toward the continuance of the Advance program, leading our people in the study of the "Our Faith" booklets. The emphasis upon Advance specials will be continued, also.

An organization of Methodist Men has been formed and has begun work.

During the quarter a new type of bulletin service has been instituted whereby we are mailing to each family the bulletin on Thursday of each week.

The beautification and redecoration of the sanctuary has been completed with the laying of the new carpet

## **1950**

The Church School Enrollment shows a decrease in number when church school has grown. The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that our church school record and pupil accounting system is being kept more accurately. It has taken about four years to set up a permanent file for the church school, but at least we know who our church school members are now.

Youth Week - Largest attendance and most effective program of any youth week that we have had. Dr. K. K. George, from India, made a marvelous contribution to the success of the week.

New Educational Building: Didn't have room for our activities during youth week -  
- had to rent the Junior High Cafeteria

### **1951**

Clyde S. Bryce, Secretary of the Board of Stewards, presented the following resolution to the Quarterly Conference for action: "Mr. C. S. Cornell, Chairman of the New Church School Building Committee made a motion at the last regular Board meeting that the Board of Stewards recommend to the Quarterly Conference at its earliest convenience that Central Church be authorized to purchase the Scott Property adjacent to the church property (funds to come out of the soliciting campaign)." ...After a general discussion of the above resolution, the motion was carried unanimously.

### **1952**

M.L. Meadors, Jr. and John C. Snyder, Jr. were recommended to be given a license to preach... The secret ballot taken was unanimous in both instances.

### **1957**

We are happy to report that Central Church is manifesting a great deal of interest in our newly formed church organization, Highland Park. The Quarterly Conference will note that our net loss in membership is due to our support of the Highland Park Church.

### **1958**

Be it resolved by the Quarterly Conference of Central Methodist Church that said conference adopt a term system in the office of steward, according to the plan and method hereinafter set forth. Said system to be effective immediately. 1....9.

### **1959**

Our church school building is now being air-conditioned.

This has been a year characterized by missionary advance. We feel that the addition of another missionary family is one of the finest things this church has done this year.

In addition to this, we are giving all the encouragement that we can to Highland Park Church, and we are doing this in every way that we can. Our church is growing more mission minded, for which we are very grateful

## **1961**

Dr. Medlock stated that at the Special Building Committee Monday they decided to bring in an interior decorator, Mrs. Kerfoot, to help decide on the painting of the sanctuary.

Dr. Mobley reported that the contract had been signed and the first payment made on the stained glass rose window. He said that Mr. Willett was working on a design for the side windows and that a Lumiere would be coming in soon for the approval of church committee. He said that he thought he had the three large windows pledged, leaving the three small windows to be pledged.

Dr. Medlock said he would like to continue the two morning services for a while to give this a fair test. He said if we were reaching more people we should continue these two services, but if having two services was just dividing the congregation there would be no merit in it.

A discussion was entered into about the staff members not being able to park in the vacant lot because people who worked uptown parked in the lot.

Mention was made of the possibility of getting a chapel for Central.

Dr. Sam Russell, Jr. announced that a banquet would be held on November 27th honoring the church sponsored Little Boys Baseball League Team with New York Yankee Second Baseman, Bobby Richardson, of Sumter being the principal speaker.

The organ was designed and built by Paul Fritzsche Organ Company.... contains 1,687 pipes.

Dr. Mobley informed the group that all six of the southern stained-glass windows had been underwritten..... The cost of these windows will be \$1,350 for the large windows and \$500 for the smaller windows.

We have been given a lot adjacent to the church by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Houghton of New York. In addition to that we have purchased a large lot adjacent to that for \$75,000.

Dr. Mobley brought to the attention of the Official Board and idea of Mr. Cornell regarding the organization of a committee of church workers (possibly commission and committee chairmen) to meet weekly over a Dutch treat, for the purpose of formulating and developing ways and means of aiding the church program, with special emphasis on 1. Spiritual program. 2. Financial Program. 3. Youth Program. 4. Creating more interest and activity in Committee chairmen.

Disbursements: Viking Sprinkler Company- first payment on sprinkler system.

Dr. Medlock said that the records show that Central ranked 2nd in Epworth Children's Home giving and that Buncombe Street in Greenville lead the Conference in this.

Dr. Mobley gave the facts about the recommendation of the Special Building Committee to the called Official Board meeting on Wednesday, September 8:35 PM. The proposed plan is to put in a stained-glass window in the back of the choir loft. He stated that he would certainly like to have stained glass windows put in the Cheves Street side of the Sanctuary as memorials.

Dr. Mobley called attention to the enlargement of the church chancel and the necessity for the rearrangement of the Worship Center.... The church architect, Jack Dowis, was called on. After a few remarks regarding the development of ideas leading to the present version of the new chancel and worship center. He further stated that the installation of the rose window would delay work on the new organ about three weeks. Rose window cost \$3,000...The motion was declared carried. For motion 33, Against motion 11.

Mr. W.L. McArver stated that his committee we are now installing gas heating in the church house, as well as a gas water heater. He said that it would be necessary to take off two rooms to have a fire escape which was a requirement of the city building committee. He stated that the organ was in the process of being installed.

Dr. Mobley, supplementing Dr. Lawrence's remarks, stated that in extending the choir loft six feet on either side that it would be necessary to move the worship center and that Mr. Willet, an expert on church design and architecture, would meet with a special committee on Saturday, September 9, 1961, to discuss and advise on this phase of the renovation.

Mr. J.L. Duffell, Chairman of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism, made a brief report on the September meeting of his commission, at which there were 17 presents. 1. The problems confronting an uptown church to retain its membership in the face of progressive residential churches. 2. That beginning with the communion service on October 2nd, Central would hold two morning services through the month of October. The results of this experiment would determine whether this practice would continue.

Dr. M.R. Mobley stated that Mr. Willet from the Willett-Stained Glass Company would be here Saturday and a meeting would be called some time Saturday afternoon or Saturday night so that the committee could get some good information of the decorating of the Sanctuary.

## 1962

C.S. Cormell, Chairman of Commission on Stewardship and Finance, stated that he was about to talk out of both sides of his mouth. That the Operating Budget was still short on pledged amount by some \$16,000 and the Building Fund short about \$4,000, however since Central Church seemed to operate on faith instead of money, and the counseling minister was in urgent need of a Dictaphone and a secretary to fulfill his expanding needs, he would make the following recommendation and motion. That the church purchases the requested Dictaphone. That the church employs a secretary for a 3-month trial period.....

...Viking Sprinkler Company...Haynsworth Construction...Willet-Stained Glass...DeBerry Windam Electric Co...Bryce Plumbing Co...Paul Fritzche, balance on organ in full...Summerford Sheet Metal Works, Peoples Natural Gas...Carter-Miles Machine Shop, fire escape church house.

Of course, the general topic of conversation around the table was the crisis in the world today because the United States had been forced to declare a blockade on any ships from Russia carrying offensive weapons to Cuba.

Mr. Al Cole, expressing the thoughts of those seated around him, suggested that the bulletin be printed in red until the budget was raised.

...4. Request relating to space or equipment shall be channeled to the Commission on Education through the department superintendent and the division superintendent.

Cliff (Cormell) said that he hoped that we could get in shape so that we could put aside some money for emergencies. Rives King said he had been waiting for years to hear Cliff say that and he was heartily in accord with that thinking.

Dr. Medlock, reporting on the membership of the church, stated that in his opinion Central Methodist Church had the best program in the South Carolina Conference, yet the membership is declining. "We stand now in a critical situation with all downtown churches." The laymen are doing a fine job and he gets wonderful reports of their work, but the new churches, St. Paul, and Highland Park, have an aggressive and progressive spirit and are growing, which means that more effort with more members contributing will have to be exerted. The downtown church must be finding ways to offset the natural advantage of the out-lying churches.

Dr. Medlock announced that he had received a copy of the brochure of the Cumberland Methodist Church and that they had expressed deep appreciation for the \$40.00 ad from Central Church.

Mr. W.L. McArver brought up the fact that Mr. B.B. Gilbert would like for him to have the privilege form signed for the Civil Defense to investigate the possibility of using some of the facilities of Central Church as a potential fallout shelter. The group decided that Mr. McArver should go ahead and sign this privilege form as chairman of the Property and Furnishings Committee.

Announcement was made that the Special Building Committee has finished its work and has now been dissolved.

Dr. Iverson Graham stated that the Committee on Counseling was going ahead with the plans for the School of Pastoral Care (non-denominational) to be established here at Central Church.

### **1963**

The need for a hostess at Central was brought out and it was agreed that it would be so good if this could be instituted.

Dr Mobley made a motion that the idea of staff members giving reports on their various activities at the Official Board meetings be adopted. This motion was carried.

6 PM Supper in Fellowship Hall--\$.35 per person...singing at the tables...7 PM Study Groups and programs for all ages...

The possibility of having brass rails installed on the front of the sanctuary building was seriously discussed and authorization was given to call Mr. Haynesworth for some prices.

Dr. Medlock stated that the three "Family Nights" held already had been very successful. The programs had been good, and the meals were delicious. This Sunday another good program is planned, and this will be the last in the series.

It was announced that the Revival would begin Sunday at the 11:15 A.M. service and would continue Monday through Thursday from 10:00-10:45 AM and from 7:30-8:30 PM. Dr. Medlock stated that he was writing letters to persons in the church assigning them certain pews to be filled up every night....

The subject of having our church incorporated was brought up, as well as whether we should take out liability insurance.

Dr. M.K. Medlock, Chairman, mentioned again the Family Nights beginning March 10th with supper for \$.35 per person.

The fact that Central would be soon celebrating her 50th anniversary was mentioned, and comments were made on whether some special celebration should be planned.

The class of Juniors was brought into the church on Palm Sunday; mention was made of the thoroughness of their training. This training began in their department on Sunday morning with Mrs. Allen Slone as their teacher over a period of six weeks... The Reverend Davis Bilberry said... that he hoped that next year this class could be developed into a longer period of study, that he thought these young people needed more than six weeks training.

Mr. Wilson gave a report on his recent visit to the Youth Camp at Cleveland, SC. He stated that he was on the Grounds Committee. He reported that construction was well under way and the facilities there would be meeting many needs and would soon be open about all year around and would be called the Methodist Camp instead of the Youth Camp because the camp would be used for all ages.

Lynn Duffell, chairman of the Membership and Evangelism Committee, announced that a reception for newcomers and new members of Central had been set up for 4:00 PM Sunday May 19th.



The word came in that Conner Staudenmaier would like to order and present to the church a stretcher which seemed to be the type that would meet our needs. The group agreed that this was a nice gesture and to notify him to order the stretcher.

The closing of the driveway across the church's lot was discussed and the group thought it would be wise to let our people know through means of the bulletin that they could not use the Gasque Hotel parking lot for church meetings.

The stretcher that Mr. Connor Stoudenmaire had ordered and donated to the church has come in and will be hung on the wall of the sanctuary hall for ready use.

Dr. Iverson Graham reported that the School of Pastoral Care had had their first graduating class exercises with seven area ministers receiving graduation letters.

Plaque: The Rose Window in the Sanctuary is dedicated to the Glory of God and in honor of Dr. Melvin K Medlock and Mayme DuBose Medlock who ministered unto us 1956-1963

## **1964**

Mr. Rufus Lewis, Chairman of the Property and Furnishings Committee, announced that they had installed a temporary light in the sanctuary to light the stained-glass windows and he would like the group to drive by the church at night and let him know what they thought of the lighting.

## **1965**

Dr. R. Bryce Herbert, Chairman, gave the purpose of the Policy Committee as being a long-range view of the church's life and function. He brought out the fact that no official action could be taken but referrals can be made to the proper commissions and committees. He stated that it seemed that this committee, meeting regularly once a month, could be a good tool to serve as a body to do close thinking.

The matter of memorials in lieu of flowers, etc. was discussed. It was suggested that a "Want List" be published for the consideration of the congregation to buy such things as pianos, new hymnals, and pulpit paraments...It was suggested that a Book of Memorials along with a display stand for this be purchased with the memorial money now on hand, but that this matter be referred to the Worship Commission for their thinking and possible action.

## **1966**

Dr. Herbert told the group that he and Mrs. Eloise Parish had talked about the possibility of the church buying a camera, either for movies or slides, to record church school and church activities for showing at different programs in the church life. The idea we brought out that this picture taking might be a function assigned to the Committee on Church History.

The lighting of the new stained-glass windows, having the present flood lights taken into consideration, was discussed with the conclusion that an electrical engineer should be consulted to find the best way to secure the result wanted.

Plans for instituting the Camp for Disadvantaged Children was talked about. A site must be pinned down; a camp supervisor must be secured, counselors, cooks and helpers need to be enlisted: and the length of time the camp will be in session has to be decided.

A new "form" to take the place of the Wednesday evening prayer service was discussed and the following suggestions made A) To conduct different "schools" or emphasize a particular subject for a period -- then discontinue. B) To explore the possibility of an early morning "on-the-way to work" or "on the way to school" time of prayer. C) To explore the possibilities of "neighborhood group" discussions.

The following were elected as a Building Fund Committee: WS Dowis, Jr., Irving Blanchard, Tom Stackhouse, Jr., CS Cormell, Leigh Wilson, EC Bryce, and Walter Hewitt.

Included in the list of committees were Records and History, and Policy.

## **1967**

Motion made that a program of Pastoral Care and Counseling be initiated within the SC Conference and that a Director of Pastoral Care and Counseling be established. Dr. Iverson Graham, Jr. be authorized to accept this part time position.

## **1968**

The following came out of these group discussions. 1. Need for Retarded Children's Sunday School Class.

Dr. S.O. Russell, Jr. gave a report on the Lay Witness Mission held on the weekend of May 24th, stating that it seemed a wonderful experience for the people

of Central and for the lay visitors. He stated that sharing groups were being formed and we would be hearing more about these groups.

It was announced that the congregation voted to buy the new camp property and now it was a matter of making application for the loan.

The Board members were divided up into discussion groups of six and Mr. McWhirter gave out sheets with the following items listed: "Program", "Buildings", and "Staff" and asked that each group discuss these items and come up with some recommendations.

Mr. McWhirter made a statement of appreciation for the way he had been received at Central and challenged Central not to rest on the past accomplishments but to move on into the future. He said, "Central must have a vital program in every respect if it is to remain the great church it is and that concern about people is a prerequisite for growth."

The members of the proposed Long Range Planning Committee were read out as follows: Mr. Karl Guest, Mr. Laurence McIntosh, Mr. Milliard Dozier, Mr. Rufus Lewis, Mrs. Clyde Bryce, Jr., Mr. Jack Parrish, Mrs. R.I. Van Hook, Mr. Allen Windham, Mr. Leigh Wilson, Mrs. James Allen, and Mr. C. S. Cornell. Mr. Guest was asked to serve as temporary chairman.

It was announced that the now existing Policy Committee be activated and that this committee be a steering committee to assign duties to now existing committees and commissions, with these committees and commissions reporting to the Official Board each month.

A Grounds Committee was appointed as follows: Mrs. J. L. Flowers, Mr. M.P. Jackson, Sr., Mr. Charlie Jernigan, Mrs. James Lambright, and Mrs. E.A. Carlson with Mr. Flowers being appointed as temporary chairman.

Neighborhood lists were passed out to the new official board members.

Mr. C.S. Cornell gave a report on the effort to reactivate the Methodist Men's Club and have the club meet at a time that would suit most of the men of the church.

## **1969**

Mrs. Frank Greene, Social Concerns Chairman, reported that her committee had met and selected three projects for the year: (1) family adoption plan (2) a blood

program of the church in conjunction with the Red Cross (3) Austin Wilkes Society, Flynn Home and AA.

Rev. Paul McWhirter - stressed the following: (1) Dr. Pierce Harris will be with us next week for our Revival (2) Family night on Wednesday nights at 6:30 PM (3) On Sunday evenings, following revival, we will be having Bible Study at 6:30 PM

Mr. Allen Windham reported for the Parsonage Committee stating that plans were being completed for a new parsonage. After discussion by various members of the Board, motion was made by Mr. Charles Smith and seconded by Dr. Sexton that the committee proceed with plans and letting of a contract for the construction of the new parsonage. The motion carried.

Rev. Few reported that a Family Night would be held on December 3rd with new members and newcomers as special guest.

Mr. Charles Smith made the motion that the Board approve the purchase of the Gasque property and the appointment of a committee to negotiate on the price of the property. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Lide and carried.

Mr. McWhirter reported a new program of taping sermons and getting someone to take them to the homes of shut ins.

Rev. McWhirter introduced the three new staff members, Miss Prevatte, Mr. Mills, and Rev. Few, and explained their duties and work areas.

## **1970**

Mr. McWhirter commented that in 1970 Central will be 100 years old, he asked that a committee be appointed to draw plans and report back to this board. Mrs. Pearl Jones moved that the chairman appoint a Centennial Committee - approved.

The Building Commission recommended we purchase the Gasque property (known as the Garden Gate property) at \$56,500. Mr. Laurence McIntosh made the motion and Mrs. L.D. Lide 2nd the motion. Mr. McWhirter explained about meeting held with the owner of the property. Approved voice vote.

Mr. McWhirter reported that on Sunday evening, beginning October 18, 1970, thru December 13, 1970, to include more people, the Sunday evening service would be changed to the following: ...Fellowship Hall sandwiches...informal worship period of approximately 20 minutes...also study groups.

Mr. Millard Dozier, member of the Long-Range Planning Committee, presented their report and recommendations for the Gasque property and made the motion that they be adopted. Seconded by Mr. Clyde Bryce Jr. Motion Carried. (Copy of Long-Range plan attached)

Mr. C.W. Brown Jr. reported that the first meeting of the Methodist Men's Club would be held Tuesday, October 20, 1970. (Note this is the first meeting of the restarted Methodist Men.)

Mr. John B. Crouch, Church Lay Leader made a report as follows: "The Policy Committee of Central Methodist Church hereby offers the following suggestions to carry out the plans that are set up which evidently will take three- or four-year's time: See attached plan of 1970 2 10.

Mr. S. Leigh Wilson for the Camp stated that the building program is about complete and that a four-week CCFC for 50 children is planned for this year.

Reverend McWhirter gave the board the background on a "Youth Council" set up by the young people under the direction of the Reverend Few, Reverend McWhirter, Miss Prevatte, and others. This Group organized to administer the building known as the Gasque property or the Garden Gate Building. After much discussion on this George Jordan moved "That we hear the youth representative." After much discussion and a question-and-answer period with several motions and comments, the makers of these motions withdrew them and agreed to one motion made by Mr. Karl Guest. "That we allow the use of this Building by the Youth Council at the pleasure of the Board passed voice vote." (Original Proposal attached)

At 7:30 PM the Board Members were Host of Dr. and Mrs. Claude Sexton to a delicious chicken bog dinner at the Church Camp Site. The meeting was called to order by Chairman W.S. Dowis at 8:25. PM.

Mr. McWhirter commented about the wonderful experience the children had at our camp for the underprivileged that they were happy and almost everyone learned to swim. He also remarked about the environment that they had to go back to.

Taylor Herring representing the young people of the Church, reported that they have had 4 dances with approximately 800-900 people in attendance and all had a

good time and there had been no trouble at all. He also expressed their thanks for our confidence in them by letting them use the building.

## **1971**

Mr. Rives King read the following resolution and moved for its adoption. Seconded and passed...., I therefore move that this Church name the youth building the Raymond McMillan Youth Building and the Camp on Black Creek, Camp Sexton.

The Camp Committee recommended that the Church Camp be named "Camp Sexton", ...Mrs. Charles Ingram made a motion that the pavilion be named "The Morse Pavilion". Seconded by Mrs. Clyde Bryce. Motion carried.

Whereas the parsonage on 317 Winston Street has been sold...Therefore be it resolved that the Trustees of Central United Methodist Church be authorized to purchase the home located 1307 Cantabury Road.

Building Fund Chairman, Dr. Hunter Stokes gave a full report....He then presented the following resolution and moved for its adoption -- The Finance Committee recommends that all business coming before the Board requesting funds of more than \$100 and which has not been previously reviewed by the Finance Committee be fully discussed and voted on that if the business is approved it is then referred to the Finance Committee for action -- Seconded, discussed and passed.

The secretary amended the resolution of the Finance Committee to read as follows: The Finance Committee recommends that all business coming before the Board requesting funds of more than \$100 and which has not been previously reviewed by the Finance Committee be fully discussed and voted on - if the business is approved it is then referred to the Finance Committee for financial feasibility studies, then to be returned to the Board for final action.

Plaque Organ Chimes to God Be the Glory in Memory 1885 - Troy Gladstone LeGette - 1971 by his Wife and Son Mrs. Vera Haselden LeGette, Ray Gladstone LeGette

## **1972**

He (Mr. McWhirter) stated that Dr. LeGrand Moody would hold a revival the last of Feb. Sunday AM through Wed PM that he would like for all board members to note their calendars and plan to attend all services.

Mr. Leigh Wilson, reporting for the Long-Range Planning Committee made the following motions: 1. Trustees that they get cost estimated on tearing down the church house and paving the lot for parking...2. Trustees to obtain cost estimates of paving present parking lot for church staff...Trustees to investigate leak in the sanctuary roof and obtain cost estimates for repairs also cost estimates for painting sanctuary after roof repairs are made.

Jimmy Rainwater stated that there had been some discussion about the name of the Youth Building. He said the "McMillan Building" would still be the official name, but the young people would like to call it something else, and they are having a sign made which reads: "BACKWARD DOG -- 'DOG' spelled backward is what it's all about. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Welcome are all children of the BACKWARD DOG. Central United Methodist Church, Florence, SC."

### **1976**

Plaque. This elevator is dedicated to the memory of Miss Isabelle Saleeby January 19, 1976, through a loving gift by her sister Miss Helen Elaine Saleeby

### **1982**

Plaque Needlepoint Communion Keelers in grateful appreciation to the committee Mary Alice Ingram, Sarah Meadors, Joan D Bryce, Gail H Dixon, Karl, and Lois Guest

### **1988**

Camp Sexton through its Christian ministries served over 1,000 people in various programs during 1988.

### **1990**

In the State of the Church Report, Chad Davis said, 'We have begun several new ministry efforts this year including a church school class for singles, a church school class for mentally handicapped children.

A Children's Sermon was initiated for the 11:15 Sunday service.

### **1991**

Long Range Planning Committee formed in April 1991

The Camp Sexton Committee hired a part-time camp director in March to direct all aspects of the Camp Sexton Program.

The Evangelism Commission had a new member party with 29 new members participating. They have an ongoing First Sunday Fellowship time in the Fellowship Hall for all Central members to get to know each other better.

Mother's Morning Out has become self-supporting and is running extremely well.

Wednesday Family Night meals have been quite successful. A chef has been hired to prepare meals; china plates have been used.

Central's Chrismon Tree project that was started in 1983 will be reactivated this Christmas and will be continued

Central had a pulpit exchange with Rev Chad Davis going to Moreton, England, and Rev Graham Hindle coming from there to Central.

To extend our ministry into the community we have been able to provide meeting space for about 30 groups.

The Sunshine Class has moved from Wednesday afternoon to Sunday Mornings. This helped students and parents with scheduling and attending Sunday school and Worship Services.

## **1992**

The responsibilities of the Director of Christian Education have been divided between Lura Marsh working as Director of Children's Ministries and Linda Segars working as Director of Adult and Family Ministries.

The Committee on Scouting has been established to promote and oversee all scouting activities of the church.

A special committee on Stewardship has been organized and 1993 has been designated as a year of stewardship emphasis.

The church room acoustics are well adapted to the space's speech uses, but not as excellent for the choir, organ, and congregational singing. We believe the first area can be improved economically and easily by (a) reducing the quantity and thickness of the carpet, and (b) using hard pews without pew cushions or recovering the existing pew cushions in leather or vinyl or similar impervious material. Note (not in report) This was a 13-page report that covered many factors. The note above is just to get it in the list of notable events during the last 50 years.



Central sponsored church and community wide organ Informance by CJ Sambach, a program designed to inform people about the pipe organ.

### **1993**

We have a growth in our outreach ministry through our new Outreach Committee.

One of the first things to happen because of the Senior Minister's illness was the increase in prayer by the people and a sense of coming together. The results of this increased amount of prayer were an increased spiritual awareness and openness and a unifying of the congregation. They faced the crisis together and there was a sense that they realized they were all a part of it together.

Central Place. Request for use of Central Place rooms shall be coordinated through the church receptionist. Questions regarding usage by a particular group or agency should go through the Associate Pastor. Note (not part of the guidelines) This is just the opening sentence of the 4-page document, just to highlight this ministry to the community.

### **1994**

The first issue was determining a method to coordinate with other downtown churches and care providers in hopes of developing a system to efficiently deliver help to individuals in the downtown Florence area as needed. Ralph Porter agreed to make the initial inquiries...

Outreach worked with Rev Steve Brown in recruiting six youth and one adult to work in the Salkehatchie program during the summer.

A recent stewardship thrust targeted volunteerism in the church by providing almost 100 opportunities for persons to give of their time and talents in new and existing ministries in the church.

Trustee approved request by 125 Year committee to plant a tree as part of celebration

Chad reported that based on the Vision 2000 meeting we need to update the ladies' restrooms. One of the updates would be to make the Parlor restroom suitable for handicapped access.

Scout hut repairs have been completed and the Scouts are painting the building.

Camp Sexton, led by Leigh Wilson recommended we hire a caretaker and allow him to live on the property as originally recommended by our professional camp planner, Charles Stott.

New Yamaha piano for the fellowship hall (cost \$21,322.50) to be delivered.

Present computer system consists of 4 computers. Steve Brown's as an example had 178 MB of hard drive and 4 MB of RAM and operated on DOS software. The proposed new computer system was something called Windows and would be based on a 540 MB server with 12 MB of RAM. We expected that to be powerful enough to last 7 to 8 years.

New Communion Table in Sanctuary, designed and built by our own LP Rogers will be consecrated this date.

Long Range Planning Committee submitted its report. It had met monthly since April 1991.

Central's bid of \$10,000 was rejected for the old C&S property that is now the FMU medical facility.

The Methodist Women fund-raising efforts originally began in the 1950's in the home of Mary Alice Ingram where they met to make aprons, dress dolls, and a few pillows. The ladies held a bazaar in her home for two years .....The Country Store as we know it today officially began in 1973.

Outreach Committee raised \$500 to sponsor a youth from a former Soviet-Block country to attend the World Youth Conference on Evangelism in Hamburg, Germany.

A new altar table was completed by LP Rogers. This was a gift from the Frank Lucas Family. The dedication was held in September.

A Central UMC banner was completed and used at the Vision 2000 Launch event in Columbia.

Outreach Committee sent 70 lbs. of children's clothing to our missionary in South America.

Goals for 1995 included preparing pamphlets with history and information on the following items the stained-glass window, the organ, the textile (the banners and needlepoint kneelers, etc.), and the church furnishings

Note: No example of the wording of the brochure is given, just a reference to it to compare to today's list of ministries.

Cross placed in the Sanctuary during lent was made from the trunk of the Chrismon tree from the previous Christmas.

Formed a committee to help shelve and categorize library books.

## **1995**

Rather than a birthday or an anniversary, Central United Methodist Church chose to recognize its 125th year of existence with a Heritage Celebration, befitting a church older than the city in which it is located.

The Administrative Board adopted a rotation plan that has made it possible for Central to include more young leadership.

Endowment Fund approved.

Dargan family donated a strip of land 50' wide to Central for us to construct a road that we will own, into Camp Sexton.

Administrative Board acted on "urgent" needs-renovated sanctuary 1995.

Almost 750 adults and youth will be involved in at least one significant task in connection with the ministries of Central UMC. The involvement of the congregation in a volunteer capacity in the ministries of the church grew tremendously this year and is poised for even greater things next year.

Early in 1995 Central Church made a commitment to work cooperatively with a church community in Haiti to improve their quality of life.

In addition to the Haiti project, two members went to Cuba on one of the first mission visits allowed in that country in many years.

Worship services were moved to Spears Fellowship Hall while the Sanctuary was being renovated and painted.

We now have more volunteers working in the church than at any time in recent history.

Sixty-one-year-old Rev. Chad Davis is one such person: he has the heart of a 16-year-old, thanks to Jason Yandle. Yandle died in a car accident on Aug 3 1993.....Davis received Yandal's heart the next day. When people receive an organ transplant, they aren't told who their donor are Jason's mother Patsy found me from a radio broadcast..... I (Davis) told her Jason and I preach every Sunday.

Do you remember? Former Garden Gate Restaurant - This building was adjacent to the Florence Morning News office at 141 S Irby Street. It was a buffet-style restaurant in the 1960's then became a floor covering business and was later purchased by Central United Methodist Church and briefly used as a youth center. When this photo was taken in the mid 1990's the building served as the Mission Mart Resale Shop for the New Life Rescue Ministries (later renamed House of Hope of the Pee Dee). It was eventually torn down to add more parking spaces for the church.

New program for children ages 3-5 years old called Welcome Wiggles. It will help prepare children for Big Church.

## **1996**

Charge Conference appointed Building Committee in March 1996.

Permanent handbell tables in the East balcony will be removed and replaced by movable tables.

Vacation Bible School had 152 participants. Confirmation class was 24 youth, one of the largest in history of Central.

Vision 2000 goal to help establish a community wide ecumenically based help agency to meet emergency needs of people in Florence, Central has been principal player in the development of Lighthouse Ministries.

A second outreach effort, initiated in 1995 in cooperation with Cumberland United Methodist Church was continued. Representatives from both congregations met with representatives from the eastern Florence area to determine needs and plan activities.

In addition to the Haiti project, one member participated in a foreign mission trip, and we hope to form our own mission team in 1997.

Goals for 1997: Lighthouse Ministry, Mission Team-local and foreign, Community Service-facilities & etc., Camp Sexton, Brazil missionary, Connectional or Conference missions.

New Senior Adult Council was activated to manage the growing number and variety of programs offered for senior adults.

Some progress has been made in working with Cumberland United Methodist Church through their Outreach Center. While we have not done all that we should, we are moving in the right direction.

Central also played a role in the rebuilding of Effingham Baptist Church by providing money, volunteers, and food to feed volunteers.

Central's Outreach budget was \$4,600 for 1996 and grew to \$11,200 for 1997.

We have not only focused on the financial aspects of Stewardship, but more especially on volunteers' involvement. We have encouraged involvement not only in 'in church' ministries but also beyond the local church.

## **1997**

Building Committee Report presented to Administrative Board and unanimously approved

The motion brought by the Trustees, supported by the Finance Committee, is to purchase the property as described - The property, West of the Fellowship Hall, and playground, is known as the Tim Cox Building. Motion carried.

Florence's Central United Methodist wants to stay in center of city. They decided it was important for us to stay at the center of the city, Davis said. Good things are happening here, and we want to continue to be a part of that."

Central purchases the former Morning News building, and the McMillan Building next to the church, land across Cheves St and a former bank building behind the church.

Creation Window dedication.

Plaque: The Creation Window (Dome) "The Natural World Praises the Creator" - Psalm 148 - Given to the Glory of God by Reamer and Betty Gail King in honor of their children, Reamer Benjamin, Jr., Elizabeth Ashley, Jacqueline Louise, and their families.

## **1998**

We have spent more than \$600,000 to improve our property. Nearly \$250,000 on renovation of the organ and about the same in renewing the Aiken-Spiers Building which in the future will be known as Central Place.

Our Capital Funds Drive is continuing schedule to have \$1.75m (1/2 of the total cost) in hand and begin the design stage in 1999 for our building addition.

Just to round out the program we have started three Discipleship I Bible Study classes, published a quarterly calendar of church events, and started our Internet site.

Our Outreach Committee has placed two families in mobile homes, added Christmas in April to our budget, and increased our financial support of Lighthouse Ministries.

Missionary support will be given in Cuba, Russia, as well as through UMVIM.

During 1988, the completion of the pipe organ contributes to the growth of our musical program which is a vital part of Central United Methodist Church's Worship program.

Bob Faulkner, in his Report of Pastor for Charge Conference said, "Time seems to frustrate my best intentions and efforts." Later, he says, "My major frustration remains with the apparent inability to get the Methodist Manor under construction."

Goals for 1998 included CUMC will establish a communications committee for the 1998 calendar year.

Commenting on the renovations to Central Place Dannye Bragdon said, 'Now the overwhelming need is to develop a ministry that will justify the cost and effort of this new facility.' In the same report Dannye said, I must admit that youth ministry is still that part of my job that I often feel I would do without pay.'

## **1999**

Plaque In Grateful Recognition of the Sacrifices and Services of the Men and Women who served in the Defense of their Country during the Second Half of the Twentieth Century and in Sacred Memory of Those Who made The Supreme Sacrifice Philip Ray Dearing 1947-1971 First Lieutenant United States Army AD 1999.

Earthquake insurance added to insurance policy.

Central Methodist begins expansion project.

November 22, 1999, notice to proceed given to contractor for new construction and renovations.

## **2000**

CHOICES use of part of Camp Sexton approved by Trustees.

Christmas in April Project. The CUMC Men fielded three repair teams for three Christmas in April homes.

The highlight of the year might be said to be the first Children's Sabbath that we had on October 29th. Tom Pietela says he is still getting compliments on that service with a message brought by Bishop Jack Meadors.

Over 75 people are involved in the ministry Disciple provides. Disciple includes one group at the Methodist Manor.

The key fundraising project for the CUMC Men is the Christmas Ornament sales for the Pee Dee Center for Disabilities and Special Needs.

The Children's Council lead by Jody Baxley started the year funding and providing pagers for parents so that they might have a more worry-free time of learning and worship while at Central.

Central Place renovations were substantially complete in August of 2000.

## **2001**

Davis Christian Life Center dedication story.

Security guard hired for Sunday and Wednesday evenings

The Outreach Committee took on the task of funding and construction of a Habitat for Humanity house.

A new committee, the Nurture Committee, has been formed to develop and implement a plan of pastoral care that will be reformed by layperson. Ideas still to be examined include the concept of a "Parish Nurse" and Stephen Ministry.

We have received a new Associate Minister who has done remarkable work in getting to know the congregation and in pastoral care. Will Malambri and his wife Sally have been wonderful additions to the Central family.

The Disciple Bible Study program reached new heights this year as Central has 9 Disciple Bible Study classes, including all 4 levels offered and Central's first Christian Believer class. These classes involve 112 people in serious study and reflection and a wonderful asset to our Christian Education program.

This year we began a weekly Service of Healing and Holy Communion, which allows people to bring needs before God in prayer and to receive the sustaining and gracious gift of Holy Communion.

The new Brownie Girl Scout Troop just completed a very successful first year with great leaders and a great group of girls.

Ten seniors from Central went to Trenholm Road Church in Columbia to learn about the Shepard's Center program.

Igniting Ministries was the focus of the Methodist Church beginning this fall, implemented at Central by sermons, an open house, and a new ministry of greeters on Sunday.

The Youth Program at Central continues to prosper. A new Mentor program has been implemented for the confirmation process, and it was followed this past year very successfully.

## **2002**

One recent addition to our studies is the periodic eight-lesson Spiritual Gifts class, *Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts*.

Stephen Ministries began at Central this summer with 5 persons being trained (in Philadelphia) as Stephen Leaders.



The Nurture & Congregational Care Committee was created in 2002 to "meet the spiritual and emotional needs of the existing church community" at Central.

Central's Mother's Morning Out program has been in existence since 1976 under Children's Ministries. We currently have 117 children in the entire program. 37 of these children are members of Central.

On October 1, we had a Joint Luncheon Meeting with Paul Rung as our guest speaker, Mr. Rung is a Central member and an active UMVIM member. We made 146 Christmas Stockings for Hattian Children for Paul Rung to deliver to UMVIM.

Highlights of this church's ministry in 2002 include the establishment of a Shepherd's Center for our community's growing older adult population, the formation of Stephen Ministry for the ongoing care of its members at important transition times in life.

Shepherd's Center is an interfaith ministry by and for persons fifty years of age and older. It is sponsored by a coalition of religious congregations, committed to the delivery of a network of services and programs for older people. Beginning in September 2002, mini-workshops/sessions (open houses) were held once a month (September-December).

We have concentrated on improving our Greeter's Ministry and continue to observe that our church family's welcoming visitors

Before the year ends, we will implement billboard advertisements leading persons to our website and hopefully, to our doors.

CHOICES established in 2000, classes started in August 2002, currently 45 students, at the completion of the third school year (04/05) eighty-five students had successfully returned to traditional schools and eight had completed their GED or High School Diplomas. Three of them are enrolled as in college as of this date (2005).

## **2003**

Incorporation papers signed.

This commitment was demonstrated in the very successful "Yard of the Week" contest that assisted a local neighborhood in self-improvement.

Johnny Crouch reported that the change from an Administrative Board to a Church Council had some problems, but no crisis. Bill Mills was affirmed as a Diaconal Minister.

The pastoral load continues to grow. I find an increasing amount of my time devoted to "managing the place". While I believe I do those things well (or well enough), those are not the tasks for which most clergy are trained, nor are they tasks that are dear to most of our hearts.

Worship highlights for 2003 include a preaching mission with Dr. Zan Holmes, its Lenten series that continues to bring renowned preachers and teachers to Florence and a new service for Christmas season, "Service of the Longest Night."

Yard of the Week, an eight-week project that began in 2003, has grown from a single neighborhood in Florence to four neighborhoods, one sponsored by its own neighborhood association. The simple concept of rewarding the effort of cleaning up yards and fixing up homes has brought about changes not only on the surface but also from within.

## **2004**

The Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk held in 2004 at Camp Sexton was a decided success, bringing out over a hundred people and raising over \$2,000 for the CHOICES school program.

We celebrated a Service for the Blessing of Animals for the first time this year., which was well received by the congregation.

I was introduced to the invaluable work of our Stephen Ministers recently, and that program is an unspeakable gift to our church and members.

Christmas in April. This will be the 9th year of the project here in Florence, and the 9th year that our UMYF will participate.

This year after Christmas our Youth will sponsor a version of 'Christmas in April' and Salkahatchie Summer Service with a week of work called Santahatchie.

## **2005**

We have adjusted the order of worship to reflect the more ancient rhythms of worship: gathering, proclamation, response, and sending forth, with added

emphasis placed on the response to God's Word read and proclaimed. We have adjusted the logistics of Holy Communion to include encouraging kneeling and prayer at the chancel rail during the giving and receiving of the Sacrament.

We have recently added "Supper with the Pastors" for guest who would like to know more about Central and are improving our Central Orientation class to focus on depth of discipleship.

## **2006**

Programs in which Outreach and Advocacy Committee worked with Central members actively involved in mission projects including Gautier Mission, Rebuilding Together, Yard of the Week, CCC Home Repair group, The Alternative Gift Market, and Santahatchie.

Financial contributions were made this year to the Pee Dee Coalition and Durant Children's Center, Lighthouse Ministries, Mercy Medicine, Manna House, New Life Ministries (House of Hope), Habitat for Humanity, Yard of the Week, The Sunshine Class, Rebuilding Together (formerly Christmas in April), McLeod Children's Hospital, and Santahatchie.

The highlight of the year was the completion and dedication of the new Scout Hut on Plum Drive. Mrs. Roy McCollum, wife of the Troop's first Scout Master from 1948, was in attendance as charter member Mr. Laurence McIntosh (Eagle Scout 1952) dedicated a Norman Rockwell print in memory of Mr. McCollum. A second Norman Rockwell print was placed in the new hut to honor the Godbold's for their recent contribution of property next to the scout hut. A Norman Rockwell's "Scoutmaster" print was hung to honor Mr. Butch Carroll for his 35 years of service to the troop. Reverend Will Malambri conducted the dedication ceremony.

(Shepherd's Center) Of the 15 board members, they represent 10 churches in the greater Florence area.

Project have taken the form of Christmas in April, Santahatchie, as well as a CCC (Central Cross Connectional) ministries group. This past summer, youth and youth leaders traveled to outside Beaufort, SC to participate in the Salkahatchie Project. To support national missions, Central sent a group to Gautier, Mississippi to assist in Katrina repairs. On the International level, Central will once again send a mission group to Huancayo, Peru.

Our commitment to missions continues to grow. For the first time, funding missions will become a major component of our annual budget. A 2% escrow line item in the budget will generate approximately \$35,000 annually to be used for local, national, and world missions by Central members. This is in addition to its ongoing commitments to Lighthouse Ministries and other outreach ministries in our community.

Central Cross Connection (CCC) became a reality this year, with six small groups beginning to gather over the summer.

The opening of the Welcome Center in the Commons Area.

## **2007**

The organization "CHOICES" was able to complete the new 4000 Square foot Activity building thanks to a generous grant from Dr's Bruce and Lee Foundation and the Ingram Trust. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, members of Central UMC donated a 1300 Sq Ft house from Mimosa Street and financially assisted in the moving of the house out to Camp Sexton. The house has been renovated by the Camp Sexton Committee and numerous volunteers from Central. The house provides lodging to Ralph and Marlene Porter who are managing and operating CHOICES Charter School as well as property overseers for the entire camp property.

In July, Daniel Stone became the first scout to be presented his Eagle Scout award in our new scout hut.

This year we added 3 (CCC) groups, bringing our total to 9. The "niches" of existing groups are family/parenting concerns, young/new mothers, faith, and film (2), current issues/Bible study, community mission/home repair, textiles/crafts, and marriage enrichment.

As of November 13, 2007, at the Church Council meeting we pronounced 2008 "The Year of Mission: Serving with our Whole Selves." This pronouncement acknowledges a growing sense of urgency to respond to God's grace and to witness to God's love through missional service.

As a large church in the middle of "downtown revitalization", Central must be aggressive and visible in the community on several fronts. It also has to offer a variety of ministries and programs to draw people downtown.

While membership has increased at a steady pace over the last decade, average attendance at Sunday School and worship has not. The availability of volunteers has also declined. These are puzzling trends that cannot be sustained if Central is to remain a strong and vigorous church. My sense is that something new and innovative must happen for those trends to be reversed. We cannot keep doing the same things repeatedly and expect different results. We are at a generational point in the life of the church that is critical.

It was identified that Central's most needed improvement from the November 2006 survey was "Needs Based Evangelism."

Central again sent a team to Peru where we are partnering with the Peru Methodist Church to build an all-purpose church building to help address the needs of the Peruvians in the village of Huancayo. 31 members participated in the building project. Also, 17 medical related people were a part of the mission team. To help make the building possible, an estate gift in the amount of \$25,000 was donated for this project.

March saw a new fundraiser for the UMW - a church wide yard sale.

Pecan Festival "Creative Offerings" Art Show, Organ Concert, & Masterworks Performance were part of Central's unique ministry God called Central to offer to our community.

Two of the more exciting happenings at Central this year were the addition of a staff person as "Director of Spiritual Gifts and Congregational Care" (Meg Jiunnies) and the hiring of a full-time "Minister of Youth Discipleship" (Grace Timms).

## **2008**

Plaque The Sanctuary Piano is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Peggy Aiken McLeod 1916-2007 by the Aiken Foundation. Wilhelm Schimmel Pianoforte Fabrik Braunschweig, Germany 2008

There was not a 2008-2009 Confirmation Class because the recommended age for participating in the Confirmation Preparation Process was changed from the 7th grade to the 8th grade.

Panel of speakers including Dr. Barry O'Brien, Dean of Francis Marion University School of Business. Join a proven and biblically based study: Financial Peace University.

Plaque. William B Mills Organ - Dedicated September 2008 - Honoring 40 Years as Organist and Choirmaster

In 2008, Central began a new ministry on Thanksgiving Eve. Instead of the traditional Wednesday night supper at church, members brought food to the church for needy people in our community. This ministry is now a Central tradition.

## **2010**

2010 has been a challenging year in the life of Central. The reassignment of both pastors resulted in some discouragement for our congregation. Many members expressed feeling of anxiety because of the changes.....Despite our challenges this past year, Central Church is thriving with 65 new members.

Another 2010 highlight was awarding the rank of Eagle Scout to two scouts Andrew Stone and Matt Josey. The Boy Scouts of America is celebrating being 100 years old this year. During Scout Sunday we had a birthday party for scouting with cake & table full of photos and scouting memorabilia going back to 1948 when Troop 475 was first organized. Bernie Moore, one of our charter leaders and Wallace Bird one of our scouts from the 1950's shared their photo collections.

The church underwent considerable stress this year with the reassignment of its pastors. The turmoil associated with the change has had a lingering effect of the giving to the church. Combined with the effects of a depressed economy, the church has struggled to maintain its budget for the year. Unlike many large churches, Central does not operate with a reserve fund. Careful monitoring and control of expenditure has allowed us to remain solvent, although no apportionments have been paid for the year.

There are several concerns facing the UMW currently. First, and perhaps most pressing, is a dwindling membership that in turn results in diminishing pledges as well as fewer workers for our various projects. If we do not cultivate the next generation of women, without a doubt our six circles will become five and then four and eventually an irrelevant dinosaur in the life of the church.

## **2011**

Women Wanting Wisdom (WWW) Winter Series, that included Biblical models on Wisdom, Our Children and Our Bodies, Wisdom from Our Spiritual Mothers, Rev. Cynthia Taylor's Personal Faith Journey, and Holy Communion. Over the course of five Wednesday nights in January and February, 70-80 women joined together to join in study and discussion. The lesson planning was developed by Missy Brown, one of Central's local lay speakers and has been a model for other churches in South Carolina.

Balcony Friends was a program led by Missy Brown, Rev. Taylor, and staff person Meg Jiunnies in the summer of 2011 that met for discussion and spiritual friendships. As with the other women's ministry events, the age range was very diverse, including women from different ages and stages of life from 18-90+.

Quite frankly, anyone reading this report can see that we ask a lot in service from our members, and it is understandable that younger women are utilizing their time differently.

2011 has been the first full year during which Reverends Stephen and Cynthia Taylor have served as our pastors. They came to Central under very challenging circumstances and have risen to the occasion. Central is profoundly grateful for their leadership, their ministry of the Word, their pastoral care to our congregation, and their commitment to our missionary ministry to those far beyond our local community. 24 people enthusiastically participated in mission trips to Coastal Rica and Haiti, and Reverend Cynthia ventured to Cuba, all for the purpose of spreading God's Word and ministering to our neighbors in other countries.

Following the appointment process of 2010, the church leadership chose to withhold apportionments. The Administrative Council of 2011 chose to begin paying some as able.

This fall I began a men's early morning weekly Bible study called 27:17. Proverbs 27:17 reads, 'as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.' We have had an average of 25 men who gather to study the book of Mark, share about our discipleship, and pray together.

This year, Central sent its first UMVIM Mission Team to Haiti.

An ongoing challenge for our church is remaining financially viable in this time of extended recession. These pressures and the continuing hard feelings by some of the congregation over last year's pastoral change, leave our financial future cloudy.

Much healing has occurred in this congregation, and for that I am thankful. Yet our challenge, as a people of faith, continues to be to foster God's healing of the wounds that remain, and fully place our trust in the One who calls each one of us to this place. I thank God daily for those who work tirelessly to help us look to the future with great hope and zeal.

There is a passion for Christ, but overall, such feelings are kept private. It is no surprise that the last inventory done through Natural Church Development identified Passionate Spirituality as the church's minimum factor. Learning to share not just our resources, not simply our friendliness, but also our honest journeys of faith, will continue to be a growing edge for our congregation. The richness of faith in so many of our members can be encouragement and guide for those new to faith.

### **2013**

The 100 year celebration continued in our beloved sanctuary as Laurence McIntosh who has been a member of the church for his entire life shared his story - which encapsulated portions of all of our stories at the church: being baptized or confirmed here, being married here or seeing our children married here, celebrating the life of our loved ones at their deaths here.....It was a blessing to have retired Bishop Jack Meadors as our guest speaker on the Sunday of our anniversary. Bishop Meadors is a child of Central, who describes his call to ministry as beginning right here in our sanctuary. We celebrate that he is one of twenty-three who have gone into ordained ministry from our church.

Prayer Cards has begun. Each Sunday and Wednesday night a prayer team member hands out cards with different groups to pray for that week (such as policemen, our government, our staff, and our church).

Our location in downtown Florence assures our involvement in the renaissance taking place within blocks of our facility. We have participated and will continue to be involved in special events like the Pecan Festival by opening our facilities and hearts in ministry to those who attend.

There are also people in the community who are looking for a church home with a worship service that is a little less formal. One of the ways we plan to respond in



the next couple of years is by forming a new worship service that will offer some sort of alternative worship style. We are not sure what that may look like right now, but we do realize that it is necessary for the growth of Central and the good of the community.

The Young Adult ministry successfully kicked off its inaugural year, 2013, by forming the Young Adult Council in 2012.

100-year celebration of our sanctuary building

What percent of apportionments were paid in 2012? 100%. What do you expect to pay in 2013? 100%.

This fall the new and prospective members class is based on a small group study, A Disciple's Path by Jim Harnish.

This first full year of ministry with Rev. Will Malambri, as Senior Pastor, and Rev. Josh Blackwelder, Associate Pastor, brought stability and confidence to Central's members. The addition of Dr. Don Grice as Minister of Music will help us maintain Central's wonderful music tradition. We voted unanimously in May to recommend Meg Juinnies to the district committee as an ordained ministry candidate and celebrate her decision.

From worship, which this year added the strong leadership of Music Director Dr. Don Grice and Handbell Director Ms. Beverly Hazelwood.....Central is working to grow disciples who follow Christ more faithfully.

The 'C-Unity' event with Cumberland in May of 2013 (Pentecost Sunday) was a tremendous success with around 200 attending the music service hosted at Cumberland and the shared meal and Holy Communion hosted at Central. Central participated in the 'Let Freedom Ring' 50th Anniversary commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's 'Dream Speech' at Cumberland on August 28th. The United Methodist Men hosted the Cumberland Men's Choir for dinner and enjoyed a program by the choir in September.

This year, acknowledging who this church has been and who we are called to be, a modified mission statement was adopted: Central's mission is to follow Jesus by Loving God and Neighbor.

## **2014**

The Well services begin in the Davis Christian Life Center

Ralph and Marlene Porter say they will leave the house at Camp Sexton by January 1, 2015.

## **2015**

The Trustees accepted an in-depth study of our buses and their uses as prepared by Trustee Frank Alford

Central now also houses several care support resources in our Schofield Library, which are available for borrowing. Subjects include managing dementia, Caregiving, prayer, grief, women's issues, divorce support, pregnancy, childbirth and miscarriage, poverty, child abuse prevention and special needs information.

The second annual "Women Wanting Wisdom Conference" will feature Kelly Minter in February 2016.

To further explore how to best serve potential ministry opportunities arising from the Downtown Florence Revitalization, a church consultant, Conrad Lowe, visited Central. His recommendations: 1) increased emphasis on hospitality and assimilation, 2) maintain 'The Well' service, 3) determine priority of Sunday School and 4) consider a truly contemporary service as a third worship option. The first three were readily embraced but the fourth raised some serious concerns with the staff and membership.

Blood Drives have been conducted every 56 days. The November drive will introduce the "Fast Pass" system, allowing scheduled donors to complete registration online.

The adult pickup basketball games in the Davis Christian Life Center every Monday night during the year was a ministry to over 50 adults. Prayer and donations of can goods for the needy were a part of every game.

The BEDS Ministry at Central is the brainchild of Art Justice. This ministry raises money to purchase building materials, mattresses, and bedding for children in FSD1 schools. A building event was held in October 2015 to cut the boards, sand, and assemble the beds.

The Shepherd's Center would like to thank Central for their continuing support. This is a service to our seniors in the Pee Dee and the membership represents over 50 churches. You are all welcome to drop by and visit.

Our Endowment Committee has further strengthened Central's long-term funding. Any undesignated and unrestricted legacy gifts will be placed in the permanent endowment fund ending previous confusion when gifts were left without instruction.

Renovated and renamed Christian Family Conference Center, by adding electronics for presentations.

Central has more youth basketball teams than any other church in the Florence area with 13 teams and 280 youth participating last season. Many non-Central members participated....

We had 175 participate in this year's Polar Bear Run where proceeds went to support Central's youth mission projects.

Renovated part of education building to be renamed Reamer and Betty Gail King Children's Education Center passed by Trustees

Methodist Manor groundbreaking

8/23/2015 called meeting to rename King Center the Malambri Center passed by those present and email vote. Official name is The William Francis Malambri III and Sally McIntyre Malambri Children's Education Center. Note (not in minutes) This vote was taken just hours before the surprise announcement at the dedication.

June 8 - Central's Chancel Choir joined with choirs from Cumberland UMC to provide music for the Service of Commissioning and Ordination at the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church held at the Florence Civic Center.

The Summer Choir gave folks a chance to "try out the choir" during June and July without long-term commitment. Several of the folks who sang in the Summer Choir went on to join the Chancel Choir.

The Handbell Choir traveled to Montreat to participate in the Music and Worship Conference June 21-26.

Lacy Choral Scholars Funded in part by a generous bequest from the estate of the late Wes Lacey, this program was established in 2013 to provide vocal leadership in the Chancel and Youth Choirs and to afford area music students an opportunity to participate in an active church music program while receiving compensation.

Our Chancel Choir was outfitted with new vestments in the fall of 2015. Our new cassocks and cottas replace vestments that are being repurposed within other Central programs.

Anthem Donation Program. A program was introduced whereby those wishing to honor or memorialize a loved one or friend while supporting the music ministry can donate an anthem.

April 12- Howard Starks was honored in a program of handbell music composed by him featuring several local church handbell choirs.

For the first time, Central sent a group of singers to the South Carolina Youth Choir Festival in April held at Springmaid Beach Resort in Myrtle Beach. The entire choir (100+) singers then traveled to Florence to sing at Central's 11:15 AM service on April 26 - the culminating event of the weekend.

We were again honored to have the participation of 10 students from the Youngnak u-Health High School in Korea through the fall semester who were in Florence as part of the Global Competency Development Program sponsored by the South Korean Department of Education.

The Well is Central's casual blended service which began in September of 2014.

We are in the organizational phase of making a Prayer Garden in an existing courtyard on the Cheves St side of the church. In addition to this space being available for Central members, our hope is that it will be an inviting space for those walking down the street to find a quiet time for prayer.

Renamed room 226 as the Archives Room and moved our stored Trustee files to shelving in that area as our way of participating and supporting our Schofield Library work team.

The Camp Sexton Study Committee met for 6 months and took in lots of information. This included a congregational meeting. The Council accepted the

study committee's recommendation to sell the property and we are moving forward with that.

The classrooms on our Children's hall were renovated in July and August, and on August 23rd the children's wing was named the Malambri Center, in honor of Reverend and Sally Malambri.

On Sunday mornings in September and October, our three- and four-year old's have participated in the "Welcome Wigglers" class, where they have learned how to participate in worship. They have learned about the order of worship, the music, and Children's Time, among other things.

Over the summer and Mission Camp (along with First Presbyterian and St. Luke Lutheran) in July. The children participated in hands-on mission work at several local agencies and assisted living facilities. On the last day, they participated in Feed My Starving Children, a project which packs meals for children overseas.

Potential members are informed in conversations prior to joining that a Disciples Path is an expectation. The congregation is supportive of this.

We have encouraged greater participation in the areas of worship, spiritual growth, service, and growing financial involvement through offering A Disciples Path and other Bible studies at a variety of times, through sermons on the topics, and through other topical classes that relate. We have also improved our system for tracking participation in ministries beyond Sunday mornings

The Council approved the concept of expanding the Preschool hours and adding an after-school care program. We are now discovering what, if any, changes are needed to our physical space and to see if those and other logistical challenges make this too difficult a prospect.

We partnered with Cumberland United Methodist on October 28th for our second "Trunk or Treat." Following our regular Wednesday night meal, the children played games and went trick-or-treating among classrooms. Approximately 200 people attended, and a good time was had by all.

This year our outreach has grown to include the establishment of the BEDS ministry.

I also am finding that it is increasingly difficult to get adequate Sabbath rest and, as a result, I am increasingly in need of it. I hope to begin remedying that in the coming year.

With the express purpose of improving Sunday School attendance, The Well worship service start time was moved from 9:57 AM to 9 AM, restoring the 10 AM hour for Sunday School. Attendance has been up since the change (October 4, 2015).

Last September was the advent of The Well at Central. This Fall, we concluded our first year of worship and are increasingly pleased with the ability of this service to reach those who are looking for a more casual atmosphere in which to worship.

The board approved and the charge conference approved the property purchase plan and sale of Camp Sexton.

Room 226 is now designated as the Archives room.

A City policeman, in full uniform, will be present during Sunday service to deter undesirable individuals from returning and provide additional security.

Trustee. Email vote to approve lease agreement for Camp Sexton-passed by email.

## **2016**

CUMC Preschool and Central Children's Ministry share the cost of the maintenance for the Playground. In 2015 and 2016, funds from this budget have gone toward the installation of a Gaga Ball pit, and mulch to fill the pit.

Elementary Children's Events. Easter Egg Hunt - Our annual Easter Egg Hunt was originally scheduled to take place on Palm Sunday, but due to inclement weather, was moved to the following Wednesday night. It was held on our playground, with approximately 125 people (children and adults) attending.

Again, this year, Vacation Bible School was held in the evening rather than in the morning. Approximately 80 children and 50 volunteers attended.

We said farewell to Reverend Josh Blackwelder and welcomed Reverend Derrick Cattenhead and Reverend Kathy Campbell this year. We also created a Minister of Faith Formation and Discipleship who is our own Meg Jiunnies. Wanda Antwine retired after serving this church for many years; her position has been replaced by

Carrie Rowe. Leigh Ann Shelley came on board as our new Director of Communications.

We are very proud of our strong heritage of retired ministers here at Central. Reverend Tom Pietila has officially been named our Pastor Emeritus and is conducting worship on an occasional basis.

Mary Davidson and her library team have coordinated study material, and organized it for better use, and obtained new material that focuses on inclusive stories and books. The online card catalog is available and has been advertised to the congregation. The library is being used for meetings of small groups in addition to loaning materials.

The use of our parking facilities to help facilitate the traffic flow to and from the Francis Marion University downtown medical school facility. Approval of gifting most of the kitchen equipment at Camp Sexton to the Courtney Graham Homeless Shelter.

A new community wide program has started in Florence called Helping Florence Flourish. Central has been involved since its beginning. We participate in cleaning up and repairing local elementary schools with the group.

Wednesday Night Program. While this program is adequately budgeted for, it does not work as well as it could, because there are as many as 50 children attending, but very few adult volunteers. More parental and congregational support is needed for this program to improve.

The nature of our setting (having to set up and tear down every weekend, although inconvenient) has resulted in a real feeling of family- having to work together to "create" a worship space each week and then turn the Davis Christian Life Center back into a multipurpose room at the conclusion of our service.

A Trustee made motion to allow FMU to gain access through curb cut into the parking lot, this motion was based upon being a good neighbor, and supporting the City's desire for shared parking. The motion was seconded, and unanimously approved.

Our greatest collaborator remains our sibling church, Cumberland. On World Communion Sunday this year, we held our annual C-Unity Event, which included a time of reflection on racial experiences by the senior pastors of each

congregation, followed by the congregations discussing the same guided questions over dinner together. It was a very meaningful night and ended with many participants asking for us to do more together.

Contributed over \$15,000 and many in-kind goods to help the Courtney McGinnis Graham Emergency Shelter get off the ground.

The Schofield Library is currently sponsoring an oral history project involving CUMC members who are veterans of World War II. Andrew Raines, one of Tim Fisher's scouts from First Pres has interviewed extensively Billy Garey's father, Paul Rung, Frank Stokes, Hugh Merriman, Saunders Bridges and hopefully soon, Bill Baulknight. These interviews will be available on DVD by fall of 2016.

## **2017**

Mission Camp, which is held in conjunction with First Presbyterian and St. Luke Lutheran churches, is a wonderful opportunity for children to experience hands-on mission work in the Florence community as a part of ServeFlo. 80 children and approximately 40 youth and adults participated.

We did initiate a very successful program mid-year. I asked Tim Fisher to find us an Eagle Scout to take on an oral history project involving our World War II veterans at CUMC. Andrew Raines, a junior at Wilson in the IB Program, videotaped over 240 hours of interviews with 8 veterans, put each on a separate DVD and typed transcriptions of each interview to provide a written record. He has given several newspaper interviews and presented several programs for different groups. I will be doing a presentation of Andrew's project in November for the Lunch & Learn group, using the story of Paul Rung, who died this spring. Two others have died as well, and their moving stories have been preserved in our archives. The Florence County Library requested and was given duplicates of Andrew's work for the SC History Room.

During this past year at the request of a newly formed group called ALL4KIDS we formed a Special Needs Collection specifically to provide resources for parents and caregivers dealing with autism, physically and mentally challenged, bi-polar, ADD and ADHD, Down's Syndrome, learning disabilities and differences. We purchased around \$500 worth of books and have published bibliographies for both the adult and children's collections to the ALL4KIDS participants.

Central now has over 400 legacy members (25–49-year members). Central has over approximately 75 members who have been members for 50 years or more.



"Say His Name Workshop" - Minimal participation with large investment of time and resources; "Can We Talk?" panel (Care Giver information panel) excellent panel and well planned, advertised and hosted; again, with minimal turn out.

"Meals for families with new babies": Katie Williams effectively heads this program. However, volunteers to prepare meals were minimal....5 families have received meals to date.

Children's Wednesday Night Program. This program needed an overhaul. The challenge with implementing such a model is that we have very few adults willing to help on Wednesday evenings. More parental involvement is needed for this program to continue.

Sunday School Teacher Training and Appreciation. With 8 preschool classes, we have approximately 30-35 teachers who volunteer their time and talents. We believe it is important to acknowledge the contribution these teachers make to our ministry.

In July 2017, a group of 32 persons from Central, which included 17 youth, spent seven days in Costa Rica renovating the ministry camp at the Coast Rica Mission Project (CRMP) in San Isidro de El General and two local churches, respectfully.... In fact, members of Central have been serving in Costa Rica through CRMP since 2009.

This year we awarded our first Central Youth Mission Co-Persons of the Year Award to Ann Walker Payne, and Caroline Falcone for their Shoe Ministry where they solicit people to give shoes at their cross-country meets to be given out at the Parking Lot Mission on Saturday mornings. Also, Art Justice and Dody Phillips were awarded the Central Mission Co-Persons of the Year Award for their work with the BEDS Ministry and Family Promise, respectively. Additionally, Joe Eaddy was presented The Paul Rung Lifetime Service Award for his many years of tireless work in various capacities within the church and the broader community.

We continue to host parking lot cookouts as a way of welcoming and inviting our neighbors at the Francis Marion University's Health Science Complex and the Emerson apartment community, which are both adjacent to Central.

And we were pleased to honor Rev. J Derrick Cattenhead in his ordination as Elder and Rev. Meg Jiunnies in her commissioning as a Provisional Deacon. We are thrilled to support Ben Wells and J.T. Brown in their theological education.

Our threat preparedness includes silent alarms in the hands of several leaders, video surveillance of the facility, guarded entrances, and a security team that includes an off-duty police officer at peak times. Our Safe Sanctuaries policy and practices have been improved and we have made improvements to our cyber-security.

We are improving our communications strategy and interconnectedness, particularly through the introduction of Realm to the congregation. The more our congregates engage with Realm, the better we will function as a community.

Central's March 19, 2017, Scout Sunday insert listed 11 Girl Scouts and leaders, 39 Cub Scouts and leaders and 20 Boy Scouts and leaders for a total of 70 involved with our scouting ministry here at Central. In addition to these leaders, Central has over 18 other adults in our scouting ministry leadership team. While over 50% of our scouts and leaders are members of Central, our scouting ministry is an outreach to the community.

On January 29, 2017, we held our first "Children's Sabbath - Winter Edition" at The Well with a modified service, allowing the children to sing 6 or 7 songs (accompanied by piano, banjo, fiddle, and guitar), read the Scripture, share the parish concerns.... the kids did everything but preach!

On February 5, a new mission focus for Central, "Digging Deeper", was introduced in The Well. "Digging Deeper" features a local service agency (or mission opportunity) each month, many within walking distance of Central. Representatives of the featured agencies tell us about the work of the agencies and of volunteer opportunities. Our first Community Workday was held June 25, with a total of 68 individuals of all ages serving as the hands and feet of Jesus at 5 different locations in our community.

## **2018**

Worship services moved to FMU PAC from July through September for renovations of sanctuary interior

Fire Suppression system completed for all downtown campus. This was done to enable Pre-School to go fulltime.

Roofing of sanctuary building complete, this allows renovations of sanctuary interior to proceed.

## **2019**

Central's three pastors are all involved in continuing education, adding up 14.5 CEU's in 2020 and 9.5 CEU's in 2019.

In 2019 Central paid 100% of our Annual Conference apportionments.

In 2019 Central had 611 persons serving in mission/community ministries.

In 2019 Central had several neighborhood gatherings to meet, hear from, and to share thoughts with our new Pastor Thomas Smith. We intend to continue those after Covid-19 is in the history books.

## **2020**

Central's properties in 2020 were insured for \$22,627,915.

In the fall of 2020 Central had 100 children enrolled in our preschool and 200 on our waiting list.

In many ways, Central's online platforms have been like a satellite campus that allows us to reach new people with the good news of Jesus Christ.

As of Thanksgiving 2020 there were 250 YouTube videos available from Central online.

New words added to Central's dictionary in 2020 were prerecorded Services, Live Streaming Services, Zoom meetings, Virtual Hymn Sings, YouTube Bible Study, YouTube Worship Service, Virtual Wednesday Nights, Virtual Children's Ministry, and how about Virtual Live@Central.

Blood Drives continued through the Covid-19 months and as examples 61 pints were donated in July, and 64 in September 2020.

Internationally acclaimed composer Craig Phillips of California composed an anthem for Central's anniversary service. The work is entitled *O Praise ye the Lord and* features a text by Henry Williams Baker based on Psalm 148 and 150.

During the Covid-19 months Central relied more heavily than normal on the Lacey Choral Scholars for choral voices in our Worship Services.

During the Covid-19 months of 2020, Central's Wednesday night suppers were held at our neighbors' homes, their restaurants in downtown Florence.

In March of 2020 Central Church activity, as we know it, virtually came to a screeching halt, and Virtual Central was born.

## **2021**

Through a generous gift from one of its members, Central UMC has commissioned Anne Acker, Historic Keyboard Specialist from Savannah, Georgia, to build a new Flemish type (after Ruckers) Double Manual Harpsicord.

Plaque. The Charles Helms Ingram Memorial Chapel Given in Loving Memory by his wife Mary Alice Caudle Ingram

We have notes written with chalk in the attic of the sanctuary telling you 'The way out' and 'leak' with an arrow, etc., the oldest ones written by Cliff Cornell. We call them Cliff notes.