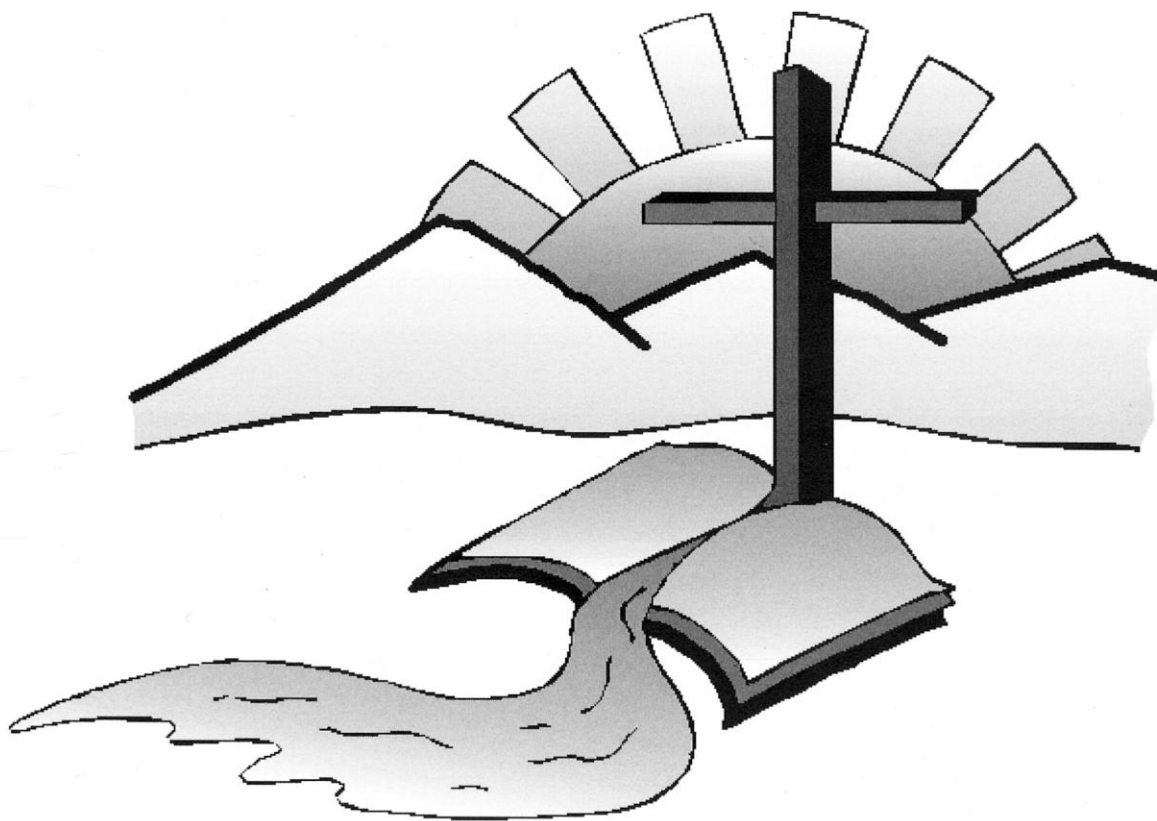


Grace Lutheran Church

Rock Hill, South Carolina

SERVING CHRIST, CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY SINCE 1923



1998

The authors wish to thank Pastor E. Ray Morhmann and Parish Secretary Pat Kirk for their assistance in making the records of Grace Lutheran Church available for this writing of the history. Thanks to Kathryn Bridges for reading the manuscript prior to publication. Any errors or omissions were unintentional and are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Naomi B. Bridges
Martha B. Seigler
May, 1998

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 1923-2009

Through the Grace of God

"New Church To Be Formally Opened Here Tomorrow." "Struggle of Small Grace Lutheran Congregation For Ideal Compels Admiration." These headlines of the May 1, 1926 issue of the Rock Hill *Evening Herald* announced the first services to be held in the new house of worship for Grace Lutheran congregation. The completion of the new church building was the culmination of six years of planning and praying.

The first organized effort to establish a Lutheran church in Rock Hill began in 1920 when the President of Synod, Dr. H.J. Black, deemed it wise to establish a church in this city. However, a small band of Lutherans began holding regular services in Rock Hill as early as 1914. According to Mrs. T.L. Bridges, Sr., a charter member of Grace and a graduate of Winthrop College, about 25 Lutheran students on campus met regularly with a Winthrop teacher to worship in the Lutheran faith. Miss Fannie Beckman, and College Librarian, Clara Louise Voight, held services each Sunday morning in a college classroom.

After a while, the group was compelled to abandon the classroom and Miss Beckman organized Lutheran students reading circle which met each Sunday afternoon in her room. The group read from *The Lutheran Church Visitor*. Three of those Winthrop students later became members of Grace Lutheran Church. They were Mrs. T.L. Bridges, Sr. (Lucille Lathan) of Newberry, South Carolina; Mrs. H.H. Felder (Lottie Hipp) of Elloree, South Carolina; and Mrs. Ashley Wannamaker (Pearl Haigler) of Orangeburg, South Carolina. The Winthrop Lutheran services began to falter when Miss Beckman resigned in 1918. From 1918 until 1920, there was very little interest in conducting Lutheran services in the area and any Rock Hillians of Lutheran backgrounds sought other church homes.

When the decision was made to begin a Lutheran congregation in Rock Hill, the Chamber of Commerce offered the use of their hall as a place of worship. Local Lutherans gladly accepted and organized a congregation of 14 charter members. Synod President Dr. Black and students from Southern Lutheran Seminary in Columbia conducted services during the winter months. There were few services held in the summer.

On April 15, 1923, a temporary church was established. On June 21 the church adopted the ULCA (United Lutheran Church in America) model constitution and chose the name Grace. On July 1, 1923, the congregation called its first pastor, Reverend H.A. Schroder.



Reverend Henry A. Schroder
June 1, 1923 - November 1, 1931

Reverend Henry A. Schroder began his ministry at Grace Lutheran Church on June 1, 1923. The Women's Missionary Society of the ULCA agreed to pay the major portion of the pastor's salary. The Board of Education, ULCA, promised support because there were Lutheran students at Winthrop. The congregation would pay the remainder of the pastor's salary. When the charter roll closed, there were 23 signatures:

Mr. and Mrs. D.E. Hood
Mrs. M.E. Rudisill, Barbara, Lois, Lena and Jason Rudisill
Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Lutz
Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Corzine, Gladys and David Corzine
Mr. E.H. Barr
Mrs. P.W. Enniss
Mrs. J.P. Tatham and William Tatham
Mrs. W.L. Reinhardt
Mrs. T.E. Ross
Mrs. W.J. Tally
Mrs. T.L. Bridges, Sr.
Rev. and Mrs. H.A. Schroder

Grace Church's first confirmands were James E. Rudisill and Vera Rudisill; they were confirmed April 13, 1924, before the church structure was built. The first council members were E.H. Barr, C.J. Lutz, D.E. Hood, and W.C. Corzine. Later T.Q. Blackwelder joined the congregation and became a member of council and secretary of the church. D.E. Hood was superintendent of Sunday School. Serving on the first building committee were Chairman T.Q. Blackwelder, D.E. Hood, C.J. Lutz and W.C. Corzine.

The congregation chose Nat G. Walker of Rock Hill as architect of the building. The church accepted bids from five contractors, three from Rock Hill, one of Columbia, and one of Charlotte, North Carolina. The contract was awarded to John P. Little and Son of Charlotte. The congregation decided to defer construction of the parsonage. The cornerstone of the church was laid December 12, 1925. Pastor Schroder wrote, "With the start of the construction work, there is in evidence a new spirit of enthusiasm. The congregation is realizing that the long wait has not been in vain." The total cost of Grace Lutheran church, completely equipped, was approximately \$32,000. The WMS contributed \$20,000 leaving the congregation with an obligation of \$12,000.

The beautiful stone church was ready for occupancy May 2, 1926. The membership had grown to 35 by then, and Sunday School attendance numbered 46. In addition, 37 Winthrop students and 5 faculty persons worshiped at Grace; clearly Winthrop meant much to the life of the congregation.

On May 1, 1926, the *Evening Herald* devoted headlines and much space to the story of Grace Lutheran Church. The paper printed the services for the formal opening of Rock Hill's newest church. Rev. Dr. H.J. Black, president of South Carolina Lutheran Synod, conducted the morning services. The evening service was a celebration of worship by members of all churches in the city and was led by Dr. P.E. Monroe of Hickory, North Carolina. Dr. Monroe was former president of Summerland College near Newberry, South Carolina, and later acting president of Lenoir- Rhyne College at Hickory.

Grace financed its church building in a unique way, asking each woman in the South Carolina Synodical Society to contribute three dollars per year for five years. The women at Grace, 13 members of the WMS, raised \$1,000 in 13 months for church furnishing. They sponsored a booth at the York County Fair! The booth featured home cooked specialties with many of the ingredients donated, and profits from sales went into the society's church fund. One Rock Hill couple, though not members of Grace, came yearly to the WMS booth for coffee paying one dollar per cup. That couple, Mr. and Mrs. J.G. Sassie, referred to that as their yearly contribution to Grace Lutheran Church. Mr. Sassie, of Rock Hill Monument Granite and Marble Works Company, blocked and dressed a piece of granite and mounted a gavel made by T.L. Bridges, Sr. The stone used was a remnant of granite from the church building. The gavel was presented to Mrs. M.O.J. Kreps, President of WMS in November 1926.

Early church records show the names of many contributors toward the building of our church. Many were townspeople of other denominations; some were interested parties throughout North and South Carolina. Clearly, Grace Lutheran Church was welcomed into the community and the region.

Evidence of acceptance was again forthcoming when Grace entertained the South Carolina Synodical Convention in 1927. Hosting a convention was a tremendous undertaking for an established

congregation, and although Grace had only 13 women delegates to the convention, it was their task to find lodging for approximately 200 delegates from visiting congregations. Again the people of Rock Hill gave generous assistance to Grace by providing necessary housing for delegates for two days and one night.

There were many contributions of furnishings for the new house of worship: baptismal font, electric lanterns for entrance, cross and vases for the altar, pulpit hangings, communion linens, and a gas range for the kitchenette. An early report states, "Winthrop students have been exceptionally active and faithful in attendance", further proof that Winthrop's role in Grace life was, and still is, vital.

During Reverend Schroder's eight years at Grace, the WMS of South Carolina paid in full their pledge of \$20,000. The Men's Federation (Brotherhood) paid a portion of \$5,200 on the lot and \$1,000 on the paving assessment. In 1930, Synod took over the balance of the unpaid portion pledged by the Brotherhood. The congregation indebtedness was reduced from \$12,000 to approximately \$3,700, and membership grew from 14 to 46. Pastor Schroder served Grace well during those first trying years. He resigned October, 1931, to become pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Durham, North Carolina.

The early members of Grace Lutheran Church proposed a building in 1923 large enough still to serve a congregation in 1998! They were bound by faith, endowed with vision, and held together by the spirit of God. There must have many times when the amount of indebtedness weighed heavily, but the congregation never doubted that God's purpose for a Lutheran Church in this place and time would take form and be realized.

Economic hard times had come upon the nation during the church's formation. The Great Depression began October 24, 1929, with the complete collapse of the stock market. Businesses closed, putting many people out of work. Banks failed, and wages declined for those still fortunate enough to have work. Hourly wages dropped by about 50 percent. Such massive poverty had never before been known in the United States. Historical accounts show that one-fourth of the labor force was out of work, and there was no such thing as unemployment insurance. Prices for agricultural products dropped to a very low level. The demand for goods declined, triggering a decrease in the value of money. There were no federally funded programs to alleviate poverty, and soup lines were a common site in almost every town. The Rock Hill area was not spared; neither were the finances of her churches.

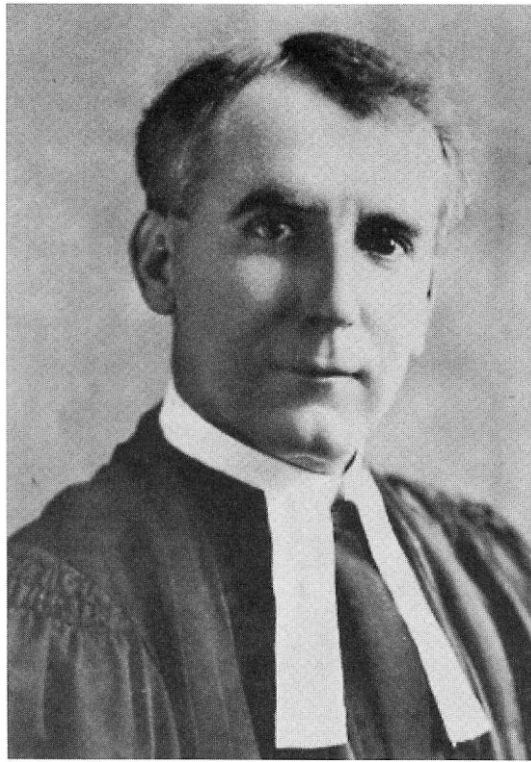


Reverend Carl B. Caughman
December 1, 1931 - December 1, 1933

Grace extended a call to the Reverend Carl B. Caughman, a native of Mississippi, and just back in the States after serving as a missionary to India. Reverend Caughman accepted the call and began his service to Grace Lutheran Church December 1, 1931. Reverend Carl B. Caughman served Grace Church for two years until December 1, 1933. These were years of great fellowship. Congregation members and Winthrop students shared a closeness that defied the gloom of the Depression. Twenty new members joined Grace Lutheran Church during these two years; two came by confirmation, one by baptism, and the remaining 17 by letter.

Submitting his resignation in 1933, Reverend Caughman wrote:

The work of the church has been gratifying, the little congregation showing faith, and courage and working together admirably. The church grows slowly numerically, but Rock Hill is an important center which needs the cooperation of the whole church. The resignation from this pastorate to accept the call to Grace Church in Prosperity, South Carolina, is done in the sincere hope the he who follows me here will be the instrument.



Reverend W.J. Roof
April 15, 1934 - January 1, 1938

A call went to Reverend W.J. Roof, of St. Barnabas Church in Charleston, South Carolina. His call was unique in that he received three calls: from the Educational Board; from the Mission Board; and from the congregation. Reverend Roof accepted and began his pastorate April 15, 1934, serving until January 1, 1938. Since this pastorate was strictly a mission undertaking, his support came from the three who issued the call.

Pastor Roof was the answer to the needs of Grace. He believed in young people and in community. The organization of the first chapter of the Lutheran Student Association created a closer bond between Grace and Winthrop students. Mrs. Roof was the link between college girls and congregation. The Roof house was often a "home away from home" for students. Reverend Roof conducted Vespers at Winthrop many times, when he talked to the entire student body.

Pastor Roof developed the Light Brigade and Luther League, forerunners of Lutheran Church Youth (LCY). The young people met once a month in various homes. Many times the group met at the pastor's house where cookies and lemonade became a usual treat for the youngsters.

While Grace Lutheran Church served the college campus well, Pastor Roof was determined that the church should serve the community and neighborhood as well. Soon the "Little Stone Church" and its leader became very well known. Pastor Roof served as President of the Lions Club for two years, where he was instrumental in providing glasses for the near blind. It was not long until Pastor Roof's voice became as well known to the sightless as the physical likeness became familiar to those with sight.

Pastor and Mrs. Roofs letters to the Mission Board endeavored to persuade them that Grace needed a parsonage. Although the parsonage did not become a reality until 1939, the Roofs laid the spiritual foundation for the parsonage. Since there was no parsonage, and rental houses were at a premium, charter members Mr. and Mrs. D.E. Hood offered the new pastor and family the use of their home. The house on State Street was always open to the congregation, students and any townspeople needing a helping hand and a listening ear. The Roofs later moved to a house on Aiken Avenue Extension which was closer to both Winthrop student and the congregation.

During the Depression, many times the congregation was unable to pay the pastor's salary. It was common necessity for families to maintain gardens from which they canned and preserved foodstuffs for the coming season, and church members shared their harvest with the pastor's family. Other times, when a member could purchase groceries for his own family, he bought enough for the pastor, also. Creative compensation kept food on the table; dedication to the Lord's work kept the pastor in the pulpit.

Pastor Roof resigned Grace Lutheran Church January 1, 1938, to become pastor at Vale, North Carolina. Upon retirement in 1959, the Roofs returned to Rock Hill to be closer to their son and his wife, Jimmy and Nell. Reverend Roof assisted in the services at Grace Lutheran Church from time to time. The death of Reverend Roof in 1962, at age 81, saddened the congregation. Reflecting on their ministry to Grace and the community, Mrs. Roof commented, "All we did was to serve. What more is asked of each of us, but to serve?"



Dr. Henry Smith Petrea
March 1, 1938 - February 1, 1954

Dr. Henry Smith Petrea, the fourth pastor, served Grace the longest, from March 1, 1938, to February 1, 1954. His ministry in Rock Hill came when the country was recovering from the Depression, and it was a period of financial recovery for Grace Lutheran Church. The church projected and accomplished many improvements. The best way to relate that period in Grace's history is the summary Pastor Petrea wrote himself.

The congregation had a debt of \$3,600 with a local bank at an interest rate of 6%. A loan for that amount was soon secured from the Board of American Missions at 2% and was repaid in full by May 18, 1947, on which date the church was dedicated free of all debt, and one year later the Board's aid on the pastor's salary ceased. The parish paid \$375 on Pastor Petrea's salary during his first year and increased it steadily until his last year when it reached \$2,850. In 1947 a new roof was put on the church at a cost of \$600. Two years later a Hammond organ was installed at a cost of \$2,250. The pastor gathered funds for the organ for several years in small amounts from many individuals, about \$400 of it coming from former Lutheran students at Winthrop.

In a plea to Winthrop students, Pastor Petrea wrote, "I beseech you, in behalf of the girls who come here and will continue to come through the years, to regard this as a personal, pastoral appeal to you to give as gratitude and love constrain you, whether it be \$5, \$10, \$25, or \$100." Pastor Petrea signed his appeal, "Yours with grateful heart and open hand, H.S. Petrea, Pastor." He added, "Item of interest - Five years ago the present pastor built a beautiful brick parsonage back of the church. Its large living room is HOME for Winthrop students and they come nearly every Sunday afternoon.

When you come to Winthrop, knock at our door." At that time, there were 57 students and 57 members in the church.

Another improvement during Pastor Petrea's pastorate was the renovation of the church basement, with all the work done by the congregation. The rearranged area provided Sunday School rooms and an area large enough for social gatherings. A furnace with stoker was installed and added to the comfort and convenience of the church.

It was during Pastor Petrea's years at Grace that a parsonage was built. When efforts to secure a loan for the parsonage failed, Pastor and Mrs. Petrea financed the building of the parsonage. By 1954, the congregation had repaid the loan in a manner satisfactory to the Petrea's who, from time to time, had carried the cost of the building payments also.

War years came during this period, and, with so many men called into service for their country, Pastor Petrea took on much of the work of maintaining the church physical plant. It was not an uncommon site to find him dusting the sanctuary, washing windows, repairing the roof, and keeping the grounds in order. When it was time to paint the sanctuary, Pastor Petrea took on the task. It is said that he placed the ladder in the archway over the chancel, looked a long time at that great height, said a prayer that his courage not fail him, then ascended the ladder and got the painting done.

Grace Church's young men answered the call to service during World War II. A December, 1944, bulletin says, "Let us give Christmas cheer to our sons in service by sending greetings to them." They were Corporal Floyd Enniss, Lt. Ernest Fellers, Lt. W.W. Coleman, Private T.L. Bridges, Jr., and Corporal L.C. Denton, Jr. The same bulletin informed the congregation: "The husband of Mrs. Robert Carter leaves Tuesday for the navy. Our prayers go with him." Grace Lutheran Church was deeply saddened by the announcement of the death of Corporal Denton, June 9, 1945. Denton was the son of L.C. and Mattie Denton, and brother to Richard Denton. He served as radio operator and was killed when his plane crashed on the coast of Kamchatch, Russia during World War II. Three years later when the Hammond organ was installed, it was dedicated as a memorial to young Denton. It was a fitting tribute to Grace's only gold star veteran, even more so because he gave the first \$100 to the organ fund. That fund was completed by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Denton, Sr.

Under Pastor Petrea's 16 years of service, Grace Lutheran Church was freed of debt, built a parsonage and installed the Hammond organ. Pastor Petrea resigned February 1, 1954.



Reverend Everett L. Lineberger
June 1, 1954 - July, 1958

Reverend Everett L. Lineberger was called to become Grace Lutheran Church's fifth pastor. The call was issued in April, 1954, when he was a senior at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina. Pastor Lineberger accepted effective June 6 after graduation. He served from June, 1954, until July, 1958.

Soon after Pastor Lineberger came to Grace, the church council authorized the creation of a Parish Education Cabinet to plan and supervise the educational affairs of the congregation. The cabinet was comprised of chairman of church council, president of the women's circle, Luther League president, superintendents of adult and children's Sunday School, the choir director, one appointed member of the congregation, and the pastor. The congregation adopted a Sunday School Constitution, and Grace began a sound education program.

The years 1954 through 1958 were productive for Grace. Membership grew rapidly from 100 to 157; baptized membership grew from 142 to 248; and the operating budget doubled.

Rock Hill was growing with the coming of new industries, and Grace became the church home for many who followed the industries. Growth pointed out the need for other innovations in Grace's ministry. The congregation initiated a drive to purchase more music editions of the *Common Service Book* and laid plans for the first "Preaching-Teaching" Mission which was held in October, 1955.

Repair work began on the church and parsonage. In October, 1954, the congregation established a fund to install carpet on the church aisles. A committee began to address additional classroom needs. The congregation was growing faster than space could be provided, and, in December, 1955, the seven room Parish House at 420 Oakland Avenue, and the 50 by 190 foot lot, were purchased from Mrs. L.O. Austin at the cost of \$16,000. The Parish House provided office space for the pastor, five Sunday School class rooms, and an adequate nursery.

The church borrowed the total amount of the purchase price from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. The 15-year loan was secured by mortgages on the Parish House and parsonage. Just prior to the purchase of the Austin property, the church applied for and received a state charter.

Also in 1955, the congregation painted the doors of Grace Lutheran Church red to symbolize "Blood of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." The red doors continued to be a landmark for the town and a welcome to all those who wished to worship within. Grace Lutheran Church continued to grow with Reverend Everett L. Lineberger and his wife, Ann. Pastor Lineberger and Ann generated an enthusiasm for the ministry that was equally appreciated by the students at college and the youngsters in the congregation. Confirmation classes took on more structure, and the church saw young people well schooled in the Lutheran faith.

The church began to enjoy even warmer relationships with the college and the town. One special observance was Winthrop's traditional Blue Line Sunday. It was a time for welcoming students back to campus and the community after the summer break. In Blue Line tradition, the first Sunday in September, Winthrop students walked from the front campus as an entire student body to the churches of their choice. It was called "Blue Line" because the students wore the navy blue uniform issued by the school, where only navy blue and white garments were approved campus apparel. Blue Line Sunday was an impressive event for the entire town. Grace Church was one of the first churches each student saw as she walked that line down Oakland Avenue.

Reverend Everett L. Lineberger submitted his letter of resignation in July, 1958, to become pastor of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Charleston, South Carolina. The four years Reverend Lineberger was pastor at Grace Church proved to be years of amazing growth, physically, and spiritually. The church property saw many improvements, and, when the doors of the church were painted red, Grace truly became a community landmark. Spiritually, the folks at Grace had a better foundation to continue the Lord's work until the pulpit could be filled.



Reverend Charles 1. Shealy, Jr.
January 10, 1959 - August 15, 1969

The sixth pastor for Grace Lutheran Church was the Reverend Charles 1. Shealy, Jr. Pastor Shealy came from St. Luke's Lutheran Church at Thunderbolt, Georgia. He was pastor of Church from January 10, 1959, until August 15, 1969.

Early in Pastor Shealy's ministry, the Parish Education Cabinet evolved into a Christian Education and Literature Committee. The committee developed a co-ordinated curriculum for all ages. For example, in the children's department, literature provided Bible School and Weekday Church School material which supplemented and reinforced literature used in Sunday School. The curriculum was well received as the church went into the eighth year of Weekday Church School. The committee also extended Vacation Bible Schools to a two weeks each year. In 1960, Grace congregation began using the new *Common Service Book and Hymnal*, and in September, 1962, Grace became a member of the new Lutheran Church in America (LCA).

From 1960 to 1962, extensive physical improvements continued at Grace under the pastorate of Reverend Shealy. The South Carolina Synod gave a special fund of \$500 to Campus Ministry to renovate and decorate a room for Winthrop Lutheran students. The remodeling triggered a major property improvement program. The church basement was completely renovated, and kitchen facilities were updated. Before any interior work could be done, the exterior of the basement walls were waterproofed. One improvement led to another, and soon, the church was thoroughly cleaned thoroughly on the outside, sandblasted, and treated with silicone. Inside improvements included painting, air conditioner installation, and the addition of new light fixtures to the nave. A new altar rail, replicating the altar design, was added to the chancel. Although funds for the Student Room came from Synod, the congregation financed the remainder of the renovations.

In 1963, the year Grace Church celebrated its 40th anniversary, there were 238 baptized members and 158 confirmed members; the church property value was assessed at \$114,000--a far cry from 23 charter members and property value at \$40,000 in 1923 when the congregation was born.

The theme for Grace's 40th anniversary was "A Fellowship Where You Feel At Home With God," and congregation celebrated with a special service on September 22, 1963. Returning to deliver the sermon was recently retired Reverend Henry A. Schroder, who had been Grace's first pastor. The order of worship for the day was:

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

September 22, 1963

Silent Prayer

Prelude

Hymn 131-"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"

(Congregation standing until end of Collect.)

Confession of Sins (Music, P. 15)

Introit

Gloria Patri, Kyrie, Gloria In Excelsis

Collect

Old Testament Lesson, I Kings 17:8-16

Epistle, Galatians 5 :25-6: 10

Junior Choir Anthem

Gospel, Matthew 6:24-34 (Standing)

Order For Infant Baptism

Announcements

Hymn 429, "From All That Dwell Below The Skies"

Sermon The Rev. Henry A. Schroder

Durham, N.C.

Offering

Senior Choir Anthem- "I Will Magnify Thee"

Offertory, Number 3

Prayer of the Church, Lord's Prayer

Announcements

Hymn 240, "Angel Voices Ever Singing"

Benediction, Doxology, Silent Prayer, Postlude

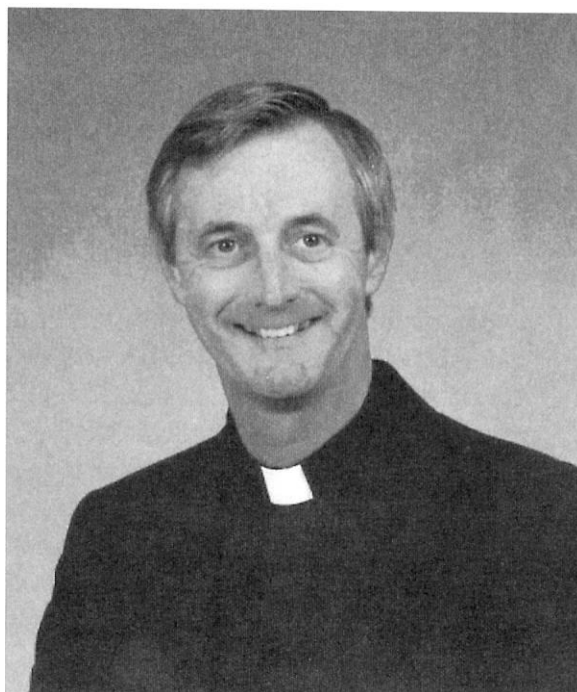
Pastor Shealy commented that the program of celebration was especially appropriate to the occasion:

This is a day of wonderful meaning for Grace Church. Forty years of serving God here in this community by the more than 450 people who have been members are a cause for rejoicing. Also, we salute the hundreds of Winthrop students who have joined with the congregation in worship and for whom Grace Church has become a center of their religious life while here.

It is a happy privilege to have Pastor Schroder with us as our preacher this morning. He was the first pastor, serving the congregation from June 1, 1923, to November 1, 1931. Since that time he has been pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Durham, N.C. until his retirement last June.

Because of the close ties over the years between us and the Winthrop students, it is fitting that our anniversary celebration be held on Church Line Sunday [formerly known as Blue Line Sunday]. We greet you today, students, both returning and new. Your presence always gives us a lift.

While at Grace, Pastor Shealy celebrated his 25th year of Lutheran Ministry. On May 12, 1968, the Grace congregation honored him for this service. In August, 1969, Pastor Shealy accepted a call to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Pomaria, ending a decade of service to Grace Church.



Reverend John E. Boyd, Jr.
July 1, 1970 - August 17, 1975

Reverend John E. Boyd, Jr., of Statesville, North Carolina, accepted the call to be the seventh pastor while still a senior at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. One Sunday morning in late 1969, while Grace was without a pastor, the congregation heard a very promising senior seminarian, John Boyd. The congregation liked what it heard; young people were impressed and expressed their approval to the committee searching for a pastor. The call to the young seminarian was issued and accepted in January, 1970, but the congregation had to wait until July, after the ordination of Reverend Boyd, before he could become official pastor.

Before Reverend John E. Boyd and his wife, Linda, moved to Rock Hill, the church council had begun updating residential policy for a pastor of the church. Council suggested that the parsonage no longer be used for a pastor's residence, but that it be turned into office space and much needed church school rooms. The pastor would be given a housing allowance, choose his own housing, and be responsible for its upkeep. The congregation voted in favor of the new policy.

Pastor and Mrs. Boyd brought an enthusiastic approach to Grace Church. Reverend Boyd, a graduate of Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina, received his Master of Divinity Degree from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. He served his internship at Christ Lutheran Church in San Diego and worked as Youth Director of a Lutheran Church in Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii. His varied background provided a good foundation for the work he was to do for Grace.

Early on, Pastor Boyd's community interests became well known. He served as chairman of both the Drug Abuse Council and Junior Women's Club Girl's Home. As an active member of the Rock Hill Ministerial Association, his messages frequently were heard on local radio.

One of the more exciting areas of interest at Grace was the Youth Ministry program. Along with regular weekly meetings, the young people formed a singing group specializing in contemporary and folk music; the young people wrote many of their own songs. Retreats became an extension of their confirmation classes. The 1972 confirmation class wanted to let Grace Church know their appreciation of their spiritual growth and set a precedent for other graduating classes to follow, by presenting Grace Church with a beautiful dogwood tree for the church lawn. That year's class also celebrated its confirmation on April 13, the same date as did the first class of 1923. The 1973 confirmation class continued the gift giving tradition by presenting Grace with a new church seal.

Grace Church celebrated her Golden Anniversary in June, 1973, with a week of events. On Sunday, June 17, Dr. Herman Cauble, President of South Carolina Synod, delivered the sermon at the 11:00 o'clock service. A congregational picnic at Joslin Park followed the morning worship. On Tuesday evening, Reverend Everette Lineberger, who had become pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, led the 7:30 p.m. service. Reverend Charles J. Shealy, Jr., Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Pomaria, South Carolina, preached at the Wednesday evening service. Celebration week concluded with a 7:30 Thursday evening service led by South Carolina Lutheran synod President Dr. Karl W. Kinard. Receptions following each evening service afforded the congregation an opportunity to visit with the guest pastors and returning members who came back for the Golden Anniversary celebration. In the 1973 Annual Report, Council Chairman Dr. J. Donald Horst stated:

1973 marked the fiftieth year of existence for Grace Church and we not only recalled the faith of our fathers, but by our celebration attempted to thank them for their perseverance through hard times, their faith in God and god's work in this congregation, and also their hope for the future.

The energy of Grace Lutheran Church showed revitalization in many areas. Lutheran Church Women (LCW), the organization for women known in the early life of Grace Church as Women's Missionary Society, changed their general format allowing the women of the church to fit into a group or groups that appealed to their individual interests. There was a renewal of interest in Girl Scouts, and the entire scouting program took on new life.

The January, 1974, *Grace Notes* reported that Grace Church had approved the purchase of a new seven and one-half rank Zimmer Pipe Organ including chimes. The organ was custom built and installed January 23, 1975. Of the total purchase price of \$17,970, the congregation raised the substantial amount of \$10,800 by the time of installation. Space availability and tonal quality dictated that the organ be installed in the balcony area of the sanctuary; the men of the church prepared the balcony for installation. The organ was first used in February, 1975. Dr. Karl W. Kinard, Jr., organist from St. John's Lutheran Church in Salisbury, North Carolina, and Mr. Shannon Hunter, organist at Grace Lutheran Church led the Dedication Service on Sunday, May 25. By the dedication date, the congregation owed less than \$5,000 on the organ.

A food pantry for elderly and infirmed persons began soon after Pastor Boyd came to Grace. A Good Samaritan Fund was established for those passing through our community and finding themselves in need of financial assistance on a one time basis. One member of the congregation expressed her favor of the fund, "As each person in need passes through, they take the love of Grace Church with them as they move to another area. Grace Church then becomes not only a church of stone, but one with a heart of gold."

During Pastor Boyd's ministry, the Lutheran student program began moving toward a social ministry approach, concerned with tutoring and work with area underprivileged children. This was also the beginning of greater ecumenical worship and programs.

The Lutheran Student Association was poised to become a strong ministry for Grace Church as early as 1959 when fourteen Winthrop students were received as student members of Grace. Student participation can be credited to a designated visitor to the campus, who provided students more contact with the congregation. In 1961, Synod approved the position of contact pastor and provided a small stipend for the position. Duties included visiting the students on campus, helping develop their Christian education programs, counseling, and participating in state and national student events. By Fall, 1962, LSA changed its meeting time to the Sunday School hour to allow more students an opportunity to attend.

The responsibilities of contact pastor grew over the years, and Synod and National Lutheran Campus Ministry sanctioned the position of a lay person as campus contact pastor. Emphasis continued on Christian development and expanded to offer students opportunities to work with disadvantaged youth, teaching them arts and crafts and providing tutoring. Titled campus pastor, the congregation's representative maintained the Lutheran identity, enjoying a cooperative ministry with other denominations on Winthrop's campus and establishing contact with other schools of higher education in the area, even reaching out to assist campus ministry at Limestone College in Gaffney.

The first Grace visitor to Winthrop was Frances Edge, followed by campus pastors Naomi Bridges (1961-1979), Sharon Olthof (1979-1990), and Judy Huitt (1991-1995). Grace recognized the value of the Campus Ministry program and created a Campus Ministry Committee to assist the contact pastor in securing space for programs and administering a budget financed by the South Carolina Synod and National Lutheran Campus Ministry.

Campus Ministry, which began its evolution during Naomi Bridges' seventeen years of service, opened the door to greater outreach to campus and community. Former campus pastor Sharon Olthof said of her ministry:

Working with Winthrop students was a wonderful experience for me. We worked co-operatively with the Episcopal Church of Our Savior to serve both Lutheran and Episcopal students for many of those years. Lutheran campus ministry worked ecumenically with Winthrop College Cooperative Ministry to establish a Lutheran presence on the Winthrop campus. Our Winthrop students led worship at Grace once a year with liturgical dance, drama and song. The Campus Ministry Committee and other families opened their homes for student suppers, pool parties and Christmas drop-ins. Our campus ministry provided student leadership for Lutheran Student Movement and attended regional and national LSM assemblies. It was an experience which enriched my life and I am thankful for the opportunity to serve through the congregation at Grace Lutheran Church.

The Grace Campus Ministry program continued to grow under Campus Pastor Judy Huitt. Her ministry was centered in scripture as evidenced in her following recollections:

It was my privilege to serve as lay Lutheran campus ministry from Grace at

Winthrop. During this time, the Episcopal Church of Our Savior joined us as our partner in campus ministry Lutheran/Episcopal Campus Ministry. We called ourselves Club "5:27," based on Luke 5:27 when Jesus called His disciples saying, "Follow Me." Our weekly meetings were on Tuesday at 5:27 p.m.! "5:27" was Christ centered, Bible based, relationally oriented, focused on individually and collectively growing and serving, in a personal relationship with Christ, each other and our world.

Based on Acts 2:42, these goals were accomplished through God's power, prayer and leading as we

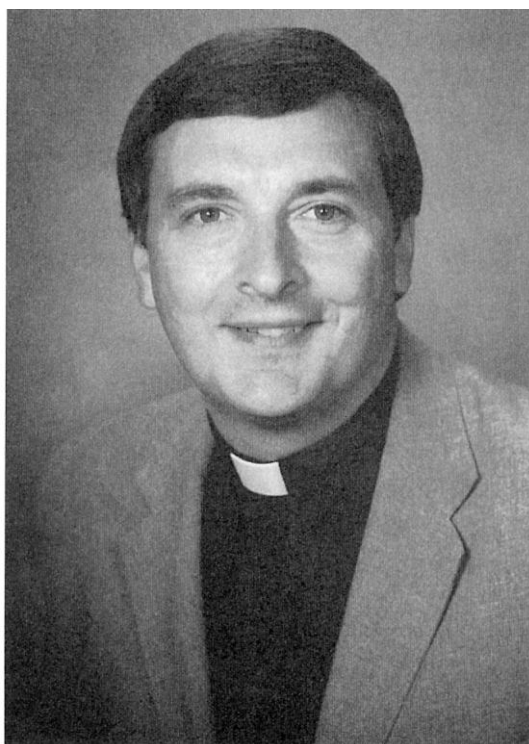
... "feasted at Jesus' feet" through Bible studies, prayer, worship and sharing with each other.

... "fellowshipped together" space - in community - at meals, through programs, retreats (beach, lake, ski) and various events.

... "flowed over as the Lord filled us" - sharing Christ and His love - through various service projects and campus events, as well as were an active member of Winthrop's Cooperative Ministry organization and its ecumenical events.

Ever increasing members are coming to worship on a regular basis. We have extended ourselves through the Food Pantry and the Good Samaritan Fund in ways that are difficult to measure the value. Our Campus Ministry Program is reaching more students than ever before, Luther League continues, Sunday Church School has shown a slight increase. We could go through all the programs of the church and find evidence of growth, occasionally small but at least positive.

On January 1, 1975, Grace Church had 385 baptized members. When Pastor Boyd submitted his resignation in August, 1975, to accept a parish in Savannah, Georgia, Grace Church was strong in fellowship. Youth Ministry participation was at an all time high, and many other church programs including the women's circles were reaching out to the Rock Hill community.



Reverend Hollis A. Miller
July 1, 1976 - June 15, 1981

The Reverend Hollis A. Miller came to Grace Church from St. Peter's Lutheran Church, a mission congregation in Southport, North Carolina. Pastor Miller, his wife Susan, and sons Jeffrey and Jonathan, began their ministry July 1, 1976. The annual report from 1976 carried this message from Pastor Miller:

Glory, glory, hallelujah! How does one go about thanking you for the ministry you gave to me and my family on July 1st. These have truly been exciting days for the Miller family. We have been excited in our ministry with you The Lord has been good to us. The future is certainly an open door to many opportunities and possibilities.

Grace Church received 89 new baptized members in 1976. Pledges of \$57,195 were 55% above pledges for 1975, and a building fund for an educational building was established. The church contracted with Lutheran Laymen's Movement (LLM) to conduct a capital funds drive in March, 1977. The church also selected the architectural firm of Ferebee, Walters and Associates of Charlotte to guide the congregation in its plans for an educational-multipurpose building. The projected cost of \$271,000 would provide for an 8,300 square foot building plus architects' fees, furnishings, and LLM expense for conducting the capital funds drive.

When final plans were drawn and invitations for estimates were issued, the congregation realized \$325,000 would be required to finance the building. In August, 1978, the congregation voted to go forward with a bond issue as a means to finance construction. Kick-off for the bond campaign was November 5, 1978. An offer to purchase adjoining property, known as the Ward property, had been accepted earlier and that acquisition afforded additional space for expansion. Room for the new building was made by demolishing the old parsonage and the parish house. The church offices moved

into the Ward building.

Dr. Hal C. Anderson, chairman of the bond drive, wrote in the November 1, 1978, issue of *Grace Notes*, "We are beginning a new era of growth at Grace Lutheran. With our bond sale about to begin, the result of much work by many members is about to be realized. Our Building Plans are in the completion stage, the old parsonage and parish house are being taken down, all evidence of progress toward our goal." In three weeks, better than \$275,000 in bonds were sold, leaving only \$49,750 needed to reach the needed \$325,000. Ground breaking for the first major building for Grace since 1925 was set for December 10, 1978.

The successful bond sale to finance construction of the new building allowed construction to begin, and the new building was dedicated on November 4, 1979. Dr. Herman Cauble, President of South Carolina Lutheran Synod, delivered the message to a "church filled to overflowing."

Grace Church began a new phase in church life, entering the Parish Life and Ministry Development (PLMD) program in 1978. With the assistance of South Carolina Synod and Lutheran Church in America (LCA), Grace began to evaluate its ministry and develop goals for more effective outreach to congregation and community. PLMD resulted in the April, 1979, Official Statement of Mission:

Being baptized into the Fellowship of Christ, we declare Grace Lutheran's Mission is:

To fulfill the commission of God by providing an opportunity for growth, worship, and learning.

To equip all people in Grace to witness, to care for and to minister to those within our community.

To develop a deeper fellowship and support within the congregation and

To provide the opportunity to show love and commitment to Christ.

At a called meeting in July, 1979, the congregation selected five priority objectives to fulfill the new Statement of Mission. Those objectives, as noted by Pastor Miller, were:

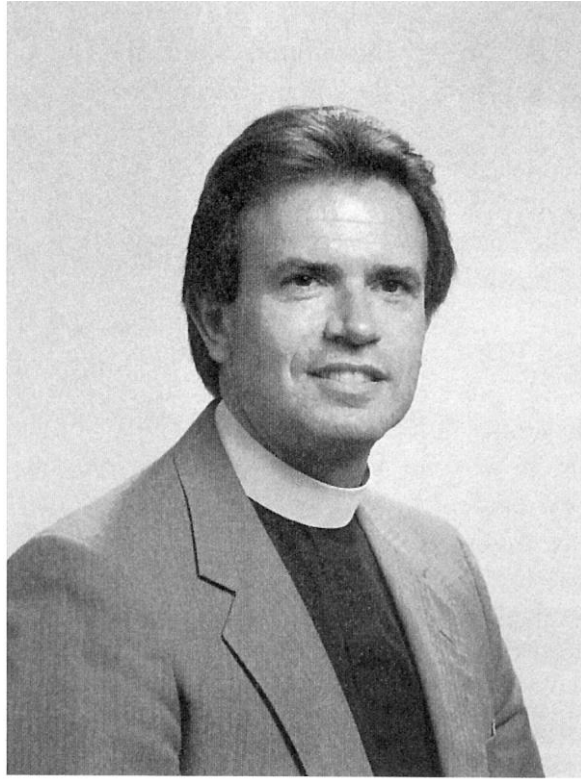
1. SERVICE - Plan a strategy for involving the congregation in the most urgent community hurts and needs.
2. WITNESS - Help less active and inactive members become more involved in the life and work of the congregation.
3. LEARNING - Plan and develop a program of educational ministry in relation to the congregation's mission and purpose.
4. WORSHIP - Evaluate and make recommendations on the relationship on the congregation's total music program with its worship life

5. SUPPORT - Help members grow in a sense of fellowship in the congregation.

Grace Church continued to grow in many ways. There were 590 baptized members and 416 confirmed members on the roll as of December 31, 1979, and church programs reflect that growth. Lutheran Church Women had approximately 60 active members, providing worship and service opportunities to three circles. The 1980 confirmation class was the largest class at Grace to date; 11 young people were confirmed on May 25. Youth groups were no longer called Luther League but were known as Lutheran Church Youth. Other youth programs included several new scout troops and two basketball teams.

In March, 1981, Pastor Miller announced his resignation to accept a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Lexington, South Carolina, effective June 15. His letter to the congregation read:

Together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we have accomplished much during this time. This includes our new Educational Fellowship Building, a successful Capital Funds and Bond Campaign for building, the acquisition of the Ward property, participation in Parish Life and Ministry Development, (PLMD), entry into Word and Witness, sponsorship of a Vietnamese family, expansion of our youth programs, participation in Synod's Camp Appeal and Strength for Mission, utilization of the new *Lutheran Book of Worship*, a doubling of our financial receipts and the reception of 300 new members. I give thanks to God for our years together. Susan, the boys, and I will always treasure many friendships here. We pray that the good Lord will continue to use both you and us mightily in His service.



Reverend R.E. Lybrand, Jr.
July 5, 1982 - May 29, 1988

Grace Church issued a call to Reverend R.E. Lybrand, Jr., in April, 1982. The congregation had searched diligently for a pastor who would best serve the needs of a growing congregation, campus and community. Pastor Lybrand, then serving Lutheran Church of Resurrection in Columbia, South Carolina, wrote the following in his letter of acceptance:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ!

You have honored me deeply by choosing to extend a call for me to become your pastor. I stand in awe and humility of the powerful guidance of our Lord in this entire process. Your pulpit committee and church council have been most gracious and thorough. The ministry at Grace and in Rock Hill appears to be a challenging one which is filled with tremendous opportunities. After much prayer, thought and counsel, I feel the lord's leadership in this most important matter. Therefore, with excitement and anticipation, I accept the call to become your pastor.

Pastor Lybrand, his wife Jackie, and children Mauri and Brett, quickly became a much loved and respected first family of Grace. In his initial message to the congregation in the August, 1982, issue of *Grace Notes*, the new pastor outlined his Pastoral Policies and Procedures giving the congregation ready access to the pastor. He stated, "I want to be a good pastor to you and your family. Please let me know when there are needs which I can help meet." He signed the message "Pastor Rammy," and, from that day forward, that is how the congregation addressed him.

Grace Church began to experience renewed strength and vitality. Numbers of new members were added to the church roll. Attendance for regular Sunday worship set new records each week, consistently numbering more than 300. Financial contributions were so strong that the church was no longer plagued by deficits. The congregation's commitment to Christ was evident in both worship attendance and in financial giving. In 1983, giving exceeded the budget by \$10,500.

Church council recognized that Grace soon would need to add a second Sunday worship service. In July of 1983, church council and the Long Range Planning Committee decided to add an 8:30 a.m. service beginning in August. The Chicago Folk Service, which had been used for more than 10 years at Lutheran Campus Ministry gatherings, was used at some of the 8:30 services, and was the inspiration for the Folk Musicians' ministry.

The congregation continued its service to the community with its support to Project Hope, Good Samaritan Fund, Meals-on-Wheels, and the Christmas Giving Tree. Grace Church participated fully in the community-wide Jobs for the Jobless by providing work for the unemployed. Other organizations Grace Church supported include the Boys' Home, Girls' Home, Children's Attention Home, the Bible in the Schools program and Rabun Circle Community Home for Girls. The church also joined the York County Hospice program and pledged \$500 support in 1984.

Growth during Pastor Rammy's six years at Grace was phenomenal. According to Synod, Grace Church received the largest number of new members in the state in 1983. In late 1984, Grace was cited as one of the top 50 fastest growing LCA congregations in worship attendance. Baptized members in 1984 numbered over 700; more than 400 celebrated communion in May.

Youth ministry was an ever increasing delight for the congregation. Youth participation was so dynamic that a van was a necessary to transport the young people to their many retreats, scouting activities and sports competitions. LCY in particular made a great effort to raise money toward and promote interest in a van acquisition. Other organizations developed. A Grace Supper Club of 30 households formed, and a Lutheran Mens group began meeting. Jubilees, a vibrant organization of members aged 50 plus, was born. The group offered study opportunities, travel and service to the community.

During Pastor Rammy's tenure, Grace participated in the Intern Program through Southern Seminary in Columbia. Debbie Wood was our first intern pastor, arriving in August of 1985. Pastor Wood went on to become pastor of Trinity Lutheran in Georgetown, S.C. and now serves as pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Welcome, N.C. In August, 1986, Kathy Chartier became Grace's second Intern. Following her graduation, she served as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Columbia, South Carolina. Pastor Chartier is now an Assistant to the Bishop of the South Carolina Synod.

Beautiful stained glass windows, made possible by donations in honor of the living and memorials to departed family members, added to the reverent atmosphere in the sanctuary. Additional property improvements included the purchase of a new copy machine and installation of partitions in the fellowship hall. A task force began to study plans for land utilization. A handicap ramp, completely funded by member Audie Gervais, was built. Handbells, purchased through generous donations, added to the beauty of worship services.

Grace continued to need two services each Sunday, and the popularity of the Chicago Folk

Service led to its use three times a month at the 8:30 morning service and once every quarter at the 11:00 service. The Folk Musicians grew in number and skills. Because they added such a meaningful dimension to the worship, the Folk Musicians produced a collection of hymns on cassette. Their voices and harmony, guitars and flute, encouraged others to join the group. Every Sunday and special occasion, music flowed from the congregation, from the adult choir, children's choirs, handbells, or folk musicians. The church valued dedicated musicians willing to share their time and talents to make Grace a joyous place to worship.

In early 1988, area Lutheran ministers met with South Carolina Synod Bishop James Aull regarding a proposed mission congregation in Rock Hill. The concept was not new; for many years Synod had considered the need to expand in a growing community, and it appeared that the time was right for that expansion. Synod would chose a pastor to develop a congregation in the Northwestern High School area of Rock Hill. Grace would have the unique opportunity to help give birth to a new congregation.

Also, in 1988, Pastor Rammy announced his decision to become pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Gastonia, North Carolina. Pastor Rammy preached his last sermon at Grace on May 29, 1988. Rammy, Jackie, Mauri and Brett moved on to continue the Lord's work in another town and another church.

Grace continued to grow and enjoy the arrival of new people in its midst, families willing to share their accumulated Christian experiences and talents and help Grace fulfill the ministry of those first faithful Lutherans in 1923. Reverend Guy Shealy, a professional counselor and member of the congregation, was appointed interim pastor to Grace as he had in the past when the pulpit was empty. The congregation was confident in Pastor Shealy's leadership until a new pastor could be called.



Reverend William R. Cobb
January 1, 1989 - October 15, 1990

The congregation was called into meeting November 6, 1988, to vote on a call to a new pastor. Reverend William R. Cobb accepted the call on January 1, 1989 and came to Grace from St. Paul's Church in Aiken, South Carolina.

Church council had entered into a study of the establishment of a Long Range Capital Development Fund prior to Pastor Cobb's arrival at Grace. The fund would anticipate future needs for more property and expansion of facilities as the congregation grew. The plan proposed campaigns to solicit gifts to the fund and arrangements for the members of Grace to make loans to the fund to finance specific capital development projects or purchases.

The concept caught the interest of the membership, and the congregation entered into negotiations for parking lot development and property acquisition. Pastor Cobb's message in *Grace Notes*, April 19, 1989, stated:

There are so many good things happening at Grace that my excitement is growing and I hope yours is, too. The Capital Development Fund continues to grow. We will be closing on the new land for the parking lot in a few days. The paving of all the lots should begin in early May. The landscape people will be putting in the new plantings this fall. So the outside of our building should really be in for some changes. Inside the building, we see new programs growing and developing.

Youth Ministry continued to plan for the best interests of the several groups of young people,

scouting, sports programs, LCY, and children's choirs. Retreats, where youngsters had the privilege of working and worshiping with young Lutherans from other congregations, continued to be well attended. A Shepherding program encouraged volunteers from the congregation to reach out to new people in the church, to families in crisis, and to newcomers interested in becoming part of the Grace family. In July of 1989, the congregation welcomed the arrival Reverend Jeff Lingle, was sent by Synod to develop the new Epiphany Lutheran Church congregation Pastor Cobb wrote, "Grace has been supportive of this mission since it was first mentioned and we look forward to its establishment. It will be nice to have another group of Lutherans in our city."

In September, 1989, disaster, in the form of Hurricane Hugo, swept through South Carolina from the coast to the mountains, and Rock Hill was right in the path of destructive winds and rain. The storm came inland Thursday night, September 21, and moved quickly in a band from Charleston through Sumter, Columbia, Rock Hill and Charlotte, into the Hickory, North Carolina, area before it subsided. Most homes and business were without power, and trees were destroyed, but there was no loss of life in the Rock Hill area. Pastor Cobb's message to the congregation after the storm passed through was

THANKS BE TO GOD! We are all all right. As I told the 85 folks gathered on Sunday morning in the dark, we have been devastated but not defeated. In fact our problems are much less than those folks along the Coast. It has been good to see people reaching out and caring for each other. Let's keep that up even after everything is straight.

The church's buildings did not suffer extensive damage, although ages-old oaks were damaged heavily, and landscaping took days to restore.

The congregation's ministry to the community remained a vital facet in the life of Grace. In 1990, the congregation was recognized by many service agencies who declared, Grace to be one of the "most actively involved" churches in Rock Hill. In October, 1990, Pastor William Cobb felt that his work at Grace was accomplished and that he must move on to another congregation. His resignation was submitted and accepted, effective October 15, 1990.

Many changes occurred at Grace in late 1990. Sharon Olthof, who served as director of the campus ministry program from April, 1979, resigned to begin full-time work elsewhere, and church secretary Gail Garmany resigned. Grace had vacancies in three critical areas of church life: pastor, director of campus ministries, and secretary.

Lay members continued the work of the church with dedication and perseverance. While the congregation sorely missed the spiritual guidance of a pastor, there was no lack of enthusiasm for the ministry Grace was commissioned to fulfill. Church council called for volunteers to help perform the visitation ministry in the absence of a pastor. An invitation went out from Lutheran Campus Ministry offering a "wonderful opportunity for someone who enjoys people and is energetic, motivated and self-directed. Job requires a four year degree from an accredited college and a flexible thirty hour week."

A first-time Cluster Reformation Service was held on October 28, 1990. Reverend David Donges, assistant to the Bishop of South Carolina Synod, delivered the sermon. Area Lutheran pastors participating in the service were Reverends Gene Baker of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in

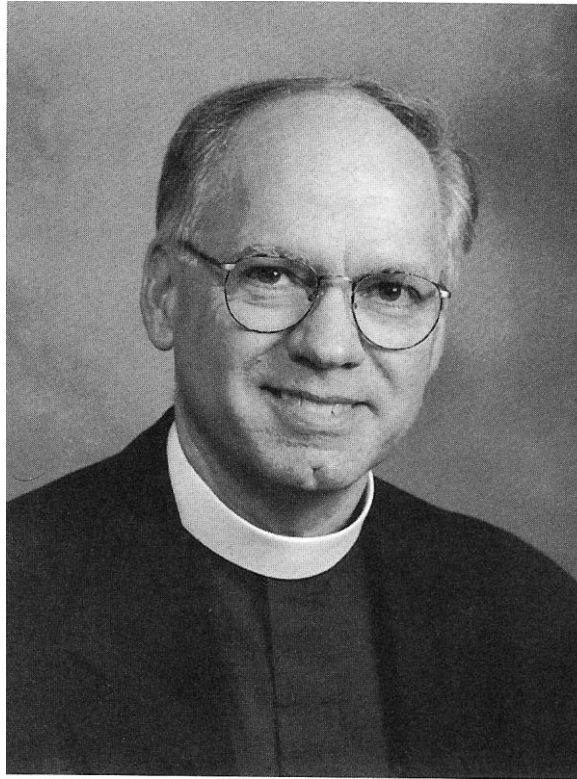
Chester and Abiding Presence in York, Jeff Lingle of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Rock Hill and Guy Shealy, pastoral counselor and occasional interim pastor at Grace Church.

Council President Dr. Hal Anderson wrote an editorial in the February, 1991, *Grace Notes*, in reference to the many changes at Grace the preceding year:

The clock was set for a pending disaster. What has happened since, I can attribute to the Holy Spirit leading us in our decisions, calming our fears of the unknown, and giving us a feeling that we can overcome. Don Horst and the Council put in a tremendous amount of work and prayers. The results are that God is answering our prayer.

Dr. Anderson praised the congregation for its financial support, stating that the church had been able to pay 71% of its apportionment from August to December, 1990. Secretarial duties were assumed by Carolyn Nesbitt and other volunteers until the new secretary could begin work. By December, 1990, the church hired new secretary Pamela Stafford. Council announced that Reverend Dr. Carveth Mitchell of Charlotte would serve as interim pastor. Judy Huitt became the new director of Campus Ministries and began work in February, 1991. Church council also appointed a call committee to search for a new pastor. Anderson continued his editorial with the words:

The Godsend has been Pastor Mitchell who has provided spiritual nourishment, provided advice, and enthusiasm to the Council. His inspiring worship services have been an answer to prayers. There is a new feeling of enthusiasm, of cooperation and sharing in the work of Grace.



Reverend A. Glenn Boland
September 1, 1991 - September 10, 1995

Pastor A. Glenn Boland came to Grace Lutheran Church from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. He set the tone for his ministry in his letter of acceptance dated August 12, 1991:

The call which you have extended to me to be your pastor is quite affirming to me as a person and as a pastor. I appreciate the confidence that you have placed in me. I have sensed God's spirit in this call process from the very beginning; otherwise, I would not have continued discussion with your Call Committee and congregational Council. After prayerful consideration of your call, I feel led by the Holy Spirit to accept the challenge that you have extended to me to be the pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, effective September 9, 1991. My first Sunday with you will be September 15, 1991.

I encourage you to join me in my prayers that Almighty God will strengthen this new relationship of pastor and people that we, together, may be an effective instrument of his will.

January, 1992, marked the beginning of an active Altar Guild at Grace. Under the leadership of the Worship Committee, the Altar Guild was responsible for the care and changing of paraments, altar flowers, and preparations and clean up of communion. The Guild was also charged with cleaning the chancel area, care of worship assistants' vestments and organizing a schedule for worship assistants.

Recruitment continued in other areas of church life. An announcement went out for handbell ringers for both Junior handbell and Adult handbell choirs. The Folk Musicians spent hours practicing for leadership in an alternative music worship service at Grace. The April, 1992, *Grace Notes* announced that campus ministries continued to flourish. Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops nearly doubled membership; a new Senior High LCY organized with 14 members, and Junior High LCY continued meeting twice a month. Special recognition, a gold star rating, was awarded to Aid Association Lutheran (AAL) Branch 5255, Rock Hill, for their exemplary volunteer service to the community.

At a called congregational meeting June 14, 1992, the congregation voted to take advantage of lower interest rates and refinance outstanding indebtedness with Lutheran Brotherhood at 9.37% interest for 20 years. The amount refinanced was \$225,000, which included bond indebtedness of \$106,281, parking lot paving and paving note of \$97,139 plus \$21,580 for projected closing cost, and a contingency fund for anticipated repairs and 1992 shortfall.

In October, former Grace member Garry White, became a student seminarian to the congregation. White, formerly a professor at Winthrop University, was a student at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. He returned to Grace in August, 1993, as a student intern for one year. In September, 1994, Garry White once again returned to Grace as a part-time member of the staff, serving his senior year internship as Director of Youth Ministry. White's ordination was at Grace Church on July 10, 1995.

Council established a Seminarian Fund in July, 1993, with proceeds to be divided quarterly among members of the congregation pursuing theological studies leading to ordination by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As of April, 1998, three persons have benefitted from this fund: Michael Comer, Garry White and Andrea Anderson Wiegand.

Grace Lutheran Church, recognized for her generous response toward community needs, received thank-you notes from various organizations. Boy's Home of York County received funds toward the purchase of bedding. HOPE wrote, "We appreciate your concern and care for the less fortunate of our community." The director of the Girl's Home said, "Through your generous giving, you have extended yourself to those in need of love and support, and we are truly grateful." Grace's Service Committee thanked the congregation in the February, 1993, *Grace Notes*, stating that the church had been able to exceed its budget commitment to local service agencies. Financially, 1993 was a banner year for Grace. Total contributions were \$228,814.34. After all expenses were paid, the treasurer reported a balance of \$9,529.31.

In March, 1994, the Service committee asked the congregation to participate in the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen, a means for providing meals for the hungry throughout the community. Volunteers would donate food and supplies and prepare and serve meals. Grace responded generously. The soup kitchen has remained a viable ministry for Grace members who have staffed the program the first Saturday of each month since July, 1994.

Randy Wallace became the first, full-time Director of Music Ministries on February 13, 1994. Mr. Wallace had served Amazing Grace Lutheran Church in Lawrenceville, Georgia for eight years prior to coming to Grace. Under his guidance, the music ministries of the congregation were expanded greatly and benefitted from his consistent and stable leadership.

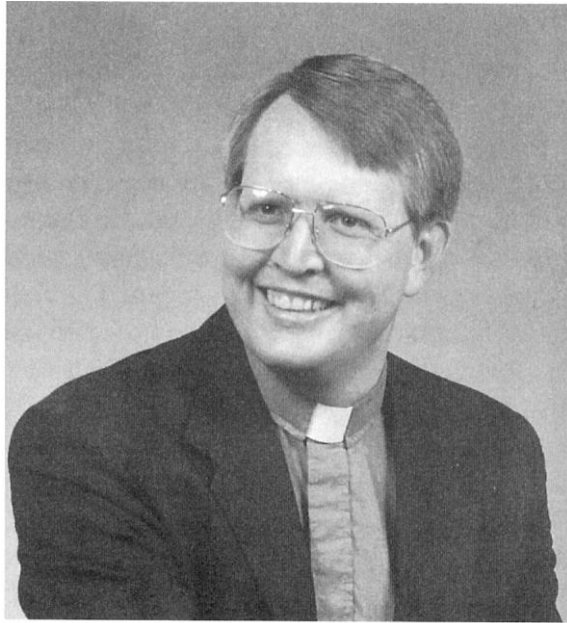
Grace presented the congregation with a unique giving opportunity in 1994 with the purchase of a new Rodgers C 100 keyboard. Members purchased individual keys for \$24 each. The keyboard remained an integral part of worship services in 1998; Director of Music Ministries Randy Wallace continued to use the Rodgers C 100 in various music programs.

Homecoming in 1994 featured Ed Kilbourne, a popular singer/storyteller and religious resource person. He performed again in 1998, to a packed sanctuary, to launch the 75th anniversary celebration of Grace Lutheran Church.

Highlights of 1995 included the construction of a playground and Dr. and Mrs. Ken Curtis' gift of the house and property at 412 Oakland Avenue. In preparation for Easter, the Newberry College Madrigal Singers presented "The Seven Last Words of Christ," and New York City actress and playwright Margaret Anderson presented a dramatic monologue entitled "Mary's Boy."

Throughout the year, LCY remained active, Lutheran Campus Ministries continued its work on Winthrop's campus, Sunday Church School and Vacation Church School provided many enriching experiences for every age group. Grace's Jubilees, an organization of the church's young in spirit though older in years, remained a vibrant group. Although the congregation was saddened by the resignation of Pastor Glenn Boland in September, 1995, to take a ministry at Kimball Memorial Church in Kannapolis, North Carolina, Grace members were prepared to take up the search for another pastor to fill her spiritual leadership needs.

Reverend Gary Lyerly was designated interim pastor and served Grace into the new year.



Reverend E. Ray Mohrmann
August 25, 1996 - present

The Grace congregation met in a special called meeting on June 9, 1996, to approve the call of a new pastor. The July, 1996, *Grace Notes* announced that Reverend E. Ray Mohrmann had accepted the call to become Grace Church's twelfth pastor. Pastor Mohrmann's first Sunday in Grace's pulpit was August 25. He came to Grace from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, North Augusta, South Carolina, with wife Ann, a public health nurse, and children Laura and John. Reverend David Donges, Bishop of South Carolina Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, presided over the installation of Pastor Mohrmann on September 22, 1996.

Upon accepting the call to Grace, Pastor Mohrmann wrote that, in addition to his desire to work in a medium-sized congregation where he would get to know the individual members, he felt called to "serving in a congregation that is deeply committed to serving and witness in the community, firmly rooted in a ministry of Word and Sacrament." He quickly became addressed as "Pastor Ray."

Under Pastor Ray's leadership, the congregation continued to contribute to the needs of the community. Opportunities included The Giving Tree, The Angel Tree, Warm Clothing Box, Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen, and The Hunger Outreach Program. The May, 1997, *Grace Notes* ran a message written by Pastor Ray that spoke of new challenges: the change in Campus Ministry, plans for new groups for young adults, developing plans for Grace's 75th anniversary celebration, a first-ever golf tournament, youth mission trip to Florida, and a "very positive cash flow" that allowed the church to make extra principal payments on the mortgage. For the first time in many years, Grace was able to accept its full apportionment from Synod in 1997 and received a commendation from the Synod Council for giving beyond our accepted apportionment. In Pastor Ray's words, "We are a strong congregation with a strong call to ministry in this place."

Early in 1997, congregation leaders met in retreat to develop a VISION for Grace that will carry the church into the next century. The statement that evolved from that meeting reads: "Our

vision is to be a Christ-centered community of God's grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit to live in faith, share the Gospel, and serve in love." Retreat participants determined that the pathway from vision to reality could be achieved through six promises: "Encourage and Maintain Greater Involvement; Strengthen Youth and Campus Ministry; Strengthen Christen Education; Strengthen Outreach with the Gospel, Emphasize Spiritual Gifts, Nurture Faith and Deepen Prayer Life."

A highlight of Grace's history occurred on June 30, 1997, when Michael Clark Comer became the first "child" of the congregation to be ordained into the ministry. Michael was made a pastor of the Church through prayer and the laying on of hands at a festival service of ordination held at Grace. Bishop David Donges presided at the ordination, Rev. Robert Van Home was the preacher, and several of Michael's family members and friends participated. A reception honored Michael and his family in the Fellowship Hall following the service. Pastor Comer was called to serve as pastor of Trinity Lutheran in Elloree, S.C. Another member of Grace, Andrea Anderson Wiegand, is also preparing for the ordained ministry at Southern Seminary. Andrea is currently serving her internship in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and will complete her degree in the spring, 1999. Michael and Andrea both received financial and prayer support from the congregation throughout their seminary educations.

Pastor Ray announced in July, 1997, that the church had "set a goal to establish a fulltime, permanent position of Director of Student Ministries and to fill that position in early 1998." The new Director of Student Ministries, funded jointly by Grace Church and South Carolina Synod, would work both in Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry. Judy Huitt had resigned as Campus Minister in 1995. Father Tom Diggs led the Lutheran/Episcopal student group for the 1995-96 school year. In September of 1996, Amy Amick became our part-time campus minister. Jennifer Key and Stephanie Sease served as part-time peer ministers during the 1997-98 school year.

The history of Grace Lutheran Church would not be complete without a record of the secretaries who have served the congregation so efficiently and generously since 1970. Each of these talented women has truly ministered to the congregation in her own right. It is with love and appreciation that they are listed here:

Mickey Anderson, Parish Secretary, 1970 - September, 1986
Joyce Kenney, Parish Secretary, November, 1986 - November, 1988
Tammy Collins, Parish Secretary, December, 1988
Gail Garmany, Parish Secretary, April, 1989 - November, 1990
Pam Stafford, Parish Secretary, February, 1991 - December, 1992
Pat Kirk, Parish Secretary, February, 1993 - present

Pat's organizational and communication skills continue to provide for the needs of a growing congregation. It is largely due to her efforts in collecting and organizing church records that has made this updated history possible.

Grace Lutheran Church has come a long way from 1923 to 1998--three quarters of a century. The church is in the midst of celebrating 75 years of serving Christ, Campus and Community. The theme of the anniversary year is "Celebrate Grace His Story ... Our Heritage Our Hope." The message written by Pastor Ray Mohrmann in the November, 1997, *Grace Notes* best summed up the Grace Church story:

Celebrate Grace! As we begin our celebration of 75 years of ministry in this place, we need to ponder what it is that we celebrate. First and foremost, we celebrate His Story. The anniversary of a congregation is not a time for tooting our own horn, but a time to remember with humility and thanksgiving the work of God among us. The story of Grace Church is the story of God's Grace, active in those who had a vision of a Lutheran Church in Rock Hill; active in those who have built on that vision over these seventy-five years; and active in those who now carry that vision into our future.

We also celebrate Our Heritage. We remember the lives and contributions of women and men who sacrificed in order to start a church with only a handful of people. We remember the lives and ministries of twelve dedicated pastors who have served Grace with distinction. We remember the work that went into building a "Little Stone Church" on Oakland Avenue, purchasing additional property, adding an educational building, purchasing a new organ and stained-glass windows, starting a Cremains Garden. We remember the Blue Line, Luther League, Campus Ministry, Christmas Candlelight and Easter Sunrise services, picnics and covered-dish suppers, Sunday School and Confirmation, black and red and green hymnals, the Great Depression, several wars, and even a hurricane named Hugo! Grace Church wasn't born yesterday, and we remember our heritage with fondness and appreciation.

Even as we look back to celebrate our past, an anniversary is also a time to celebrate Our Hope. We have a history of God's grace active in the world and in our lives. We have a seventy-five year heritage of "Serving Christ, Campus and Community." And now the future lies before us, awaiting the ministry that God has in store for us. We don't know what that future will hold, but we know that God holds that future. So let us celebrate this 75th Anniversary with the confidence and hope that "the best is yet to come!"