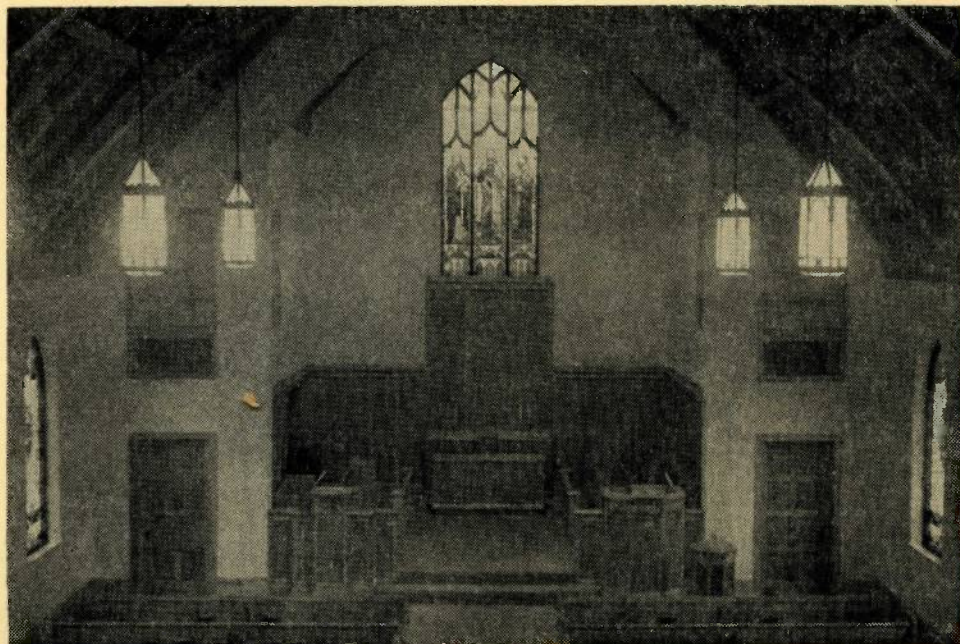


1902

1957

The First  
Presbyterian Church  
of  
Fairmont, North Carolina



## OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

JAMES F. DICKENSON, Minister

### THE SESSION

W. L. Brady

A. R. Bullock, Jr.

Howard Lewis, Clerk

J. W. Lewis

C. B. Stafford

Warren Wallace

Billy Whitted

### THE DIACONATE

Edwin Andrews

Virgil Brady

William Brady

L. B. Brice

Herman Campbell, Treas.

Carl DeVane

J. D. Gibson

V. G. Grantham

Charles Grantham

Bennett Lewis

C. E. Mallard

Guy McCormick

A. B. Stubbs, Chairman



A HISTORY OF  
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF FAIRMONT, N. C.

1902

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THE FIRST HALF CENTURY

On July 13th, 1902 a group of people met in what was then called Ashpole township for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian Church. Here is a record of the minutes of that first meeting.

"The Commission appointed by Fayetteville Presbytery to Organize a Presbyterian Church at Ashpole, N. C. met here July 13th, 1902 at p. m.

The Commission consisted of The Reverend misters P. R. Law, J. P. McMillan, and W. T. Walker and elders C. B. Cox and J. E. Price. All the commission were present except Rev. Dr. McMillan. The Rev. M. N. McIver acted in the place of Dr. McMillan at the request of the Commission. The Commission was constituted with prayer.

Certificates were read from Iona Church of the good standing of Mr. C. F. Lawler, Mrs. E. A. Lawler, Misses L. J. Lawler and M. N. Lawler, Drs. J. B. Brown and J. S. McGeachy, and Dr. J. P. Brown, Mr. W. C. Brown, Mr. J. H. Briggs, Mrs. Mary Floyd, Misses F. J. Ratley, S. E. Ratley and I. D. Ratley and N. A. Ratley, Mrs. N. S. Lewis and Mr. J. D. Lewis. These persons answered the constitutional questions in the affirmative, Book of Church Order, par. 27, and according to the same paragraph were constituted a Presbyterian Church.

Dr. J. B. Brown was elected and installed an elder and Dr. J. S. McGeachy was elected, ordained and installed a deacon according to par. 112 of the Book of Church Order. It was decided that the Church be called Bethcar Presbyterian Church. Meeting closed with prayer."

Thus with a few members from Iona Presbyterian Church, work was begun in Ashpole on a new Presbyterian Church. Two lots were given by A. L. Jones and Dr. J. P. Brown and the congregation began the construction of a new sanctuary. On March 22, 1903 the Church called its first minister, The Reverend M. N. McIver to serve for one year, and to preach once each month. In the fall of the same year a sum of \$250 was borrowed to complete the new Church. Along this same time three new elders and four new deacons were ordained and installed. The elders were Ed Williams, W. W. Ward, and F. L. Blue, who was elected as Clerk of Session, and deacons were A. L. Jones, Dr. J. P. Brown, J. D. Lewis, and C. F. Lawler.

During the early years the Church grew slowly with 30 members on the roll in 1904. In 1907 Ashpole changed its name to Fairmont. By 1910 membership had reached a total of 43 members, rising to 45 in 1911.

1912 proved to be an active year. The Reverend N. L. Latimer accepted a call to the field and during that same year the congregation instructed a building committee to make additions to the Church building. A belfry was built and a new bell purchased and installed. It was during this same year that the Church requested the Synod of North Carolina that it be allowed to change its name from Bethcar to Fairmont Presbyterian Church. Permission was granted.

By 1914 membership had reached 56 with 75 attending Sunday School. Mr. Latimer resigned and in 1915 The Reverend H. M. Dixon accepted the field. During the next few years the Church attempted to build a new manse and to change the location of the building but after further study by a committee of five the matter was dropped.

In 1923 Fairmont Church was grouped with Iona, Midway, and Elrod Churches in a field of four. The Reverend H. M. Dixon left that same year and for the next four years the Church used a stated supply. The growth of the Church was slight but activity could be seen.

In April of 1927 the congregation issued a call to the Reverend J. L. McLean who was to hold two services each month. In the summer of that year in a congregational meeting four points were recorded in the minutes. They are as follows: a) majority voted to look for new Church site, b) refused an offer on the Church property, c) elected trustees to investigate move, d) gave permission to lay plans for new site and building. By 1928 however after futile efforts were made to take action the decision to move was once again tabled.

During the 1930's the Church added to the spiritual well-being of the community. The Reverend McLean left in 1930 and in 1931 the Reverend L. A. McLaurin came to the Fairmont Church to serve until 1936. The Reverend James Gray served from 1936 to 1939 and in 1941 the Reverend L. L. Barr accepted a call to this pastorate. During the war years the Church made some improvements on the build-

ings but it suffered a loss in membership. In the fall of 1944 the Reverend Barr resigned and the congregation called the Reverend D. L. Jones who served from 1945 until 1949.

The first half century for Fairmont Church was indeed a struggle in the faith. Its membership increased and decreased, its activities were limited, and yet the spiritual life of the people was as a light shining in the darkness. By 1950 the membership had increased to such a point that expansion became necessary. 102 members were listed on the roll.



## A NEW ERA

In 1950 the Reverend J. Clyde Plexico accepted a call to come to the Fairmont Presbyterian Church. In the late fall of that same year the congregation placed under construction an educational building connecting to the sanctuary. This was completed early in '51. Within the year a manse was purchased and interest was at an all-time high in the Church. With each passing month, however, the need for more adequate quarters was felt and gradually the idea of moving the Church location came to be accepted. A building fund was started with the hope that in a few years a new building might be possible.

By the early part of 1954 the Church came to a crossroad. Either the old sanctuary had to be repaired at a great expense or a new Church had to be erected. The lack of funds held back the decision for months, when suddenly, an option was taken on three lots at the corner of Church and Davis streets. Now the congregation was faced with a possible move, and on August 15, 1954 in a meeting of all members the decision was made to move the location of the Church. This proved to be a bold move since the Reverend Plexico had resigned the month before the meeting and the Church was without a minister.

By the end of 1954 the foundation had been poured for the educational and Church buildings but it was decided that nothing more could be done in the immediate future due to lack of funds. However, the opening of 1955 saw increased activity and the educational building was put under construction. Also the old manse had been sold and the receipts were to be applied to the building of a new quarters. In early spring of 1955 the Church called its present minister. The manse was completed in April of that same year and two months later the educational building was finished.

On July 3, 1955 the official move from the old site to the new location took place. The morning worship was held in the fellowship hall where it was to be for the next year and a half. In October of '55 the old property was sold and the debt



incurred on the educational building was removed. Now the way had been cleared and the committees set about laying the groundwork for the next project. With the unanimous consent of the Joint Board of Officers and with the approval of the congregation it was agreed to begin construction on the new sanctuary in March of 1956. This plan was carried out and the Church was completed by December of the same year. The first service was held December 23, 1956 in the new sanctuary.

The entire project took a little more than two and one-half years to complete. This program has not been the work or ideas of one or two, nor even of one committee. Rather it has been the unified efforts of the members of the congregation who through their prayers and liberality were led by the Spirit of God to the fulfillment of this work. Many different ideas were incorporated in this building which were not in the original plans.

The total program, lots, new manse, educational building, the sanctuary, plus all furnishings and equipment, comprised an outlay of \$125,000 of which more than two-thirds has been paid. Outside of the receipts from the sale of the old property the funds were raised within the families of the congregation, the largest single gift being \$2,500, and many smaller contributions coming from every family.

This is not the end. The Church looks toward a brighter future and is already formulating plans that will continue to enhance the Kingdom of God. By His grace and through the labors of His servants His Kingdom shall not perish from this earth.



## MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THIS CHURCH

1903-1904	M. N. McIver
1912-1914	R. L. Latimer
1915-1923	H. M. Dixon
1927-1930	J. L. McLean
1931-1936	L. A. McLaurin
1936-1939	James Gray
1941-1944	L. L. Barr
1945-1949	D. L. Jones
1950-1954	J. Clyde Plexico
1955-	James F. Dickenson