

*Walnut Hill Presbyterian  
Church*

*75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History*



*1932-2007*

*"This People; This Place – Celebrating Our Past*

*With a Vision for Our Future*

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**A view of the sanctuary as it appeared just after remodeling in 1992.**

## **Acknowledgements**

*It is with grateful appreciation that we would like to acknowledge all those who made this 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary history of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church possible. We would like to thank Marcia Stone for assimilating records, pouring over documents and conducting numerous interviews in producing this written history of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church. George Stone for the layout. Ed Wise, chairman of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, for his guidance during this project and to the session of Walnut Hill for reading this history before it went to print to check for accuracy. Tony Stitt for the back cover photo and to Dr. William Wade for sharing the King College archives. Also, thanks to Steve Williamson and Premier Printing of Bristol for producing the final product.*

*The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee  
September 16, 2007*

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## **Table of Contents**

### **Dedication**

### **Church History**

1927-1949

1950-1975

1976-1990

1991-2007

2007 A Year of Celebration

The Story of Hannah Rouse

### **Church Leadership**

Organization of the Church

Elders and Deacons

Pastoral Biographies

Present Church Officers

### **Ministry**

Women In the Church

Sunday School

Vacation Bible School

Music Ministry

Youth Ministry

Christmas Scenes

### **Missions**

Home

Foreign

## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the many men and women who have given of themselves sacrificially to further the Kingdom of God through their ministry at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church. From its earliest beginning, this church has been blessed with a congregation that has been willing to give of their time, money and talents. Nehemiah 4:6 “. . . *for the people had a mind to work*” can truly be said of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church.

In 2007, we celebrate the many years of service of  
two members of our congregation.

We acknowledge with grateful appreciation:

### **Pauline Rosenbalm Scarcela**

In January of 1958, at the age of 25, Pauline left Bristol and her home church of Walnut Hill to serve as a missionary to the people of Brazil. Pauline, along with her husband Isaac, has spent the last fifty years taking the Gospel to the people she loves so dearly. Thank you for your many years of service. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your ministry

### **James Houser**

In 1959, James was ordained as a deacon of this church. Over the past forty-eight years, he has served as deacon, elder, Sunday School teacher, VBS teacher, Sunday School superintendent, youth worker, church bus driver and choir member. An excellent role model for us all, James and Letha have been married over fifty years. Having established a godly home, James and Letha are blessed to see their children serve as leaders in our church today. Thank you for your years of faithful service.

## ABOUT OUR NAME

Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church was indeed built on a hill among a grove of black walnut trees. Over time the trees were cut down to make room for parking, the last one being removed to pave the parking lot. A beautiful wooden cross hangs in the sanctuary made from the wood of one of the last walnut trees. It was crafted by church member Brenda Cruff Emmert and added to the sanctuary in September of 1989.

*"The Light on a Hill"* was a nickname given to us by the Rev. Dan Graham. When the church was built, it was the only church for several miles and very visible from the main highway. It was the prayer of Rev. Graham that this church would always reflect the light of God's love to a lost and dying world.



Homecoming under the walnut trees in the 1950s

## Church History

### 1927-1949

For many years this beautiful, historic section of Sullivan County was known as Chamberlain Community. It received its name from a prominent pioneer family and the center of activity was a little one-room schoolhouse of the same name. Built in 1885, church and Sunday School services were held at Chamberlain School for many years. In 1921, the school was closed and students were sent to the new consolidated Blountville School that housed students from grades 1-12. The abandoned building fell into disrepair.

In 1927, the Rev. Dan Graham accepted the call of Holston Presbytery to pastor the Blountville group of churches. This group consisted of Blountville, Arcadia, New Bethel, Thomas Memorial, Weaver's Union and Paperville. Rev. Graham along with his assistant pastor, the Rev. John Yelton, were busy in the evangelistic work of the church.

Soon after arriving in Blountville, Dan Graham began conducting services in the old Chamberlain School. Members of the community met and together they cleaned and readied the old building for use. The building mysteriously burned in 1930. In the fall of 1931, members of the community rallied around Rev. Graham and planned a tent revival. The tent meeting was held just across the road from our present church in the vicinity of Liberty Baptist Church on property owned by Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Stone. The meeting was a great success and lasted for three weeks. Rev. Graham was assisted by Rhea Anderson (pianist) and Rev. Alston Boyd (song leader). At the close of the revival, the people, many of whom were new converts, resolved to build their own church. The search began for a proper piece of land upon which to construct the new church. Rev. Graham at first tried to buy some land for the church, but the owners refused to sell. Instead, Mr. and Mrs. Charles King donated that same property, the best real estate in the community. And so, a beautiful one-acre lot on a hill covered with black walnut trees, merely yards from the main highway, became the future site of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church.

Raising funds for the building was more difficult as the rural community was especially hard hit by the Great Depression. The greatest inspiration for the building project came from a poor farm girl named Hannah Rouse. Hannah set an example of sacrificial giving. She took one of her two pigs, sold it for five

dollars, and donated the money as the first gift to the building fund. That one act spurred the whole community into providing the funds to raise the church.

The church building was designed and the plans donated by Allen N. Dryden Sr., a prominent architect from Kingsport, Tenn. and a member of First Presbyterian Church of Kingsport. The building was described as 38 by 45 feet and of "brick veneer."

In the winter of 1931, the call was given for voluntary workers to gather and start work on the church. Men gathered, ground was broken and forms built for the foundation. On January 7, 1932, after laboring for ten days, men gathered to pour the concrete on the foundation, working all day. Fifty men from the community, Bristol, Bluff City and elsewhere labored until 10 o'clock at night. Some of the community men that helped in the construction were John Clark, Emory Newton, William Hoover, Tom Harr, Bob Dishner, Campbell Rouse, Rufus Smith, W.J. Smith, A.D. Stone, Frank Stone and Blanche Stewart. Women joined with well-filled baskets providing lunch and supper. Rows of flaring torches illuminated the hillside where the work continued that winter evening. E.Lee Leonard, as a boy of nine, recalls "slipping off" from home with other neighborhood boys to observe the building as it progressed. In 1932, the church was referred to as a "mission outpost" or "mission branch" of Blountville Presbyterian Church. Blountville was called the "mother church" with all members of the "new church" having their names added to the roll in Blountville. In 1932, there were only six houses from the beginning of what is now Walnut Hill Road to the end. The road itself was dirt and gravel. This sparse area must have seemed very rural indeed to those from the towns of Blountville and Bristol. Rev. Graham had early in his ministry visualized building a church on a hill that would be the light for those in the community. He nicknamed Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church the "*Light on the Hill*".

On February 28, 1932, just a few months from its beginning, the first service was held at the new church with Rev. Dan Graham preaching the first sermon. Services were started before the building was totally completed. Plans were made to build the building "rough" and improve it as more funds came in. Regular services continued through the years. When Rev. Graham came to Blountville he had an agreement in his call that he could be away whenever desired to conduct evangelistic meetings. When absent from the pulpit, Rev. Graham arranged for speakers to be present. Several of those early ministers were students from King College and included: Tom Rhea, John Rhea, Dick Burns, Ted Fix, Graham Keys, and John Yelton, assistant pastor.

Sunday School was begun soon after the start of church services. Rev. John Rhea acted as the first Sunday School superintendent. The first Vacation Bible School was held in the summer of 1934 with 47

students eager to come to the “new church”. The teachers for this first VBS were Mary Perry, John Yelton, Virginia Steele (Leonard) and Tom Rhea and wife Kate. Much progress was made in the early work of the church, which was characterized by its friendliness and zeal for souls.

Walnut Hill added the church bell in 1933, again the person responsible for helping to gather the necessary money was Hannah Rouse. A piano was purchased about this time also.

The Holston Presbytery, in its minutes from 1941, described a lack of assertiveness in the actions of the minister holding the position of Evangelist for the Holston Presbytery. The evangelist’s job was to travel the area, preaching and looking to develop new Presbyterian church congregations. In 1942, Rev. Dan Graham was asked to take on this role, as he was greatly fitted to the task. Therefore, in 1942, he resigned as pastor of the Blountville group of churches.



**Dan Graham (fourth from right) at one of his tent revivals. Also pictured is Ralph McCray (far left) and Rhea Anderson (fourth from left). To the left and behind the WOPI van is the tent Graham used.**

The commission of Holston Presbytery to organize the Walnut Hill Presbyterian church met in the sanctuary at 3 p.m. on April 18, 1943. A commissioning service was held. Eighty-six persons met, asking to be organized into the church, most of them coming by transfer from Blountville, the mother church. Those present answered the constitutional questions satisfactorily and the church was officially declared

the organized church of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church of Holston Presbytery. Margie Rosenbalm (Branscomb) was the youngest charter member at the age of five.

Larry Smith Arnold, son of Kyle and Vivian Smith Arnold, was baptized by Rev. Dan Graham on May 2, 1943, the first infant baptism in the newly organized church.

World War II called upon many area men for service to their country. Mr. Charles Ball, a member of the Sunday School at Walnut Hill, was killed in the war in 1943.

Regular prayer meeting services were held each Thursday night at 7:30. Sunday School, which met in the afternoon, was well attended and continued to grow steadily. The congregation was blessed with an outstanding group of young people.

In June of 1943, the Rev. Charles Bixler accepted the call to the pastorate of the Blountville Group of Churches, which by this time had been re-grouped and contained: Blountville, Arcadia, Walnut Hill, and the missions of Graham (Reedy Creek) and Bethany. Thus, he brought his new wife Sarah and became the first installed pastor of the church after it was organized. He was ordained by the Holston Presbytery on October 5, 1943. Charles Newland of Arcadia Presbyterian Church remembers being a boy of ten looking in awe at Rev. Bixler's 1941 blue Ford Coupe. Cars were scarce during the war, especially a relatively new one like his. Rev. Bixler's first child, Florence was born while living in Blountville. Due to ill health, he left in November 1944 to accept the pastorate of a smaller group of churches in Covington, Va.

Mr. Watson Guy, a ministerial student from King College, helped in Sunday School and preached twice each month for several months in 1945. Rev. Graham was then called upon to be supply pastor and served in this capacity from 1946-1949. He was still active in the Dan Graham Evangelistic Association at this time. In his absence, a variety of ministers filled the pulpit. Church services were most often held twice monthly, the first and third Sundays, during this time period.

In 1944, the congregation set about to improve the appearance and comfort of the church. New pews were purchased. In 1946 a new heating system was installed. The first source of heat was a coal-burning, pot-bellied stove that sat to the left of the sanctuary. In 1947, the grounds were graded, retaining walls built and shrubs planted. A church bus was purchased in 1948 promoting good attendance to Sunday School, even in bad weather. In 1949, the auditorium was renovated. A large part of the work has always been donated by the members in any improvement the church has launched. Also in 1949, Rev. Graham became ill and moved to Florida to recuperate. In Florida's warm climate, he quickly regained his health and even pastored a small congregation while there, helping them build a new church. Members of the Walnut Hill

congregation set about to convince Rev. Graham to return to Bristol and accept the call as full-time pastor. A group traveled to Florida to talk to him in person.

## 1950-1975

The Walnut Hill congregation and officers called Rev. Graham as full-time pastor in February 1950. It was agreed that he should carry on his radio program as he saw fit. After deliberation, he agreed to return and came to Walnut Hill on May 1, 1950 as the first full-time pastor of the church.

On the fifth Sunday morning in July 1950, Rev. Graham was installed as pastor of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church. Beautiful weather prevailed and a large crowd was present for this special occasion. After the service, a bountiful picnic meal was served in the shade of the big walnut tree on the church lawn.

The 1950s were years of phenomenal growth at Walnut Hill. The 1951 church history listed Sunday School enrollment at 206, with the number swelling to a record high of 285 in 1955. It would come as no surprise that in 1950 the church announced plans to add a Sunday School room addition to the present building. A manse was also in the planning stages. The new addition was completed by 1951 and featured one and a half stories divided into ten classrooms. Two modern restrooms and a nursery were also added. The sanctuary was enlarged by moving the stage back and installing more pews. Again, much of the labor was donated by the men of the church. Church membership was listed as 214 in 1951.

The Women of the Church (WOC) was organized in October, 1950. This group of women took on an important ministry of the church that continues today.

During the 1950s the Southern Presbyterian Church (PCUS) was embroiled in controversy over liberalism. Walnut Hill dropped the denominational Sunday School literature in 1951 due to disturbing statements found in the young people's lesson, casting doubt upon some of the miracles of God. Walnut Hill also stressed the King James Version of the Bible over the Revised Standard Version promoted by the denomination.

Walnut Hill questioned the denomination's relationship with the National Council of Churches and also expressed growing concern over the planned union of the denomination with the Northern Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). A petition was sent to the Holston Presbytery in 1953, to be forwarded to the general assembly, formally stating the church's concerns and asking the denomination to sever ties to the NCC and stop the process of the union with the PCUSA. In 1954, the denomination's material used by the women of the church was found to be doctrinally unsound.

In 1955 the church issued an affirmation detailing its belief in the following five fundamentals of faith: (1) the virgin birth, (2) the verbal plenary of the infallible scriptures, (3) the blood atonement, (4) the bodily resurrection, and (5) the second coming of the Lord.

By 1956, Walnut Hill believed that the denomination had become too liberal. On July 29, 1956, the congregation voted overwhelmingly (122 to 1) to withdraw from the denomination and become an independent, or unaffiliated Presbyterian church. Rev. Graham left the Southern Presbyterian Church and joined the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a small group of conservative Presbyterians. Members of Walnut Hill church were firm about their decision. They believed that they had not left the denomination, but rather the denomination had left them. Although Walnut Hill left the Holston Presbytery in 1956, the church continued on the presbytery's rolls until 1975. Apparently the presbytery was unwilling



**1958 Homecoming - (first row) J.D. Gardner, Kyle Barr, Ann Smith, Iva Whitaker, Merlin Whitaker, Dorothy Whitaker, Joyce McCray, Mary Katherine Fraley, Foy Fraley; (second row) Evelyn Camper, J.D. McCray, E.Lee Leonard, Nettie McClain, Linda Leonard; (third row) Vivian Arnold, Kyle Arnold, Powell Whitaker, Doris Whitaker, Bill Smith, Maude Smith, Dessie Atwell, Betty Bunn, Lucille Leonard, Hazel Gardner.**

to release the church. Yet the presbytery did not sue the church for the property. Some argue that the presbytery did not dare initiate a civil suit against the church because of Rev. Graham's popularity and stature in the community. Rev. Graham firmly believed that the church property belonged to the local congregation, and wrote that principle into the constitution for all of the churches he established.

Congregational ownership later became a fundamental principle of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

Walnut Hill's decision to leave the PCUS was a sign of things to come. Within 20 years there was a major exodus of churches from the denomination. It could be said that Walnut Hill helped pave the way for the formation of the PCA in 1973.

The Graham Bible Institute (later known as Graham Bible College) was founded in 1951 by Rev. Graham. Its purpose was to train students in all areas of Christian service and to better serve in their own local church. Ten members of Walnut Hill's congregation were listed as attending classes at Graham Bible College (GBC) in 1951. As much as students from King College played an important role in the early years of Walnut Hill, students from GBC played an important role at Walnut Hill in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Students helped by filling the pulpit when needed, teaching Sunday School and VBS classes and working with the young people. One more benefit provided by GBC was that it offered the congregation and community access to the preaching of some of the most notable ministers of the time. Dr. M. R. DeHaan once spoke at Walnut Hill. He was the founder of Radio Bible Class and the devotional publication "*Our Daily Bread*". Every year an Evangelistic Conference was held at GBC with Rev. Graham inviting guest ministers to speak at the conference and often to preach at Walnut Hill on Sunday morning or evening. A similar Missions Conference brought a wide array of missionaries to the church to present their work. Because of his extensive evangelistic work and radio broadcasts, Rev. Graham was acquainted with ministers all over the eastern United States. In the 1960s and 1970s, Walnut Hill participated in a youth ministry known as Crusaders for Christ. Young people from area churches met monthly at the Bible college for instruction and fellowship.

The first public address system was purchased in 1952. Iva Whitaker and her brother Powell began printing the first church bulletins in 1954.

Some of the yearly church activities during this era were: an annual revival (sometimes lasting two weeks or more), Sunday School Rally Day and picnic, Mother's Day service, honoring the oldest and youngest mothers, as well as the mother with the most children (that honor annually going to Mrs. Hazen Cook as she was mother to seventeen.) Homecoming was a much anticipated event. There were also Christmas programs by the Sunday School and the young people. A New Year's Eve watch service ended the year and found attendees on their knees in prayer.

conflict. A service honoring his memory was held at the church. In 1955 a moving ceremony was held for Rev. Graham as he was awarded a citation from the Tennessee Selective Service System for his work with area draftees. He took New Testaments to the local draft board offices, presented them to draftees and held individual prayer services with them before being sent into duty.

In 1954, Rev. Graham took on the job of preaching at Bellemont Presbyterian Church on Sunday evenings and helped them to build a church. He also supplied Piney Flats Union Church every second Sunday morning. Mr. Leonard Allred, candidate for the ministry, filled in for Rev. Graham while he was away and also worked with the youth.

In 1956, land was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Howard Sells to build a manse. The manse was located a few houses past the church, on the right side of Midway Drive. This year also would see the hiring of an assistant pastor.

January of 1957 was the beginning of another long relationship with a beloved minister. The Rev. Kyle Barr, son-in-law to Rev. Graham came to assist in the work of the church.

He brought his wife, Jane Temple Barr Graham and their three children Margaret, Danny and Jimmy. Dan and Jim would become ministers of the gospel, and Jim also an accomplished pianist and organist. The Barrs moved in with the Grahams until the church manse was finished in September 1957. Much of the work of building the manse was provided by the men of the church, with Rev. Barr donating hours of free labor. The church manse was later sold in 1985. Mrs. Barr was an elementary school teacher first at Walnut Hill School then at Akard Elementary. While her husband was busy assisting Rev. Graham, she was active teaching Sunday School and directing VBS. While Rev. Graham was known for his evangelistic meetings, Rev. Barr was known for his compassion for the sick, shut-in and the unsaved of the community, as demonstrated through his active visitation ministry. Even when ill and near the end of his life in April 2007, Rev. Barr recorded on a piece of scrap paper the number of people he had presented the Gospel to while in the hospital. Lab technicians, dietary and housekeeping workers as well as physicians and nurses were unashamedly told of the love of God. Rev. Barr passed away on June 29, 2007. He was able to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at Walnut Hill honoring him, where he was given a wooden rocking chair with an engraving commemorating his service as pastor.

As time passed and Rev. Graham was often away and later as his health began to fail, Rev. Barr took on more and more of the responsibilities of pastor, even being listed as pastor often in the 1960s bulletins. He

The church's interest in foreign missions blossomed during the 1950s and 1960s. This interest was due in part to one of the church's own members setting out for the mission field in 1957. Pauline Rosenbalm (Scarcela) left her family and home to spend her life in service to her beloved people in Brazil. Through regular letters, she described her life in Brazil. The church prayed for her during hard times and rejoiced with her in times of success and gained a greater understanding of what a missionary's life was like. Soon, the church was not only supporting Pauline, but others when it was able.

In 1962, the name of the church was changed from Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church, Independent to "unaffiliated". Another church bus was purchased in 1962, a yellow 1958 Chevrolet 48 passenger bus, and once again a bus ministry was in operation.

The Vietnam War began in 1959. With the war's escalation in 1965, several young men from the congregation were called to serve as soldiers. The church still gives God the praise for the return of each one safely home.

In 1973 and 74 the sanctuary was renovated adding carpet. Twelve new windows replaced the original ones.

Rev. Dan Graham passed away January 10, 1975. Rev. Barr resigned at the end of 1975 to serve full-time at Graham Bible College as a professor and later as President.

## 1976-1990

The year 1976 brought a new pastor to Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church, the Rev. John Myers. Rev. Myers moved his family - wife Janice and children John, David, Daniel and Laurie from New Jersey to Tennessee. The whole family experienced culture shock. Even so, the Myers family blended well with the congregation and this group of children grew into adults before their eyes much like Rev. Barr's children two decades earlier. The church is blessed to have part of that family still in the church today. Janice Myers, her son Daniel, wife Tracy and children are current members.

Music was a large part of Rev. Myers' life as he was gifted with a wonderful tenor voice and greatly enjoyed singing. He served as choir director at Walnut Hill while pastor. His wife, Janice, often accompanied his solos at the piano and served as church organist during this time. In 1976 a singing school was held at the church, In 1977 the congregation hosted the Sullivan County Singing Convention. Rev. Myers sang in the Bristol Concert Choir for ten years. The chorus from Sullivan Central High School

performed several times at the church, a special event as some of the members were part of the congregation.

Rev. Myers was also an avid lover of sports. In 1976 the Fellowship Hall was built as church members provided the labor to build the structure. Several church league sports teams were in place at this time, men and women's softball, basketball, volleyball and bowling. The teams were a source of fun and fellowship as well as a great way to attract others in the community. The bowling team still exists today. There was a large group of teens and Rev. Myers enjoyed participating in the activities along with the youth leaders.

The elders met with representatives of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1980. Rev. Myers had been ordained into the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod. A meeting was later called in 1981 of church officers to discuss possible affiliation with this denomination. No action was taken, however the Reformed Presbyterian Church later joined the PCA in 1982. Walnut Hill remained "unaffiliated".

Due to sky rocketing petroleum prices, it was decided in 1980 to convert the heating system back to coal from oil to save money. Remember gas rationing in the 1980s? Also in 1980, a 1.46-acre parcel of land adjoining the church property was purchased from the Glover estate.

A new ministry was started at Walnut Hill in 1983 by Bud and Margie Branscomb. A senior citizens group called "The Jolly Keenagers". Margie related being so thrilled to be able to "give back something" to the many older members of the congregation that had taken their time to serve as teachers and leaders in the church when she was growing up. Miss Mary Perry who had taught in the first VBS and Sunday School in 1932 was in her late 80s and enjoyed participating until her health declined a few years later. The ministry was a great success with monthly meetings and exciting trips, a favorite of which was the *mystery trip* – seniors boarded a waiting bus not knowing where it would take them. A regular activity was the annual apple butter making held at Lowell and Frances Galloway's house, with each senior taking a turn at stirring the bubbling kettle. The label on the apple butter read "Old Fashioned Apple Butter, Made the Old Fashioned Way by Old Fashioned People". This ministry became so well-known that other churches asked to join. In 1990 it became "*Alpha/Omega Ministries*" and began rotating meeting places to area churches as well. At this point, the ministry became a home mission project of the church and was supported as such



1993 – A Sunday celebrating Senior Citizens and the McCray Family. (First Row) Lillian Countis, Sara Jenkins, Joyce Smith, Betty McCray, Lottie Steele, Iva Whitaker, Virginia Leonard, Powell Whitaker, Glen McClain, Margie Branscomb; (Second row) Lowell Galloway, Frances Galloway, Mary Harr, Mary Lucille Wagner, Helen Wagner, Nettie McClain, Anna Lee McCray, Louise Gray, James Houser, J.D. McCray, Letha Houser, Clifford Leonard, Isabelle Parker; (Third row) Hazel Whitaker, Gerelda Rouse, Margaret Rutherford, Homer Atwell, Dan Bunn, Bill McCray, Ester Day, Virginia Rouse, Paul Parker; (fourth row) Lonnie Phillips, Flossie McCray, Mary Leonard, Keley Rutherford, Albert Utsman, Hazel Gardner, J.D. Gardner, Ethel McCray, Bobbie Rouse; (fifth row) Richard McCray, Don Leonard, Ralph McCray, Junior Dishner.

until it ended in 2003. In its twenty years of service, over 150 seniors participated. Their motto was “Fun, Food and Fellowship”. Bud and Margie have many pleasant memories of this special group of seniors. Their ministry brought many smiles to the faces of an often forgotten group of people.

Rev. Myers resigned in 1986 to accept the call of Princeton Presbyterian Church and Cash Hollow Mission in Johnson City, Tenn. In the late 1990s, he retired due to health problems. They owned a home in Bristol so he and Janice returned to Walnut Hill. Pastor Ed Crook quickly put Rev. Myers to work teaching Bible studies, filling the pulpit in his absence and singing an occasional solo. Rev. Myers became a close friend and mentor to the pastor during this time. He passed away on July 27, 2003.

The Rev. Lester Sharpe served as supply pastor for the interim between Rev. Myers and the next pastor in the year of 1986. Rev. Steve Baker became pastor of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church in June, 1986. He brought his wife Kathy and young children Charissa and Mark (son Paul was born during his pastorate). They came to Walnut Hill from Stanley, N.C. Rev. Baker had previously served as youth minister and assistant pastor, making this church his first full-time pastorate. During his stay, he brought about several important changes.

By 1986, the leadership of the church was again contemplating affiliating with a reformed denomination. The Reformed Presbyterian Evangelical Synod they had met with in 1980 had now become a part of the Presbyterian Church in America. Rev. Baker brought special insight about the PCA with him having been ordained into the denomination. In 1987, it was voted upon to join the PCA. After joining the PCA, Walnut Hill began the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Night Sing. PCA churches in the Bristol area were invited to join together in a music service, a good way to get acquainted with the PCA churches and their members.

A new style of worship was introduced on Sunday nights in 1989. Rick Sacra came to the congregation as a family practice resident at Bristol Regional Medical Center and would later with his wife Debbie and children become missionaries to Liberia. Rev. Baker and Rick were gifted guitarists and played for the evening worship service, teaching many of the praise songs enjoyed today.

Rev. Baker brought to the congregation the idea to begin a new ministry to present the story of the Nativity to the community, by means of a series of drive-through scenes. This ministry has continued for 18 years. This year of 2007 will be the 19th presentation of the Walnut Hill Christmas Scenes.

Fall brought about a family-centered event called the Harvest Party. All ages of the congregation were invited to come in costume for a time of games and refreshment on Halloween night - a Christian alternative to a secular celebration. Stations were set up for the children including a pick-up-duck pond, fishing pond and water balloons. A devotional was presented and prizes awarded for the best costume.

Rev. Baker resigned in 1990 to take on the directorship of the Abortion Alternatives and Crisis Pregnancy Center, a home mission project supported by the church.

### **1990-2007**

In the fall of 1990, Dr. Ed Crook came to Walnut Hill as supply pastor. He then agreed to accept the call as pastor and was installed in January 1991. Rev. Crook was a good organizer and instituted a system of committees. Missions, Intercession, Outreach, INC (Introducing Newcomers to Christ - to promote

personal evangelism), Christian Education, and Shepherding committees were formed. These committees served many purposes. They provided a coordinated approach to various ministries in the church while giving the participants a sense of responsibility. The committees also fostered friendship and unity. The Faith Promise system of supporting missions, used today, was developed in 1992 by the Missions Committee. Today the Missions and Christian Education committees still exist. An outgrowth of the Missions committee led by Bud Branscomb was an annual three day Missions Conference first held in the Fall of 1992. The conference consisted of a special speaker each night and time set aside to highlight various area missionaries. Booths were set up in the fellowship hall by the church's home and foreign missionaries to promote interest and allow time for individual fellowship.

In 1991, a major renovation of the sanctuary took place with church services being held in the fellowship hall for several months. The work was completed in 1992. The beautiful sanctuary enjoyed today is the result of that labor. A wooden cross first given to the church in 1989 was re-hung in the new area of



**2003 Homecoming Celebration - (Front) Cheyenne Houser, Tiffany Houser, Joshua Nichols, Zach Wise, Kayla Gilbert, Rheanne Ledford, Caleb Simms, Laura Feathers, Whitney Snapp, Haley Oakley, Mary and Abbey Williams, Eden Leonard, James and Debbie Herring; (Second row) Rebekah Feathers, Jackson Wise, Brandon Simms, Spencer Feathers, Michael Stone, Ellen Crook, Casey Phillips; (Third row) Rosa Sherman, Ed Crook, Bob Sherman, Adam Hale, Sarah Hale, Jim Hale, Donna Hale, Judy Brown, Katy Stone, Elizabeth Culbertson, John Cox, Susan Williams, Ben Williams, Amy Phillips; (Fourth row) J.D. Gardner, Summer McClain, Tracey Brown, Susie Burbridge, Pat McCord, Jennifer Brown, Lucille Leonard, Shirley McClain, Michelle Nichols; (Fifth Row) Niki McClain, Carson Brown, Lonnie Phillips, E.Lee Leonard, Mary Leonard, Dana Utsman, Mark Ledford; (Six row) Louise Gray, Charlene Potter, Tim Houser, Mary Haga, Conner Oakley, Sid Anderson, Lisa Leonard, Pam Wise, Troy Houser, Kevin Leonard.**

worship. The cross, a handmade gift from Brenda Cruff Emmert, was fashioned from one of the walnut trees in the church yard removed for parking space. During the renovation, Mike Leonard took it home and refinished it adding a gold strip around the edge. The walnut wood serves to reflect the church's humble beginnings, while the cross signifies the grace that allows the ability to look forward to the future. Later the upstairs Sunday School classrooms as well as the basement classrooms were updated. 1991 marked the return of Children's Church during the morning worship hour. This ministry has grown and has now been divided into two rooms with classes for ages 3-6 and 7-9. In 2007 the Children's Church area was beautifully refurbished, the work done entirely by those in the church.

Rev. Crook enjoyed the study of theology and spent a great deal of time teaching, hoping to encourage the growth of deep roots of faith that would hold firm over the years of time.

The WIC published their first cookbook in 1994 and were busy during this time decorating many areas in the church. A new cookbook celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary was published in 2007.

A library committee was formed. What once was a small collection of books was transformed into a well-used, multi-media area of education. Hand-made book shelves hold the volumes with new additions added regularly.

In the summer of 2007 a projection system was donated in memory of Virginia and J.C. Leonard and installed in time for use in VBS.

A new steeple was added in 2002 as the old bell tower showed signs of decay, making it a safety hazard. The bell sat in storage until 2004. A bell tower was designed and built by church member Wayne Weaver and the bell was placed there in September 2004. On Homecoming Day, September 26, 2004, the bell was dedicated and named the *Hannah Rouse Memorial Bell* in honor of the young woman responsible for its purchase in 1933.

A tragic traffic accident took the life of fellow member John Cox in July 2004. From a memorial donation given in his honor a picnic shelter was constructed by the men of the church in the fall of 2005. A fitting tribute to a true gentleman.

A year of "church revitalization" was begun in January of 2006. A program of study and renovation entitled *Embers to a Flame* by Rev. Harry Reeder was embarked upon by the leadership and adult members of the congregation. The men began meeting every Saturday morning for the sole purpose to pray for the church to become what it should be. Part of the revitalization program included a time of reflection over the church's past. As the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church's beginning approached in 2007, plans were made regarding a year of celebrating this event.

In September 2006, Rev. Ed Crook submitted his resignation to accept the call of a small, struggling church in South Carolina. He sought the help of an acquaintance and retired fellow minister to carry on at Walnut Hill as supply pastor after he left.

Rev. Preston Sartelle came in October 2006 at the request of Rev. Ed Crook to carry on the work at Walnut Hill, knowing of Rev. Sartelle's reputation as an outstanding minister and willingness to serve as supply pastor. Due in part to Rev. Crook's careful training of the church leaders and the guidance of Rev. Sartelle, the church continued to prosper, even without a full-time pastor. Rev. Sartelle agreed to serve as interim until a pastor could be found.

The congregation of Walnut Hill voted on June 10, 2007 to call Rev. Dennis Griffith as pastor. An installation service was held August 5, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. Rev. James Richter brought the message and charged the new pastor. Rev. John Gullett delivered the charge to the congregation. A reception was held in the Fellowship Hall.

Rev. Griffith brings his wife Carolyn and children Andrew, Matthew and Rebekah from Pennsylvania. Both Dennis and Carolyn have roots in Tennessee and are happy to be "home". The congregation looks forward to learning from Rev. Griffith as it seeks to deepen its relationship with God. May the hearts of the people be open to learn from this gifted teacher. May this church always be worthy to be called "*The Light on the Hill*".

## **2007 - A Year of Celebration**

The year 2007 marked Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A year of events celebrated this milestone. In the Fall of 2006, a 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee was formed. Celebration Sundays were designated for persons to be honored during the year - former pastors and missionaries. Meals were served in the Fellowship Hall after many of the celebrations. Those being honored were presented a rocking chair with a picture of the church, honoree's name and years of service engraved on the back. Everyone in attendance received commemorative gifts from the church (listed in parentheses).

### **February 25, 2007**

Professor Roger Schultz - the life of Rev. Dan Graham (engraved key chains)

**April 22, 2007**

Dr. Kyle Barr was honored. (glass votives)

**May 6, 2007**

Rev. John Myers was honored (CDs of Rev. Myers' music).

**June 3, 2007**

Rev. Steve Baker was honored (glass Christmas ornament with picture of the inside). Steve was also given a check for AA&CPC for the money collected in the Baby Bottle Contest. Entertainment was provided in the church sanctuary.

**July 22, 2007**

Dr. Ed Crook was honored (commemorative hand fans with a picture of the church).

**July 29, 2007**

Rev. Preston Sartelle with an ice cream social after evening worship service

**August 5, 2007**

Pauline and Isaac Scarcela were honored (paperweights with globes inside were given in honor of all of the missionaries).

Rev. Dennis Griffith was installed as pastor in the evening worship hour. A reception was held after.

**September 12-16 – Homecoming Festivities**

Wednesday Sept. 12 – Picnic and message by Dr. Frank Barker

Thursday Sept. 13 – Time Capsule Burial Service by youth group

Message for men – Dr. Frank Barker, message for women – Mrs. Barbara Barker

Friday Sept. 14 – Bonfire, hayride, sharing of memories and testimonies, message by

Dr. Frank Barker

Saturday Sept. 15 – PresWIC meeting - Mrs. Barbara Barker speaker

Ice cream and watermelon social, message by Dr. Frank Barker

Sunday Sept. 16 – A special 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary worship service with presentations from LT. Gov. Ron

Ramsey and Congressman David Davis and a special message from Dr. Frank Barker (copies of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History)

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

Ed Wise(chairman), Barbara and Tony Stitt, Amy Phillips, Sheila Houser, George and Marcia Stone, Janice Myers, Madeline Nichols

**Scrapbook Committee**

Amy Phillips, Mary Leonard, Barbara Stitt, Sheila Houser, Diane Harr, Madeline Nichols, Angie Nichols

**Cookbook Committee**

Mary Leonard, Janice Myers, Diane Harr, Louise Weaver, Sheila Houser

**Church History**

George and Marcia Stone

**Fellowship Meals**

Coordinated by the Women of the Church



**This is a shot of the 1986 youth group which includes:**

**(Front) \_\_, Joe Rosenbalm, Amy Leonard (Phillips), Lisa Houser (Leonard)**

**(Middle) \_\_, \_\_, \_\_, \_\_, Michelle Nichols, Steve Houser**

**(Back) \_\_, Pam Bennett, Joan Bennett, Mary Leonard, Don Leonard, Henry Johnson  
and Eddie Wise.**

## The Story of Hannah Rouse

August 14, 1901 – January 6, 1936

### A Window to the Past

*The following story was written about Hannah Rouse by Miss Mary Perry in the 1950s. It tells in her own words a beautiful story of early life in the community, a time when people knew their neighbors and treated them as family. These excerpts from her narrative also explain why we still honor this young woman 75 years after the fact.*

Sometime during the year 1929, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Rouse and daughter, Hannah, moved into the Walnut Hill community. They had been living in the Weaver Pike community and had purchased a small hill farm just back of Mr. Frank Stone on the road to Reedy Creek. Due to the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Rouse were not well, Hannah had not been able to complete her high school work but had remained at home to help her father with the farming, milking, etc. A great portion of her time was spent reading to her parents; especially on Sundays as there was no Sunday School or Church to attend. They had all been very active in the Union Church at Weavers.

In the late summer of 1931, Rev. Dan Graham pitched his tent over on the highway just opposite the Walnut Lodge filling station on the property of Mrs. A.D.Stone. This was a very successful revival meeting and Mr. and Mrs. Rouse and Hannah attended regularly - traveling the almost two miles with their horse and buggy.

One night near the close of the meeting, Mr. Graham stated that he hoped the time would soon come when the people of this section could have a house of worship to replace the old Chamberlain school house which had burned a year or so before.

Hannah listened to all of this carefully and the next night she approached Mr. Graham and said, "Mr. Graham, Mama, Papa and I - as we went home last night - talked about how fine it would be if we could



have a church in the community. We prayed about it before we went to bed. You know we have two pigs which we are fattening for our year's meat. We decided we could get along alright with only one pig and that we could sell the other and give the money to help start a church". "Of course," she said, "it won't be much, but perhaps it would encourage others to give; and that way, it would be a start toward a church."

That night, Mr. Graham related this conversation to the congregation in the tent, and then and there other pledges were given and the machinery for building the church was started.

The pig sold for five dollars and was the first money given toward the building of the Walnut Hill church! This was the beginning and was followed by the gifts of many people: work, money, materials and prayer. The people had a mind to build and the work started shortly after the close of the revival. And the prayers of this devout family helped lay every brick and drive every nail. When the time came to put the shingles on the church, Hannah went from house to house, door to door, selling shingles and talking "Sunday School and Church". (Money was raised this way - 10 cents per shingle).

At last in February of 1932, the first services were held in the little church and an afternoon Sunday School was started. Hannah was soon appointed teacher of the beginner class. The children all loved her and she loved them very much. She was not only a great favorite with the children but with the grown-ups as well. She was of great value in teacher's meetings and helping with Christmas programs, etc. Blessed with an excellent memory she had the Scripture always ready. Mrs. Dan Graham tells the following story regarding her remarkable memory.

While living in the Weaver Pike section, the women of the church decided they would begin to try to memorize the catechism. Hannah put them all to shame; she memorized the entire catechism in one week!

Mr. Rouse died in March of 1932 leaving Hannah the responsibility of caring for her mother and looking after the farm. The horse and buggy were sold and Hannah then walked to Sunday School and Church. No Sunday afternoon was too rainy, too cold, or too hot, to keep her away from Church. We remember seeing her on a rainy afternoon in mid-summer with her winter coat on - dripping wet. She always said she "never knew anyone to get sick from going to Sunday School". She was always there as long as she could leave her mother.

In the little afternoon Sunday School, we talked about how nice it would be to have a bell for the church. This was still in the depression and money was scarce. Hannah said if everyone would give an old hen, she would come around and get them and would get Mr. Frank Stone to put them in a coop and sell them for us; to this we all agreed. We had very little money, but almost every family had chickens.

Mrs. Blanche Stewart tells the following: "I had two hens which I thought I would give Hannah for the bell. So when she came for them I went out and pointed them out to her. She looked them over and then turned and picked two of my very best hens which she felt would bring more money. I said I didn't think she could catch them. She replied "Sure I can catch them." And with one fell swoop she got one and then the other! I told her I had planned to give the others, but she smiled and said she thought these would be best.... so, she got my best hens."

After the hens were sold, we added a few nickels and pennies and one Sunday, we counted our money and had \$32.00 which John Rhea assured us the Hardware store would accept and order the bell for us; it would cost somewhere around forty dollars. So, we tied the money in Paul Gregg's handkerchief and gave it to John. Hannah went on and collected the additional money for the bell. Thus was the bell for the Walnut Hill church purchased - the one we hear each Sabbath day.

Hannah was very active in all phases of the Sunday School and Church work. She was the first janitor and was paid \$1.50 per month. When the piano was purchased Hannah was so happy to be able to give a portion of the \$1.50 each month to apply on the purchase.

Mrs. Rouse became more and more feeble and Hannah had to spend more time at home with her; reading the Bible and the Christian Observer. Mrs. Rouse had not had the advantages so common to all of us today, schools, etc. and although she could not read, was truly a "well-read" woman. She was a "learned" woman - learned in the Scripture; bearing much fruit of the Spirit in her daily life. Here in this small house these two women read the Word and spent so much time in prayer - they prayed forward the work at Walnut Hill Church.

To visit this house was always a pleasure; and all entering there received a blessing. The first time we ever visited there was one afternoon in early September. The flowers were in all their glory and Mrs. Rouse had Hannah gather seeds from all the flowerbeds in the yard and get slips of pinks, geraniums, etc from the pans on the porch for us to bring home. From this home we never returned empty-handed or empty-hearted. I don't think we ever visited there without Mrs. Rouse telling us of some passage of Scripture which they had been studying, its meaning to her and its application to some phase of the Lord's work.

As Hannah was required to spend more time with her mother, she could do very little farm work but several of the neighbors supplied her with corn and fodder for her cow. Mr. Hoover would send them coal and Mr. W. J. Smith, Mr. A. D. Stone and Mr. Rufus Smith and others saw to it that they had winter wood. Every one was happy to be able to do any small kindness for Hannah and Mrs. Rouse; we all knew they spent much time in prayer for all of us.

All these kindnesses were deeply appreciated and Hannah wanted so much to do something to repay them. Visiting her just before Christmas one year, she showed me the gifts she had purchased for the members of her Sunday School class. (Two or three programs she had to miss due to her mother's illness, but she always brought her gifts on Christmas Eve to Mrs. Stewart for her to put on the tree for her class.) She had used the egg money to get her gifts. But she said, she did want so much to buy a handkerchief for Mr. Hoover and Mr. Smith, but would not have money unless she cut down on her grocery list. She then told me that she had planned to bake a real nice cake for her mother's Christmas, but if she did that, would have to buy some baking powder. If she did not buy the baking powder, would have enough for the two handkerchiefs. I suggested I would like to help if she would let me, but she said, "No". She talked it over with her mother and they decided to go on and get the handkerchiefs and leave the baking powder out of the cake! Mr. Hoover and Mr. Smith received their handkerchiefs for Christmas!

The young people sang Christmas carols again that year and it was near daybreak on Christmas morn when we reached Hannah's house to sing for her and Mrs. Rouse. 'Twas a very cold night, snow and ice - no flowers in the yard now. Hannah came to the door to greet us - all happy and bright with all the loveliness of Christmas shining in her eyes! They were waiting for us. After singing, we went in and said "Merry Christmas" to Mrs. Rouse and then went on our way.

About three days later, we received word that Hannah had been badly burned while making a fire that morning - a spark had caught in her robe setting it on fire. Due to the depth and the large area of flesh burned, she had no chance. She remained at home for four or five days and was then removed to the Bristol hospital where she died, January 6, 1936.

The day of the funeral was cold and rainy. The house could not hold but a few of the many friends who came; we stood outside in the drizzling rain. Knowing that Mrs. Rouse was not able to make the trip to the cemetery at Weavers, they brought Hannah by her door for her to say good-bye.

Mrs. Rouse came slowly out on the porch to tell Hannah good-bye. She said: "Yes, I'll miss you Hannah, but I'll be alright. The Lord is my Shepherd.... I shall not want."...

And standing there, while we all wept, she repeated the 23rd Psalm in clear distinct tones .....ending: "And we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" and turning she walked back into the house.

This demonstration of great faith and trust in God will never be forgotten by those who stood by that day. Mrs. Rouse closed her house and went to live with her son Mr. Campbell Rouse, who in the spring of that year moved back into the house. A week or so after returning to her home, this great woman of God joined Hannah in the happy land beyond the horizon....to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Those of us who knew Hannah never go to Walnut Hill without something remind us of her. We never hear the bell ring without remembering her and the hens she collected and sold. We remember her payments on the piano, we remember her love and interest in us all. At times of revival, special days and especially the Christmas programs, we say to each other who knew her....”How much Hannah would have loved all this”.

A year or so after Hannah’s death a group of neighbors from Walnut Hill had gone to a revival meeting in Blountville. As we sat waiting for the service to begin, something was said about handkerchiefs; “I hope I never lose this one - it’s the one that Hannah gave me”. Mrs. W.J. Smith said, “She gave me this one also”. Mrs. Hoover said, “I have one, and the one daddy is wearing is one that Hannah gave him....he won’t wear any other”. Mr. Smith, overhearing the conversation, said “This one I am wearing is the handkerchief Hannah gave me.....”

The church was built upon Hannah’s sacrificial gift! The Lord blessed what she gave and the church grew and lived.

As our Lord stands over by the treasury watching us cast in our gifts what shall his judgement be of us: Can he say of us, we have cast in all.....or that we have of our abundance – given so little?



*When the old bell tower was torn down in 2002 the bell that Hannah Rouse so faithfully raised money to purchase was put into storage. But the bell found a new home as on September 26, 2004, during Homecoming at Walnut Hill, the Hannah Rouse Memorial Bell was dedicated. Thanks to the efforts of Wayne Weaver the bell now rests atop of a sturdy steel support on the grounds of the church. Also, a plaque honoring Hannah sits at the base of the bell. Pictured to the left ringing the new bell prior to homecoming services in 2004 is Shirley Leek as Virginia Rouse looks on. Both are related to Hannah.*

## Organization of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church

The commission of Holston Presbytery to organize Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church met in that church on Sunday afternoon April 18, 1943, at 3 o'clock with the following members of the commission present: Reverend Dan Graham, Reverend John Martin, Reverend A.R. Buffaloe, elder James A. Brown of Windsor Avenue Presbyterian Church, Rhea Anderson of Blountville Presbyterian Church.

A splendid musical program was rendered by the church choir. The commission was constituted with prayer by elder James A. Brown; the Reverend Dan Graham presided.

Rhea Anderson was elected clerk. Finding everything in order, the commission proceeded to organize the church. The Reverend Buffaloe preached a splendid sermon using as his subject, "*Opposition to Christ*", scriptures: Mark 3: 1-8. Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Arnold sang "*Some Bright Morning*".

The Reverend Dan Graham propounded the questions and the Reverend John Martin charged the congregation. Eighty-six persons asking to be organized into a church, most of them coming by transfer from the mother church, Blountville Presbyterian, answered satisfactorily the constitutional questions and the church was then declared to be officially organized as the Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church. It was decided to postpone until a later date the election of Elders and Deacons. The following trustees were elected:

Ralph McCray, Homer Atwell, Blanche Stewart, and William Hoover.

The following elders were later elected, all of whom were elders in the Blountville Church: William Hoover, William J. Smith, Ralph McCray, and C.C. Rouse

Deacons: B.H. Stewart (of Blountville board of deacons) Homer Atwell, Rufus Smith and Kyle Arnold.

### Charter Members – 1943

Kyle Arnold	Pauline Harr	Ardith Rouse
Mrs. Kyle Arnold	Robert Harr	Brady Rouse
Homer Atwell	Mrs. Robert Harr	Campbell (C.C.) Rouse
Mrs. Homer Atwell (Dessie)	Robert Harr, Jr.	Mrs. C.C. Rouse
Joyce Atwell	Ralph Harr	Dorothy Rouse
Betty Bunn	W.T. Harr	Evelyn Rouse
Glen Bunn	Mrs. W.T. Harr	Mary Katherine Rouse
Mrs. Glen Bunn	Bertie Hukman	Nettie Rouse

Lewis Bunn  
 Mary Ruth Bunn  
 Lester Cook  
 Bentley Dishner  
 Mrs. Ethel Dishner  
 Mrs. Robert Dishner  
 Dewey Dishner  
 Robert Dishner  
 Robert Dishner, Jr.  
 Ralph Eaton  
 Mrs. Ralph Eaton  
 Esther Fauver  
 Evelyn Fauver  
 J.W.Fauver  
 Mrs. J.W. Fauver  
 Ernest Harr  
 Fred Harr  
 Helen Harr  
 Kenneth Harr  
 Lena Harr

Frank Houser  
 Mrs. Janette Houser  
 Mrs. William Hoover  
 William Hoover  
 Winnie Large  
 Mrs. J.C. Leonard  
 John D. McCray  
 Joyce McCray  
 Ralph McCray  
 Mrs. Ralph McCray  
 William McCray  
 Richard McCray  
 Pauline Peters  
 Peggy Sue Peters  
 Walter Pratt, Jr.  
 Gaines Rosenbalm  
 Isabella Rosenbalm  
 Mrs. Lena Rosenbalm  
 Margie Rosenbalm  
 Pauline Rosenbalm

Shirley Rouse  
 Lorena Seneker  
 Mrs. Ida Shoemaker  
 Doris Smith  
 Jean Smith  
 Hubert Smith  
 P.H.Smith, Jr.  
 Ralph Smith  
 Rufus Smith  
 Mrs. Rufus Smith  
 William J. Smith  
 Mrs. William J. Smith  
 W.J. Smith, Jr.  
 Mrs. W.J. Smith, Jr.  
 Blanche Stewart  
 Mrs. Blanche Stewart  
 Gladys Stewart  
 Albert Utsman  
 Mrs. Albert Utsman  
 Dana Utsman



Dan Graham, right, stands in front of Walnut Hill Church in this 1948 photo.

## Leadership of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church

### Ministers

Dan Graham 1932-1942 (pastor Blountville Group of Churches)  
 Charles Bixler 1943-1944 (pastor Blountville Group of Churches)  
 Dan Graham 1946-1949 supply pastor, 1950-1972 full-time pastor  
 Kyle Barr 1956-1972 asst. pastor 1972-1975 pastor  
 John Myers 1976-1986 pastor  
 Steve Baker 1986-1990 pastor  
 Ed Crook 1991-2006 pastor  
 Preston Sartelle, Jr. Oct., 2006-July, 2007 interim pastor  
 Dennis Griffith Aug. 2007 - pastor

### Elders – date installed

1943 – William Hoover, W.J. Smith, Ralph McCray, Campbell Rouse  
 1948 – Homer Atwell, Rufus Smith, Albert Utsman  
 1953 – W.B.Fraley, Powell Whitaker  
 1967 – Fred Mason 1973 – James Houser  
 1977 – Don Leonard, Lonnie Phillips, Del Ray Nichols  
 1981 – Robert Nichols 1992 – Bud Branscomb 1994- Ed Wise, Tim Houser  
 1995 – Mike Leonard, Ron Emmert 2002 – Roger Painter

### Deacons – date installed

1943- Blanche Stewart, Homer Atwell, Kyle Arnold, Rufus Smith  
 1948 – John McCray, John Elsea, Powell Whitaker, Glenn Bunn, W.J. Smith, Jr.  
 1953 – Jay Drake, L.P.Perrigan, E.Lee Leonard  
 1959 – Clint Leonard, J.D. Gardener, James Houser  
 1964 – Conrad Rouse, Merlin Whitaker, Claude Sampson  
 1969 – Arthur Treadway  
 1974 – Don Leonard, Lonnie Phillips, Phil Blevins  
 1975 – Del Ray Nichols 1977-Roy Houser  
 1978 – Dewey Dishner, Earl Stelle  
 1980 – Blaine Cornett 1981 – Mike Leonard 1982 – A.J.Bennett  
 1987 – Ed Wise 1988 – Tim Houser 1989 – Dennis Wagner  
 1990 – John Seneker  
 1992 – Ron Emmert  
 2002-Kevin Leonard, David Nichols, George Stone  
 2003 - Carl Williams, David Snapp, Jim Hale

## Our Pastors

### **Dan Hamilton Graham**

*1932-1943 Pastor of Blountville Group of Churches*

*1946-1949 Supply Pastor Walnut Hill*

*1950-1972 Pastor Walnut Hill*

Reverend Dan Hamilton Graham was born to James and Sallie Hickok Graham in Holston Valley, near King's Mill, Washington County, Va. on January 12, 1889. His father was a farmer, blacksmith and a ruling elder in Cold Spring Presbyterian Church. When Dan, the youngest of eight children was six years old, his father died. His older siblings left home leaving him to care for his mother and two sisters. With little education and a strong body, he turned to logging as a livelihood. He soon became acquainted with a different way of life - drinking and gambling. He was a tall, big man and was rumored to be able to "whip three men his size". His ailing mother never stopped praying for her wayward son. On July 15, 1910, he gave his heart to God at an evangelistic meeting held in a small schoolhouse. He was known to often say that he celebrated two birthdays - one natural and one spiritual. Not long after, Dan felt the call to preach. Dismayed, he climbed to the top of a mountain to fast and pray over what to do. He was poor and uneducated, who would want to listen to his preaching? He saw a vision of three small schoolhouses scattered over the countryside. God impressed upon him that he could preach in rural places like those. The first three churches he built were the outgrowth of schoolhouses. The second of those being Walnut Hill.



Dan received his early education at old Maxwell School. After announcing his call to preach, his pastor took him to the Abingdon Presbytery where he was thoroughly examined and encouraged to pursue a formal education. He enrolled in King College, where he played football. He remarked that playing football helped him learn many life lessons. He learned teamwork and the many knocks and kicks helped prepare him for the dilemmas he encountered in his ministry. He studied hard to catch up with the other students and was often the brunt of jokes regarding his backwoods mannerisms and lack of formal education. After attending King College, he attended Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va. He was ordained to the ministry October 8, 1918. Thereafter he was known for his fiery preaching against the evils of the world, especially alcohol, having been acquainted with its influence himself.

He married Miss Nell Campbell Painter, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. George Painter of Pulaski, Va., June 22, 1921. Their oldest daughter, Jane Temple Graham, later married the Rev. Kyle Barr. Their youngest daughter Mary Nell died at the tender age of eight.

His ministerial service was: camp pastor at Camp Lee, Va., 1918; assistant pastor, Second Presbyterian Church, Petersburg, Va., 1918-1920; stated supply, Northfork and Vivian, W.V., 1920; stated supply, Green Spring, Cleveland churches, Abingdon Presbytery and stated supply, Cold Spring Church, Holston Presbytery, 1920-1921; pastor of Green Spring and Cleveland churches, 1921-1925; stated supply Bethel Church, 1924-1925; pastor of Rural Retreat, Va., and evangelist in Abingdon Presbytery, 1925-1927.

In 1927 he took the pastorate of the Blountville group of churches. In 1931 he held a tent revival that led to the building of Walnut Hill Church. This church came under the Blountville group of churches. He served the Blountville group of churches until 1942 when he became the evangelist for Holston Presbytery. In 1946, he was asked to take the position of temporary supply pastor. He served in this capacity until 1949. In early 1949, Dan Graham went to Florida due to illness where he soon recovered.

In 1950 Dan Graham returned to Tennessee and Walnut Hill Church, this time as full-time pastor, a position he held until his resignation in 1972. The last pastorate of Dan Graham was that of Bellemont Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Tenn.

Rev. Dan Graham served the Walnut Hill congregation in some capacity for over 36 years. He was a good pastor, but was probably best known for his evangelistic efforts and passionate preaching. He was known far and wide as part of The Dan Graham Evangelistic Association, holding tent meetings and revivals over a five-state region in the south. He also had a radio broadcast over WOPI in Bristol. "*The Graham Bible Hour*" was heard every Saturday at noon for over 30 years. He was a prolific church planter, one source saying that he founded 27 churches in his time. In 1951, he established Graham Bible College, which continues to prepare students for Christian service today.

Dan Graham passed away January 10, 1975. He was known for his unwavering proclamation of the word of God. This quote sums up his life: "Let it be said that there is only one Dan Graham. He came from a Christian home in Holston Valley and has never gotten away from the old fashioned faith of his mother and father. An indefatigable worker, a faithful crusader for Christ - there is only one Dan Graham."

## Charles Richman Bixler

### *1943-1944 Pastor Blountville Group of Churches*

Charles Richman Bixler was born the seventh of nine children of the Rev. Cassius Edwin Bixler and wife Florence Elwell on September 16, 1913 in Estancia, Sergipe, Brazil. His parents were pioneer missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in the USA on the Brazilian frontier.

In September 1929, just a few days before his sixteenth birthday, Charles Bixler arrived in the United States and joined his older brother at the Stony Brook School, Stony Brook, Long Island. Although Portuguese was his native tongue, and although he spoke English with great difficulty, he rapidly achieved distinction as a Christian campus leader and outstanding athlete. He exerted a profound and lasting influence on his contemporaries and was awarded by them the highest of student body honors.



From 1934 to 1938, Charles Bixler was a student at Davidson College where he was awarded letters in both football and wrestling. The following two years he spent in business, living at home with his parents who by this time had retired from the mission field.

Business was not a vocation that interested him. More than anything else in life, he wanted the Lord to lead him back to his beloved Brazil. He was hindered by the fact that he had developed diabetes and was struggling with hyperthyroidism which eventually resulted in the removal of a goiter.

In 1940, he enrolled at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga. In the spring of the following year he began his work where he was to end it - in Kings Mountain Presbytery. He served as the student assistant to the Rev. P. D. Patrick in the First Presbyterian Church of Kings Mountain. He was well liked and invited to return the next summer - which he did.

Upon graduation from seminary Charles was called to Blountville, Tenn., but before June was out, he married Miss Sarah Bond Matthews in Lithonia, Ga. on June 26, 1943. She worked loyally and cheerfully with him through all of his pastorates. Holston Presbytery ordained him on October 5, 1943. He moved to Blountville and lived there until the following fall. While there, Florence Ann, their daughter was born. Charles took over the Blountville group of churches. This group included Blountville, Arcadia, Walnut Hill and the missions of Bethany and Graham. He was the first installed pastor of Walnut Hill. For reasons of ill health, he was forced to resign in November 1944 to accept a smaller pastorate in Covington, Va.

The next pastorate proved hard also being that there were three churches and a fourth to supply. Yet so well did Charles do his job that when he left in 1947, the three churches were able to achieve self-support.

He next served at Woodlawn Presbyterian Church in Sharon, N.C. 1947-1949. He was well loved here also and when he left, a community party was held. It was a fitting occasion for him as he included all of the people of the town in his ministry.

Charles then served at Armstrong Memorial Church in Gastonia, N.C. It was a happy time for him as his brother Rev. Alfred Bixler was the pastor at nearby Olney Church in Gastonia. By this time in 1950, two more children had been born to the family - Charles Edwin (1947) and Joseph Bond (1950). In 1953 he was the moderator for the local Presbytery. He also served as supply pastor of Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church in Mt. Pleasant, S.C.

Charles Bixler died February 6, 1955 in South Carolina of problems related to diabetes and a heart attack at the age of 41. He was remembered as a well-loved and faithful preacher who accomplished much in spite of ill health.

The last mention of him in the church history was of a special love offering collected for his widow in 1955.

#### 1945-1949

In 1945, Mr. Watson Guy, a ministerial student from King College, helped in the Sunday School and preached twice each month for several months. Later in 1946, Rev. Dan Graham was called upon to serve as temporary supply pastor for which he was paid \$50 per month. He continued as supply pastor until 1949 when ill health forced him to quit. He moved to Florida to recuperate.

During his duty as temporary supply, when Rev. Graham was away, a variety of ministers filled the pulpit. The following names were listed in the Treasurer records for 1945 through early 1950 as being paid to preach in Rev. Graham's absence. Church services were held one to three times a month, most often twice a month on the first and third Sundays.

Dr. Robert Yost

Rev. Ted Fix

Dr. R. Liston

Rev. Rufus Mitchell

Rev. Watson Guy

Rev. Abe Aldridge

Rev. Allen Roach  
 Dr. Ralph Brown  
 Rev. Gene Shipley  
 Rev. Kyle Barr  
 Dr. W. W. Arrowood

Rev. Galloway  
 Rev. J.E. Flew  
 Rev. Alex Booth  
 Rev. Paul Doering  
 Rev. Warren Thurston

**Kyle Edward Barr**

*1957-1972 Asst. Pastor*

*1972-1975 Pastor*

Reverend Kyle Barr was born on June 21, 1920 and was one of five children of Frank and Della Marion Barr. Kyle graduated from Blountville High School in 1940, where he was a member of the basketball team and continued his education at Bristol Business College from 1940-41. With the outbreak of World War II, Kyle enlisted in the United States Army and served his country from 1943-46 in Europe as a technical sergeant in field artillery. He was sent to England and France. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and in four major battles. While in the army Kyle married Jane Temple Graham, the daughter of the Rev. Dan and Mrs. Nell Graham, in 1944. It was while serving in the army that the Lord called Kyle to enter the ministry. Upon returning to Bristol following the war, he entered King College in 1946, graduating in 1950. He also was a graduate of Florida Southern College of Lakeland, Fla.



Kyle served as supply pastor for Harmony and Arcadia churches in 1948 and 1949, while still a student at King College. He then became pastor of Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church in Bee Ridge, Fla. upon graduation. He was at Bee Ridge one year whereupon he entered Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. Kyle graduated from seminary in 1954 and was ordained in the East Alabama Presbytery of the Southern Presbyterian Church. During his last two years of seminary Kyle was supply pastor for First Presbyterian Church in East Tallassee, Ala. This 22-member congregation had no church and met in the upstairs of an old building for worship services. After being ordained, Kyle was called to be their pastor.

During the five years he was there, the congregation built a church and manse and the membership increased to 86.

On August 30, 1956, Kyle Barr was chosen to become assistant pastor to the Rev. Dan Graham. He came in January 1957. This relieved Rev. Graham from some of his pastoral duties to allow him more time for mission work and for the Graham Bible Institute. Upon his arrival, Kyle, wife Jane, sons Danny and Jimmy and daughter Margaret moved in with the Grahams while a manse was being constructed just down the road from the church. Kyle's wife, Jane Temple Barr an elementary school teacher, was active in Christian education also, serving as Sunday School teacher and director of VBS. She passed away on November 12, 1985.

Kyle continued as assistant pastor until 1972. It was then, in March of that year, Rev. Graham retired due to ill health and Kyle was installed as full time pastor, a position he held until tendering his own resignation as pastor on November 9, 1975 effective December 31, 1975.

During his years of serving in a pastoral role at Walnut Hill, it was not unusual to observe Kyle under a sink with a wrench fixing a leak or on a ladder replacing light bulbs or shoveling snow from the sidewalk. In 1962 a 1954 Chevrolet bus was purchased and for many years it was Kyle who drove around the community on Sunday morning picking up passengers bound for church. During the week Kyle was a constant visitor at local hospitals and nursing homes visiting the sick and he made it a point to visit the homes of those in the congregation on a regular basis. And he didn't shy away from visiting those in the community who didn't know the Lord. Because of Kyle Barr's willingness to spread the gospel throughout the community and the region, many unsaved came to know the Lord.

In 1975, Kyle began to serve the Lord full-time at Graham Bible College. He was a faithful faculty member, Business Administrator, Vice President and then President. He would often be found waxing the floors or riding the little Farmall Cub tractor mowing the campus. He also operated the Graham Bible Bookstore and continued weekly broadcasts of "*The Graham Bible Hour*" which his father-in-law started some years before. In 1985 he resigned from the college, bought the bookstore, and continued to supply pulpits on Sundays from Limestone, Tenn. to Pulaski, Va. and many pulpits in between. He served as the pastor of Lippincott Presbyterian Church in Bristol, Va. 1984-1987 and later served as the Visitation Pastor of Edgemont Presbyterian Church. Dr. Kyle Barr passed away on June 29, 2007.

Kyle was a man of God who loved life. He had a servant's heart. He had a particular interest in visiting the sick and shut-in. He served the Lord faithfully at Walnut Hill. Kyle Barr was more than just a pastor, he was a friend.

### **John Andrew Myers, IV**

*1976-1986*

John Andrew Myers, IV was born to Dr. David K. Myers and JoAnna Brinsin Sneddon Myers on July 13, 1936 in Thunderhawk, S.D. His father was a Bible Presbyterian minister who spent many years in the Dakota Territory starting churches and doing evangelistic ministry much like that of the Reverend Dan Graham in this area. He later became a chaplain in the United States Army, and as a result, John spent much of his growing up years on army bases all over the world and United States. His mother was Scottish and he recalled with fondness her thick Scottish brogue accent. John had two sisters and one brother, a retired PCA minister.



John graduated from Shelton College, Ringwood, N.J. with a bachelor's degree in Political Science/Social Studies. There he met his future wife, Janice Lorraine Corby, and they were married on June 3, 1961. He went to seminary at Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia Pa., and graduated with a Masters of Divinity in January 1962. He was ordained as a minister by Bible Presbyterian Church in North Olmstead, Ohio in May 1962. The Bible Presbyterian Church later became known as Covenant Presbyterian Church and belonged to the Reform Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod, which merged with the PCA.

The Lord blessed John and Janice with four children - John Andrew V and wife Christy, Laura Anne and husband Donald Feathers, David George and wife Ava, and Daniel Joseph and wife Tracy as well as 10 grandchildren.

John pastored two churches before coming to Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church. He served the Bible Presbyterian Church of North Olmstead, Ohio from 1962-1966 and the Bible Presbyterian Church of Stanton in Wilmington, Del. 1966-1976.

John Myers was installed as pastor of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church on March 21, 1976 and served until 1986. He is remembered for many things, but especially his faithful expository preaching, his beautiful tenor voice and his work with the youth. A special part of his ministry, through the years, was working with the youth of the churches he pastored. He taught Sunday School classes, directed and taught in Youth conferences, and participated in their socials and activities. He also took a real interest in church

sports and worked with this church program. He had many special interests, but only two dislikes; one was liver and the other was dieting. Music was another of John Myers' interests. He sang in choirs all through his high school years and also did some solo work. He enjoyed singing with the Bristol Concert Choir for ten years.

It was under John's leadership that the Fellowship Hall was completed and has been a valuable asset. He was instrumental in forming the men's basketball, softball and the women's softball teams.

In 1978, John began to teach at Graham Bible college and taught subjects such as: Theology, Homiletics, Pastoral Studies and other Bible and Christian Education courses. He also served many years on the Board of directors for Graham Bible College. He was loved, appreciated and enjoyed by his students not only for his teaching, but also for his friendliness, humor and personal love for them.

After leaving Walnut Hill, John pastored Princeton Presbyterian Church and Cash Hollow, a mission church of Princeton, in Johnson City, Tenn. for eleven years until which time he had to retire, due to health problems.

When John retired and moved back to Bristol, he and Janice returned to Walnut Hill to worship. He led Bible study on Wednesday nights and was the pulpit supply in pastor Ed Crook's absence. During this time John preached sermons on tape and sent them back to his first pastorate in North Olmstead, Ohio where they were struggling along without a pastor.

Prior to his death, John had been ill for more than 12 years, eventually being confined to a wheelchair, but through it all he continued to serve his Lord. He witnessed for the Lord wherever he was - in the hospital, in rehabilitation facilities, in physicians' offices and in the church.

John Myers went home to be with the Lord on July 27, 2003. He had many favorite songs, but one that meant a lot to him was "*Through It All*" by Bill and Gloria Gaither. He truly loved the truth of that song - his Lord was with him all through the 41 years of his ministry. His favorite scripture verse was Isaiah 40:31. He lived his life by following this verse. He trusted in his Lord to renew his strength; he seemed to soar on wings even when he was down, he seemed never to grow weary or faint.

### **Stephen Barrett Baker**

*1986-1990*

Steven Barrett Baker was born Sept. 9, 1957 in Chattanooga, Tenn. and grew up there, graduating from Columbia Bible College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1979. He received a Master of Arts degree in

Humanities from Western Kentucky University in 1980. In 1984 Steve received a Master of Divinity from Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He was ordained in 1984 by Central Carolina Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America.

He served as Assistant pastor and youth director at Brainerd Hills Pres. Church, Chattanooga, Tenn. 1978-1979, Faith Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C. 1982-1983 and First Presbyterian Church in Stanley, N.C. 1984-1986. Steve served as pulpit supply at Magnolia Cumberland Pres. Church, Magnolia, Ky. in 1980 and Eveleigh Independent Church, Leitchfield, Ky. in 1981.



Steve came to Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church as pastor in September of 1986. He resigned in June 1990 to become the Executive Director of Abortion Alternatives & Crisis Pregnancy Center of Bristol, Tenn. and currently serves in this position. Walnut Hill is proud to support AA&CPC as a home missions project. Steve has done a tremendous job working with the school children of the area educating them regarding abortion and encouraging them to choose a godly lifestyle.

Steve recently served as interim pastor of Bellemont Presbyterian Church Bristol, Tenn. from March 2003 until January 2007.

He has also taught classes at Reformed Bible Institute, Northeast State Community College, and for home-school students.

While in St. Louis, Steve married Kathleen Mary Oesch on May 15, 1982. They have been blessed with three children (Charissa, Mark and Paul) as well as two grandchildren.

Steve's hobbies include photography, miniature railroads, guitar, basketball, soccer (playing and coaching), tennis, racquetball and fishing.

When Steve arrived at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church, it was an independent, unaffiliated Presbyterian church, having left the Southern Presbyterian Church in 1956. It was in 1987 under Steve's leadership, that the church joined the Presbyterian Church in America. With the help of former church member Rick Sacra, the congregation was introduced to praise songs. Steve and Rick began teaching praise worship on Sunday evenings accompanying with their guitars. Steve also put together a men's gospel singing group "The Walnut Hill Boys" comprised of Steve, Don Leonard, Mike Leonard, Tim Houser and Dennis Wagner. The church enjoyed hearing the four-part harmony of some many favorite old gospel songs. As an alternate to trick-or-treating, Steve organized "Harvest Parties" on halloween night with games for the young ones and costumes for all. A great time of Christian fun.

In 1989, Steve introduced a wonderful tradition at Walnut Hill, the drive-through Christmas scenes. After 18 years, the Walnut Hill Christmas scenes continue and have become a significant outreach ministry of the church.

### **Edward Sterling Crook**

*1991-2006*

Edward Sterling Crook was born September 5, 1949 in Morgantown, W.Va. He came to Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church in 1991 as pastor. Ed served in the Armed Forces as a member of the United States Marine Corps from 1968-1971, serving in Vietnam below the DMZ. A marble, engraved stepping stone honoring Ed's service was purchased on Pastor Appreciation Day and sits proudly on the War Memorial walkway in downtown Bristol, Va. On June 4, 1971 he married Ellen Steele. Ed attended Thomas Road Bible Institute, receiving an Associate degree in 1975. He received a Bachelors degree from Liberty Baptist College in 1978. Both schools are in Lynchburg, Va.



In 1982 Ed attended Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. and Christian International University, receiving a Masters of Divinity degree. Ed taught at Lael University in St. Louis, Mo. from 1981-1982 and later graduated from there with a doctorate degree in Theology in 1988. He also received special education from the Evangelistic Teacher Training Association and the Pastoral Counseling Institute.

Ed was ordained into the ministry on September 25, 1982 by the Eastern Carolina Presbytery (PCA) in Freemont, N.C.

His first pastorate was White Oak PCA in Freemont, N.C. from 1982-1986. He then pastored First Presbyterian PCA, Ellerbe, N.C. 1986-1990 before coming to Walnut Hill. In September of 1990, Ed served Walnut Hill as pulpit supply, later accepting the call of pastor. He was installed in January of 1991. In September 2006 Ed accepted the call to pastor Zion PCA in Lowrys, S.C., where he serves today.

In 1992 the church underwent a major renovation of the sanctuary. The upstairs Sunday School area as well as the downstairs area underwent renovations. In 2002 a new steeple was added to the church building. 2003 brought the renewal of a board of Deacons, which the church had been without for a few years. The library was remodeled.

Ed was a great organizer and planner. Ed brought about a system of committees in 1991, many of which are in existence today. The Christian Education committee replaced the positions of Sunday School superintendent and secretary/treasurer. A Missions Committee oversees the church's involvement in mission work. Ed worked hard to educate and equip the deacons and elders by starting a Shepherding Ministry. When he left in 2006, the leadership of the church carried on remarkably well, thanks in a great way to his foresight and training.

Ed and Ellen served the church well over their 16 years of ministry. Ellen was active in the choir and WIC. Both possessed a servant's heart. Ed often went above and beyond the duties required of him in his service to the congregation. When asked what he wanted to be remembered for, Ed replied that he hoped that the many outward improvements to the church would serve as a reminder of the more important and lasting changes of hearts and attitudes during his tenure as pastor. His legacy was being used of God as an instrument to promote harmony and unity within the congregation of Walnut Hill.

In 2000, Susie Burbridge, Ed's mother came to live in the Bristol area after suffering a major heart attack at her home in West Virginia. She came to be close to her son and Walnut Hill soon came to love her too.

Some of Ed's interests are the NFL (Green Bay Packers), NASCAR (Mark Martin) and the Andy Griffith Show. He has held since his boyhood days a lifetime fascination of fast cars. Ed will quickly say that aside from his love for God, his next love is that for his beloved wife and best friend Ellen.

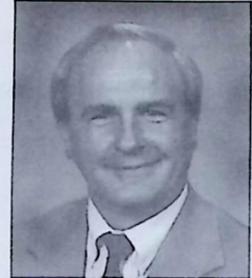
One of Ed's early jobs was that of used car salesman. He always liked to joke about his name, saying it was sure hard to sell used cars when your last name is Crook. On the other hand, he would point out that in the Bible, a shepherd's crook was used to grab wayward lambs around the neck and pull them back to safety. Therefore, Crook is a fitting name for a man that has faithfully served Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church by steadfastly proclaiming the Gospel, gently pulling those who may have fallen by the wayside back onto the narrow way.

**Preston Orr Sartelle, Jr.**

*October 2006-July 2007 Interim Pastor*

Rev. Preston Sartelle was born in Grundy, Va. on November 28, His father Rev. Preston O. Sartelle, Sr. was pastor of Grundy Presbyterian Church and in 1941 moved to Draper's Valley Presbyterian Church in Virginia to accept the call as pastor.

In his sophomore year the family moved to Bristol, Va. at the call of McIver Memorial Presbyterian Church. He finished high school at Virginia High. It was there in church and at the high school that he met his future wife Mary Ellen Sproles. They both graduated in 1959. Preston went to Hampden-Sydney College in Farmville, Va. and Mary Ellen attended Montreat College in Montreat, N.C. They were married in June of 1960, and Preston transferred to King College in Bristol, Tenn. Upon graduating from King College, he attended Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., graduating in 1966.



Preston accepted the pastorate of Midway Presbyterian Church in Anderson, S.C. where he stayed until 1970. He then moved to Kingston Presbyterian Church in Conway, S.C. In 1983 he returned home to Draper's Valley Presbyterian Church to pastor his father's former church until December 31, 1998. In 1999, after raising support, they moved to Montego Bay, Jamaica where, for over two years, they served as missionaries for Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf.

Preston was honorably retired from Westminster Presbytery in the fall of 2001 and has served as interim and supply pastor for numerous churches since that time. Before coming to Walnut Hill, Preston served as interim pastor at Memorial Presbyterian Church in Elizabethton, Tenn.

Preston was asked by Rev. Edward Crook to come to the church as supply pastor after he accepted the pastorate of a church in South Carolina. He served from October, 2006 through July, 2007.

Preston and Mary Ellen quickly became a wonderful part of the congregation. Mary Ellen sang in the choir. They enjoyed helping the church members pack shoeboxes for Operation Christmas-Child in November, as they had been recipients of the same ministry while in Jamaica.

Preston and Mary Ellen have four children: Victor Orr (1962), Mary Elizabeth (1964), Cynthia Irene (1966) and Julia Blake (1968). Preston had two brothers and two sisters: Patricia is married to Dr. Cortez Cooper, PCA minister, Susan is married to Rev. Calvin Jett, PCA minister, Rev. John Sartelle PCA minister, and Rev. Mike Sartelle, PCA minister. (Mike was killed in a car accident along with his youngest son Nate, January 1, 1992). Preston's father, Dr. Preston Sartelle, Sr. was one of the speakers for a Prophecy Conference held at Walnut Hill in September of 1977.

Having studied in the Holy Land, he was able to include many interesting details in his sermons. Preston and Mary Ellen drove from Wytheville, Va. each week to minister to the congregation. Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church is grateful for Preston's willingness to serve.

**W. Dennis Griffith, Jr.**

2007 -

On June 10, 2007, Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church called the Rev. Dennis Griffith as pastor. An installation service was held August 5, 2007 marking his beginning of service.

Dennis was born on August 21, 1963 in Abington, Pa. and spent his early years in this suburb of Philadelphia. His family later moved to Nashville, Tenn., attending junior high and high school there. In 1981 Dennis enrolled at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where he was a member of the varsity football team as a backup quarterback. He attended Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville and there met his future wife Carolyn Elizabeth Sells. They were married on August 12, 1989.



Upon graduating from UT, Dennis took a position as sales manager/announcer at station WITA in Knoxville, working there until 1988. While at Cedar Springs, he worked with Family Life Ministries. Upon feeling the call to preach, he entered Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Miss. in 1990, graduating in 1993.

He began his ministry at a church plant in Winchester, Va. In 1994, he moved to Chattanooga Valley PCA where he served until 2002. Dennis comes to Walnut Hill from New Hope Presbyterian Church PCA, near Pittsburgh, Pa. where he has pastored since 2002.

Dennis and Carolyn have three children Andrew (15), Matthew (13) and Rebekah (10). They are happy to return to East Tennessee where they feel much at "home". Carolyn is a native of Knoxville, where her mother still resides. She also has family in Kingsport and Johnson City.

Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church looks forward to the future years of service to God, growing in fellowship with Dennis and his family.



**The Reverend Dan Graham and wife Nell (both seated) and the Reverend Kyle Barr and wife Jane.**

## **Church Officers 2007**

**Pastor** – Dennis Griffith

**Elders** – Del Ray Nichols (Clerk of Session)

James Houser

Mike Leonard

Lonnie Phillips

Ed Wise

Roger Painter

**Deacons** – George Stone ( Chairman)

Kevin Leonard

David Nichols

David Snapp

Carl Williams

**Church Secretary/Treasurer** – Susan Williams

**Worship Leader** – Mike Leonard , **Choir Director** – Teri Leonard

**Pianist** – Teri Leonard, asst. Shirley Leek

**Organist** – Marlene Corby

**President of WIC** – Sheila Houser

**Missions Committee** –

Carl Williams (Chairman)

Joyce Painter

Roger Painter

Pam Cox

Louise Gray

Margaret Rutherford

Bambi Snapp

Roger Snapp

Mark Ledford

**Christian Education Committee** –

Ed Wise (Chairman)

Kevin Leonard

Lisa Leonard

Louise Weaver

Mary Leonard

Sheila Houser

Marcia Stone

Pam Wise

Susan Williams

**Youth Committee-**

Mike Leonard

Teri Leonard

Carl Williams

Susan Williams

Amy Phillips

Frankie Phillips

Miguel Allyon

**Pioneer Club** – Kevin and Lisa Leonard



***Pioneer Club 2007***

***First Row: Jacob Wise, Jaida Leonard, Silver Myers***

***Second Row: Colt Nichols, Ben Williams (behind Colt) Hunter Myers, Storm Houser, Cheyenne Houser***

***Third Row: Joshua Nichols, Zachary Wise, Abbey Williams, KiKi Byrd, Harley Vicars***

## Women In the Church (WIC)

The original name of the women's group of Walnut Hill was "Women of the Church"(WOC) as part of the Holston Presbytery. The name was changed to Women In the Church (WIC) in 1987 when the church entered the PCA, as this was their title for the women's ministry. Church history states in 1960 the WOC sent write-ups of their monthly meetings to the Bristol newspaper for publication. The women officially organized on October 5, 1950. The following officers were elected:

President – Mrs. Mable Elsea    Vice President – Mrs. Daisy Stone  
 Secretary – Mrs. B.H. Stewart    Treasurer – Mrs. Claude Sampson  
 Historian – Mrs. Ann Smith

Also present as charter members:

Mrs. Dessie Atwell, Mrs. Ida Shoemaker, Mrs. Nell Graham, Mrs. Doris Whitaker,  
 Mrs. Mary Harr, and Mrs. Jeanette Stone

Meetings were monthly and included Bible study led by Mrs. Dan Graham. In addition to prayer and Bible study, the women put their hands to work.

### **From 1950-1970 a record of some of their projects included:**

Hand-made and distributed 74 quilts (maybe more)

Prepared and distributed to Graham Bible College, needy families and various children's homes the following:

75 gallons of apple butter, 36 gallon of frozen apples, 3 crates of frozen strawberries, 2 bushels peaches (canned) 4 bushels (frozen) 10 bushels of frozen apples, 201 quarts of apple sauce, and 128 gallons of apple sauce

Visited the sick and shut-ins (fruit baskets and cards)

Support of missionaries – both money and various items requested in need

Gifts to nursing home patients

Rolled bandages for medical missions

Purchased 8 yards of material to make pillow cases

Homecoming festivities

Made doll dresses for dolls in the nursery

Gave a handkerchief shower for Pauline Rosenbalm (missionary to Brazil)

Spring cleaning of the church

**More recently (1980-2007) some of WIC projects include**

Two more quilts – one to Pauline Scarcela and one to Ed and Ellen Crook

Preparing Easter Sunrise breakfast – now taken on by the men as a project.(the men of the church decorate, cook and serve breakfast Easter morning.)

Mother-Daughter Banquet (one year there was a Father-Daughter banquet)

Preparing and serving food to bereaved families and sick church members

Sending flowers for funerals and hospitalizations

Purchasing specially needed items for our missionaries

Decorating the church

Coordinating Homecoming meal, cleaning and decorating church and fellowship hall

Purchasing needed items for kitchen

Providing a basket of snacks in the CICU/SICU waiting rooms of Bristol Regional Medical Center labeled with the name of the church, directions and invitation to worship.

The WIC has sent packages to members of the military in the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Middle East conflict.

Two of new projects are the Baby Bottle Project and the Christmas Shoebox collection.

In 2003 the WIC began participation in Operation Christmas Child sponsored by Samaritan's Purse, "the shoebox project". Items are collected on a monthly basis and packed into wrapped shoeboxes in November. A special dedication service is held on the Sunday before they are taken to a collection site to be shipped all over the world. A special offering is taken to pay for shipping. In 2006, 200 shoeboxes were prepared and \$2,250 collected. For 2007 the goal is 225 boxes!

In 2005 the WIC sponsored the now annual Baby Bottle Contest. This project is used to raise money to be given to Abortion Alternatives and Crisis Pregnancy Center. Former pastor Rev. Steve Baker is the director of the center. The contest pits the males against the females. The gender that collects the most baby bottles filled with change is the winner. The losers are responsible for providing a meal and entertainment to the winning group. In 2007, the third year of competition, the tie-breaker was won by the males. The

pay-back meal and entertainment was held in conjunction with the 75<sup>th</sup> celebration Sunday honoring Rev. Steve Baker for his years of service. After the entertainment, a check was presented to AA&CPC for \$1,622.17. In this contest, the young lives saved are the real winners.

**2007 WIC officers are:**

President – Sheila Houser Vice President – Barbara Snapp

Treasurer – Letha Houser Secretary – Pam Wise

Mercy Ministries – Angie Nichols Baby Bottle Project – Teri Leonard

Shoebox Project – Amy Phillips and Marcia Stone

A day-time WIC group led by Madeline Nichols meets on the third Tuesday each month.



These ladies met for a circle meeting in 1962. They are (first row) Iva Whitaker, Mrs. Fred Seneker, Dorothy Whitaker, Jane Barr; (second row) Doris Whitaker, Letha Houser, Rose Hicks, Betty Lewis; (third row) Hazel Gardner, Louise Dixon, Hazel Whitaker.

## Sunday School

Shortly after the church was established in 1932, the Sunday School program was begun. Mr. John Rhea was the first superintendent. Later under the leadership of W.J. Smith and his able helpers, the most outstanding Sunday School in the Blountville Group of Churches was carried on from this outpost. During the period of the Blountville Group of Churches (1932-1940s), a quarterly meeting was held and a quarterly banner was given to the church Sunday School making the best percentage report on attendance, contribution, scripture reading and catechisms memorized. A yearly banner was given for the best over-all percentage of the year. An annual Sunday School picnic was held jointly for all the churches and mission outposts. It included a basket dinner and free ice cream for all. The event also included an address from an "outstanding" speaker chosen by Dan Graham.

Sunday School was first held in the afternoon at 2:30 p.m. because many members went to other churches for morning worship. For meeting purposes, curtains were drawn in the main sanctuary to separate the five classes. The nursery and kindergarten classes were in the basement. The nursery class was once called "cradle roll" and for many years was attended to by Mrs. Bessie Dishner. Sunday School training involved learning the Shorter Catechism and the Lord's Prayer. Bible stories were sometimes presented on flannel boards. The Cross and Crown award system was used to stimulate regular attendance. Winners of the pins were determined by six points of examination: attendance, bringing Bible, studying lesson, offering, staying for church and being on time.

Sunday School was well attended. In 1948, due to the fact that so many children had no transportation and had to walk the dangerous highway to church, the decision was made to purchase a bus. The first bus driver was John D. McCray. The bus garage stood in the vicinity of the present Fellowship Hall. In 1962, once again a bus ministry was undertaken with the purchase of a 1954 Chevrolet bus. Rev. Kyle Barr became the first driver of this bus. The next bus driver for many years was Conrad Rouse. James Houser also served as bus driver. In 1991 a 1982 15 passenger Ford van was purchased to be used to enhance Sunday School attendance. It was later sold in 1994 to another church.

In 1950, plans were made for an addition to the auditorium and much needed Sunday School rooms. This addition was completed in 1952. The church history for 1951 listed Sunday School enrollment as 206 with the number swelling to a church record of 285 in 1955.

Sunday School at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church has been continuously blessed with many willing and gifted teachers over its 75 years. In the beginning, the minister speaking at worship services also taught the

adult Sunday School class. A number of men and women students from King College began the work of teaching Sunday School. Later in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, students from Graham Bible College taught or assisted in teaching Sunday School as well as VBS. These workers were assisted by a faithful group of teachers from within the congregation, many of whom would serve until they were no longer physically able to continue. In 1974, a special day was set aside to honor Mrs. Ida Shoemaker for her 42 years of service. She began her service in 1932. There have been many other dedicated teachers through the years, whose names are too numerous to list in this short history, but the common ground they shared was a love for the Word of God, faithful dedication, and a great love for each of their students.

During the 1950s and 60s, a birthday offering was received during Sunday School. A birthday offering involved a student giving an offering equal to their age (12 years old = 12 cents) on the Sunday closest to their birth date. Part of this offering was used to support missions. Rally Day was held in October to encourage Sunday School students to invite others to join and often was held in connection with the annual Sunday School picnic in later years. It also served as "promotion day" to advance to a higher class based on the student's age.

A number of men faithfully served as Sunday School superintendents over the years. Most often women filled the roles of Sunday School secretary and treasurer. These positions no longer exist. In 1991, the Christian Education Committee was formed and now serves in the place of leadership over Sunday School as well as all other Christian Educational areas of our church. Del Ray Nichols served the last Sunday School superintendent, taking over the role as chairman of the Christian Education committee. The present members of the Christian Education Committee are Ed and Pam Wise, Kevin and Lisa Leonard, Louise Weaver, Mary Leonard, Sheila Houser, Susan Williams and Marcia Stone.



*Letha Houser (left) and Mrs. Laura Countis were teachers of this children's Sunday School class in 1960. Front row – Judy Jacobs, Glenna Whitaker, Norma Whitaker, Julie Countiss, Doris Rutherford. On the back row are Roy Houser, Ted McCray, Stanley Whitaker, Mike Houser, David Rutherford, Johnny McCray.*



This picture from 1959 shows the women's class of Vera Cates, Belle Ireson, Virginia Barr, Mamie Clark, Mrs. Fullen, Daisy Stone, Dessie Atwell, Trula Rouse, Ilo Feathers, Thelma Stophel, Ethel McCray, Lola Sampson, Effie Moody, Mrs. Bunn, Lena Rosenbalm, Edith Perry, Genette Houser, Lena Mae Leonard.



Vacation Bible School watermelon feast - 1963. 1. \_\_\_ 2. Mike Leonard, 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. Cathy Cole, 6. Berna Lou Whitaker 7. Kyle Whitaker 8. Mark Countiss (in of Berna Lou) 9. \_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_ (dark hair) 11. Terry Dishner 12. Mike Houser 13. \_\_\_ 14. Roy Houser (striped shirt) 15. \_\_\_ (girl in back) 16. \_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_ 19. Gary Dishner

## Vacation Bible School

The first Vacation Bible School is said to have taken place in New York City in 1898 being called Everyday Bible School. By the 1920s several denominations were participating in a similar activity that had been named Vacation Bible School, now referred to as VBS. Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church held its first VBS in 1934. E.Lee Leonard of our congregation was in attendance and still has his certificate of graduation from that event. There were five teachers – Mary Perry, John Yelton, Virginia Steele (Leonard), Tom Rhea and wife Kate. There were 47 students eager to attend VBS at the “new church”. Vacation Bible School has been enjoyed at this church by children of our community for decades. In 1961, church history records 184 children enrolled in VBS.

VBS has undergone some changes over the years. The early years of VBS found students attending in the mornings (9am-12 noon) often for two weeks. Many children walked to VBS. In the late 1940s and off and on throughout the ‘50s and ‘60s, a church bus ran. There is even an amusing account of Mrs. Ann Smith taking 4-year old Phyllis Rouse to VBS on the handlebars of her bicycle in 1947 (one and a half miles on a bicycle in a dress, that’s a dedicated VBS teacher!). Some things about VBS have remained constant, only changing in their presentation. Standard for VBS has always been scripture memorization. Refreshments of some kind have also been a favorite aspect of the festivities - ranging from watermelon feasts to KoolAid and cookies to the popular snacks of today, pizza and nachos, etc. Singing has been a mainstay of VBS seeing simple choruses like “*Deep and Wide*” and “*The B.I.B.L.E.*” replaced by CDs of themed songs set to contemporary music. You won’t see “*Red Rover*” and “*Drop The Handkerchief*” played in the churchyard now days, however running about with reckless abandon never seems to go out of style.

The pledges of allegiance to the American flag, the Christian flag and the Bible once signaled the opening service of each day at VBS. To be chosen to carry a flag or the Bible was a much coveted honor. Today, children still line up outside the church on the porch and down the sidewalk listening excitedly for the first notes of music welcoming them to the adventure inside. Tradition continues with the closing of VBS marked by a commencement service and picnic for all.

“Sword Drills” were often standard at both VBS and Sunday School. A sword drill consisted of every student standing with their Bible in hand as a book, chapter and verse of the scripture was called out. The first student to locate and read the verse was the winner. A great way to become familiar with the Bible.

Churches today are confronted with the fact that technology can be used to either lure children away from or to God. VBS of today utilizes technology to draw children’s attention to the great love of God.

VBS 2007 at Walnut Hill was called SonForce Kids. An elaborate stage set was built and the entire church was decorated to reflect the theme. After lining up on the front porch and marching in the doors, the opening ceremony each night consisted of a skit with costumed actors. Then it was off to "stations" for 15-20 min. where students heard the Bible lesson for the night, participated in a singing session, spent time in the classroom memorizing scripture, fashioned crafts related to the VBS theme and partook of a variety of popular foods. Fifty-five children were enrolled in VBS this year, with an average attendance in the forties.

Two aspects of VBS have stood the test of time. It is great fun for all and it remains a wonderful way to reach out to children, planting the seeds of faith in the hearts of the next generation.



John Yelton (far left) and Mary Perry (far right) Kate Rhea (upper left) Virginia Steele(Leonard) - upper right in dark sweater - were the teachers for this 1934 Vacation Bible School class. 1<sup>st</sup> row standing - (2) Ralph Smith (5) E.L.Leonard (7) Evelyn Steele (8)Louise Stover back row - (2)Edna Hawk, (3) Vivian Smith (4)Helen Steele (5) Mary Alice Spacer (6) Eleanor Stover (7) Paul Stone.

## Music Ministry

The first songs sung at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church were without musical accompaniment. Have no pity on these early worshipers, however. Such a group of men, women and children lifting their voices together in praise *a cappella* has a beauty all its own and not often heard today. Soon after regular services began at Walnut Hill, a collection was begun to raise the money to purchase a piano. It was placed in the sanctuary (probably in 1933) amid controversy, as there were some that did not want a "musical instrument" in the new church.

There have been many faithful individuals who have served God through music ministry over the years at Walnut Hill. The recipe for music ministry calls for one cup of talent, one quart of courage and a gallon of dedication. "Song leader", "choir leader" and "music director" are similar names for the same job. Some of the earliest song leaders were: William (Bill) Smith, Homer Atwell, Ralph McCray and J.D. McCray. More recently: James Barr, John Myers, Don Leonard, Dennis Wagner, Rick Sacra and Sandy Huron. Today husband and wife Mike and Teri Leonard share the job with Mike as worship leader (congregational singing) and Teri as choir director (special music). Over the years Walnut Hill has enjoyed the presentation of many musical programs. Easter and Christmas programs are standard and showcase the many talents of the church family (background sets, costume design, lights and sound).

The piano in use in the sanctuary at present was a gift from the Whitaker family in 1964. The one in the choir rehearsal room was given in memory of Judy Cornett in 2000.

The following have served as pianists over the years: Vivian Smith Arnold, Virginia Steele Leonard, Mary Ireson, Katherine Stover, Joyce Atwell, Mary Burnette, Joyce McCray, Christine Countiss, Dorothy Whitaker, Mrs. John Cook, Shirley McClain Leek, Marlene Galloway Corby and Teri Haga Leonard.

The first organ was purchased in 1958 at a cost of \$1300. In October 1958 an all-day meeting was held, including dinner. This day was specified as "organ day". Mr. Charles Lawson played the new organ. The money taken that day was applied to the organ fund. This organ was replaced in 1968. The following have served as organists over the years: Christine Countiss, Phyllis Rouse, James Barr, Marion Pinckney, Glenna Whitaker, Berna Lou Whitaker, Janice Myers and Marlene Corby.

Hymnals, standard equipment for churches throughout time, were often obtained by members donating a book in honor of or in memory of a loved one, with their name inscribed inside the front page. What child of the past hasn't used a hymnal as a desk of sorts upon which to create an artistic masterpiece when sermons grew long and attention spans grew short?

Fondly remembered are children's choruses, grand old hymns and the sweet sound of a violin. Elder Albert Utsman's violin solos were always a treat. The new kids on the block are praise songs, a Praise Team, recorded musical accompaniment (CDs) and a projection system. Whatever the means, whatever the style, may music at Walnut Hill continue to accomplish its chief end - to glorify God.



*Teri Leonard (above) sings a solo during the presentation of the 2006 Christmas cantata. Teri is Walnut Hill's choir director and has also served as pianist for the past 33 years. Teri is part of a musical family as husband Mike serves as the worship leader, daughters Meagan and Eden sing in the choir as does Mike's father Don. Shirley McClain Leek has served asst. pianist for 11 years. Marlene Galloway Corby has served 22 years - first as asst. pianist, then organist. Janice Myers wife of former pastor John Myers, served 8 years as organist when he was pastor.*

*Albert Utsman (left) father to Dana Utsman, grandfather to Ed Wise - plays his violin.*

## Youth Ministry

Modern day youth ministry traces its roots to Dr. Francis Clark of Portland Maine, who in 1881 was dismayed to see the young people in his congregation lose interest in church. A misguided belief existed that teens (called children in this day) weren't serious enough to make the same commitment to Christ as adults. This made the experience of church wholly unpleasant for them. Dr. Clark made a bold move, by modifying the "temperance pledge" - a commitment NOT to do things - he crafted a pledge which listed all the things the young Christian would ENDEAVOR TO DO to apply Christianity in their daily walk. It was two pages long. The results were astonishing. The 57 young people of his congregation embraced this commitment and took ownership of their Christianity. Christian Endeavor was the name of this movement and is still in existence. More importantly, nearly every youth ministry organization today can be linked to Christian Endeavor either in history, method, or both.

In 1933 Miss Mary Perry started a Christian Endeavor (CE) group at Walnut Hill and was the leader until 1938. There were 48 members. Several of the parents joined also, attending meetings and helped Miss Perry by having the group over to their houses. They met on Sunday evenings at 6 o'clock. Meetings consisted of Bible study, singing and prayer. The group enjoyed exchanging programs with other CE groups in the area. Blountville Methodist Church had a CE group also. At Christmas the group sang for shut-ins and those at the jail.

Miss Betty Bowman came to Walnut Hill in 1949 to work with the young people's group. She had studied at Columbia Bible College. Under her splendid leadership, progress was made and this group grew into one of the best attended young people's group in the area. She left in December 1950 to marry Mr. Frank Noell who was studying for the ministry. This couple later served as missionaries to Japan and were supported by the church for many years.

In the 1950s, some of those working with the youth were: James Houser, Joyce Atwell, Powell Whitaker, Leonard Allred, Mary Perry and Hazel Whitaker (Atwell). Hazel graduated from Moody Bible Institute and taught many years in the church. Trips to youth conferences at Columbia Bible College and Ben Lippen School were taken in 1951. The average attendance for the youth group was listed at 35 in the history for 1954. They were active in community service as well as taking on much of the responsibility of running VBS.

The 1960s found Rev. and Mrs. Kyle Barr active in the young people's work. Mrs. Barr was over a group of F.C.L. girls - Future Christian Leaders. Graham Bible College sponsored a youth program called

“Crusaders for Christ”. This group had monthly meetings at the college as well as other area churches and was active in the early 1960s through the mid-1970s. E.Lee and Lucille Leonard, J.D. and Hazel Gardner also helped with the youth during the 1950s and 1960s, as did Judy Elsea in the late 1960s. The first mention of Youth Sunday was in May of 1966. This day, set aside to show the church’s appreciation of its young members, has remained a popular event for many years. On Youth Sunday the young folks “swap-out” with the old folks to lead the Sunday School and morning worship activities.

Don and Mary Leonard, Del Ray and Madeline Nichols and Linda and Lonnie Phillips guided the youth program in the 1970s and 1980s, assisted by Rev. John Myers. A large group of teens enjoyed the fellowship and teaching of these dedicated parents. Keith Schlisser helped with the youth in the 1980s also. Appalachian Bible Camp in southwest Virginia was a place of many memories for those during this era. Later in the 1980s Ed Wise, David Nichols and Amy Leonard (Phillips) took on leadership roles in this work. Bill Carr came to Walnut Hill in 1989 as youth minister for a year while he was raising support to go to the mission field in Australia. He and his family now serve in South Africa and are supported by the church.

1991 and 1992 found Mike Leonard and Barbara Whitaker (Snapp) hosting “Rec Night” in the fellowship hall for church and area teens, and later Lisa Houser (Leonard) assisted A program known as “Pioneer Club” was started at Walnut Hill in 1999 with Lisa Leonard directing with the help of her husband Kevin. Pioneer Club now have meetings on Wednesday as well as Sunday evenings. Many dedicated teachers serve in this effort. Pioneer Clubs promote Bible exploration and memory work, application skills and fun activities. Bible awards and activity awards are built into the system. This group serves ages two through grade 12. Teri Leonard began working with the teens specifically in the late 1990s, first as a singing troupe called the WWJD Followers with the help of John Huron, then as more of a Bible study group.

Carl and Susan Williams took over this work in 2001. A Youth Committee was formed to help coordinate activities. As more kids in the church grew into this age group, it was decided to seek a youth director to hire part-time. After an exhaustive search through resumes Andy Crews from North Carolina was hired in June 2003. He left in December of that year to take a job in Georgia. The Youth Committee, at the suggestion of Rev. Crook, placed a small advertisement on the bulletin board at King College for a part-time youth director. Soon a young graduate applied for the position. One meeting with the Youth Committee and its members embraced this humble young man from Peru named Pablo Ayllon. Pablo came in the spring of 2004 and served the position well while waiting for entrance to seminary. That opportunity came in December 2004 and by January 2005, he was gone to Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis.

Before he left, the Youth Committee met with him to ask if he had any one he could recommend for a replacement. He said his brother had just graduated from college and might be interested. This is the way that Miguel Ayllon came about to be the youth director at Walnut Hill today.

IGNITED is the name recently chosen by the present youth group led by Miguel. In 2004, an annual winter retreat to the Smoky Mountains was begun. Each year a special speaker is invited to spend the weekend with the group teaching, leading worship and enjoying fellowship. The mission statement of this group: "To be a youth team dedicated to a passion for Christ, commitment to our church, and reaching out to our community through evangelism and service" says it all.

**Miguel Elias Ayllon**

*Youth Director*

2005-

Miguel was born in Lima, Peru on July 2, 1982. He is the youngest son of Rev. Nelson and Lidia Ayllon and has one brother Pablo. Miguel's father has been working for Mission to the World (PCA) since 1988. A pastor and church planter, Rev. Allyon is considered one of the most influential and respected preachers in the nation. He has been ministering at "Iglesia Cristo Senor de la Molina" since 1998. Miguel's mother is actively involved in women's Bible study and other outreach activities. Miguel came to the USA for his senior year of high school and attended a PCA high school in Macon, Georgia. He then attended Bryan College in Dayton, Tn. where he received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts. He was on the soccer team in both high school and college. He then moved to Bristol to live with Pablo and work for a non-profit organization in southwest Virginia that delivered medical care to migrant workers, among others. Miguel was an interpreter for Spanish-speaking patients. He was asked to interpret for several women during the labor and delivery of their babies. Miguel began filling his brother Pablo's shoes in February 2005. Currently, he is working on a master's degree from ETSU in Public Administration. He works for the housing department at ETSU as a residential advisor.

Miguel's life dream is to serve the Lord through government or politics, ideally back home in Peru. The inspiration for this dream is his grandfather. Jose Ferreira was the first Christian congressman in the history of Peru. He began his political career in 1959. Ferreira served God and his nation for 30 consecutive years. Providing educational opportunities for the poor was on the top of his agenda. His political platform was based on Proverbs 31:9 – "*Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy.*" Indeed, his

main contribution for the Evangelical church in Peru was to establish a law that allowed them freedom of worship that consequently put an end of the harassment of radical Catholic Groups. Jose Ferreira left the Peruvian congress in 1990 with an impeccable record and a powerful testimony that has inspired many Peruvian Christians to get actively involved in the political affairs of the nation. Ferreira died in 2002 after fighting a painful battle with cancer. Today the Christian organization, "New Humanity" honors his life and legacy through the "Jose Ferreira School of Politics" dedicated to prepare the minds of young Christians to serve the Lord through public administration.

Miguel's favorite Bible passages are Nehemiah and Daniel. In his free time, Miguel likes to play video games, play soccer, work out and swim. His favorite sports teams are the Chicago Bulls and the Peru National Soccer team. He likes Latin and 80s music and loves to watch Mafia movies. Favorite foods for Miguel include ribs and ceviche (a Peru dish made with raw fish). His favorite desserts are banana pudding and chocolate éclair cake.

Miguel's brother Pablo continues studying for the ministry in St. Louis. The church had the privilege of meeting the brothers' parents in December 2004 when they came home to help Pablo move to St. Louis. Walnut Hill is blessed to have Miguel as a member of its family, ministering to the youth.



**2005 -Miguel Allyon (youth director), center in middle row, celebrates with the youth of the church. Pictured are:**

**Front row: Whitney Snapp, Abbey Williams, Zachary Wise, Colt Nichols, Josh Nichols, Ben Williams,  
Miguel, Cheyenne Houser, Jackson Wise, Storm Houser, Jacob Wise**

**Back row: Mary Williams, Sarah Hale, Eden Leonard, Michael Stone, Katye Stone, Casey Phillips (holding Dawson Snapp), Kaitlin Phillips (holding Jaida Leonard)**

## Christmas Scenes

Camp Ta-Pa-Win-Go in Elizabethton, Tenn. was the site of an officer's retreat for the deacons and elders of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church in the summer of 1989. It was there that Rev. Steve Baker introduced a ministry that was in place at his former church, the First Presbyterian Church in Stanley, North Carolina. This ministry was a series of scenes depicting the Nativity set up along the church's driveway. Visitors were able to enjoy the presentation without leaving the comfort of their car. Steve recognized early on that Walnut Hill was the perfect location for such a ministry too. He showed the deacons and elders slides of those scenes and explained his idea. The enthusiasm was contagious.

These men went back home intent to develop a similar ministry. Much work was to be done. The scenes were sketched out, props built, costumes designed and sewn, lighting and sound systems put together, traffic control planned out and plans were made to borrow the needed livestock - a donkey and some sheep. Three particularly life-like camels were fashioned by Mike Leonard and his mother Mary. Cut-out wooden camel shapes were upholstered in fur and decorated ornately. The glass eyes provided by Lonnie Phillips' taxidermy supplies seemed to be looking for Bethlehem's star also. Seven scenes would evolve to tell the story of the birth of the Christ-child. Liberty Baptist Church has been most gracious these years allowing the traffic to travel through their driveway, awaiting entrance to the scenes, preventing a dangerous road block. They have also permitted a lighted sign advertising the event to be displayed in their lawn along the main highway.

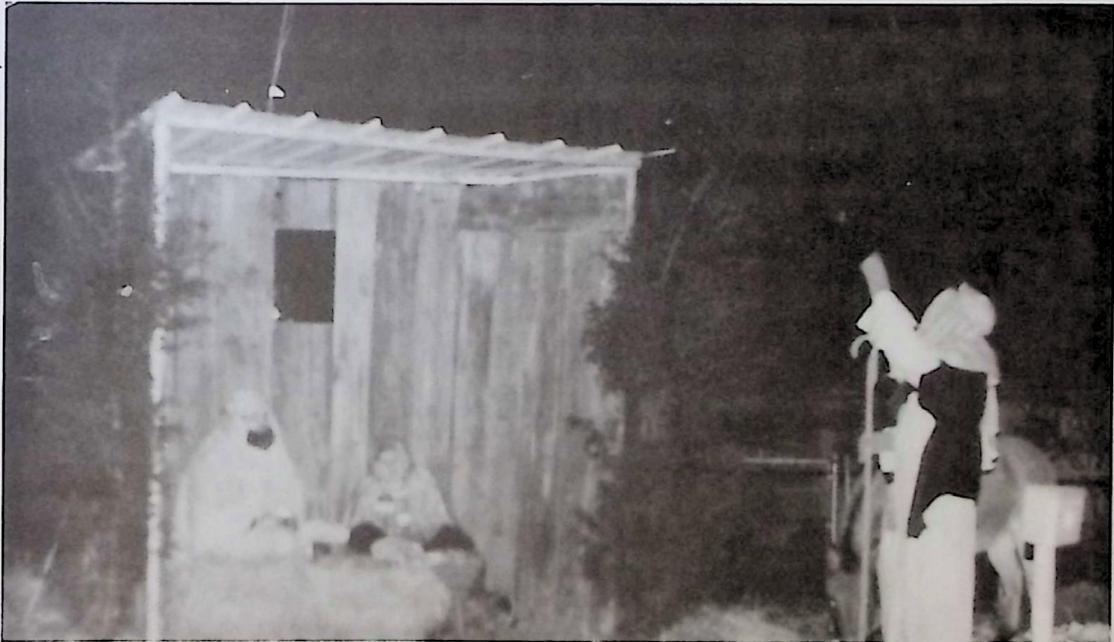
Preceded by months of frenzied activity, Thursday December 21, 1989, dawned frigidly cold. A light snow had fallen off and on during the past few days, leaving the parking lot iced over. Temperatures would plummet into the low teens for the next three days. The question came up "Is the weather too bad to do this?" Those involved decided to proceed, trusting God to see them through. The response from the first spectators was one of awe. That a small congregation could put forth such an excellent ministry in bitter cold weather was truly a testament to their faith in God.

Now some eighteen years later, the Christmas scenes mean so much to this congregation. It has become an outstanding evangelistic opportunity, as well as a means of fellowship. A generation of children have grown up in this church associating Christmas with participating in the Christmas scenes at Walnut Hill.

The live animals are a favorite among the children, not necessarily so among the actors. The first years, a variety of donkeys were borrowed for use. They were known to bite, behave unruly and bray at the most inopportune times. The last several years the scenes have benefited from the use of good old Julio, a well-

loved and gentle donkey. Sheep - well that's another story. After escaping and running amuck through the neighborhood right as opening time approached, the crew learned to tie their back legs together to prevent such further antics. Humorous stories, they abound. One such is of the time Bruce Rowland, the innkeeper, failed to answer the door as Joseph and Mary inquired about a room for the night. It was later discovered that Bruce was too busy stomping out the fire on his headpiece from the kerosene heater to answer the door. All fun aside, the scenes are serious business for those involved. Prayer for the sowing of the seeds of the Gospel and the safety of those participating marks the beginning of each night. Thanks are given at the closure of the scenes for another night completed and that the seeds sown will grow in the hearts of the spectators.

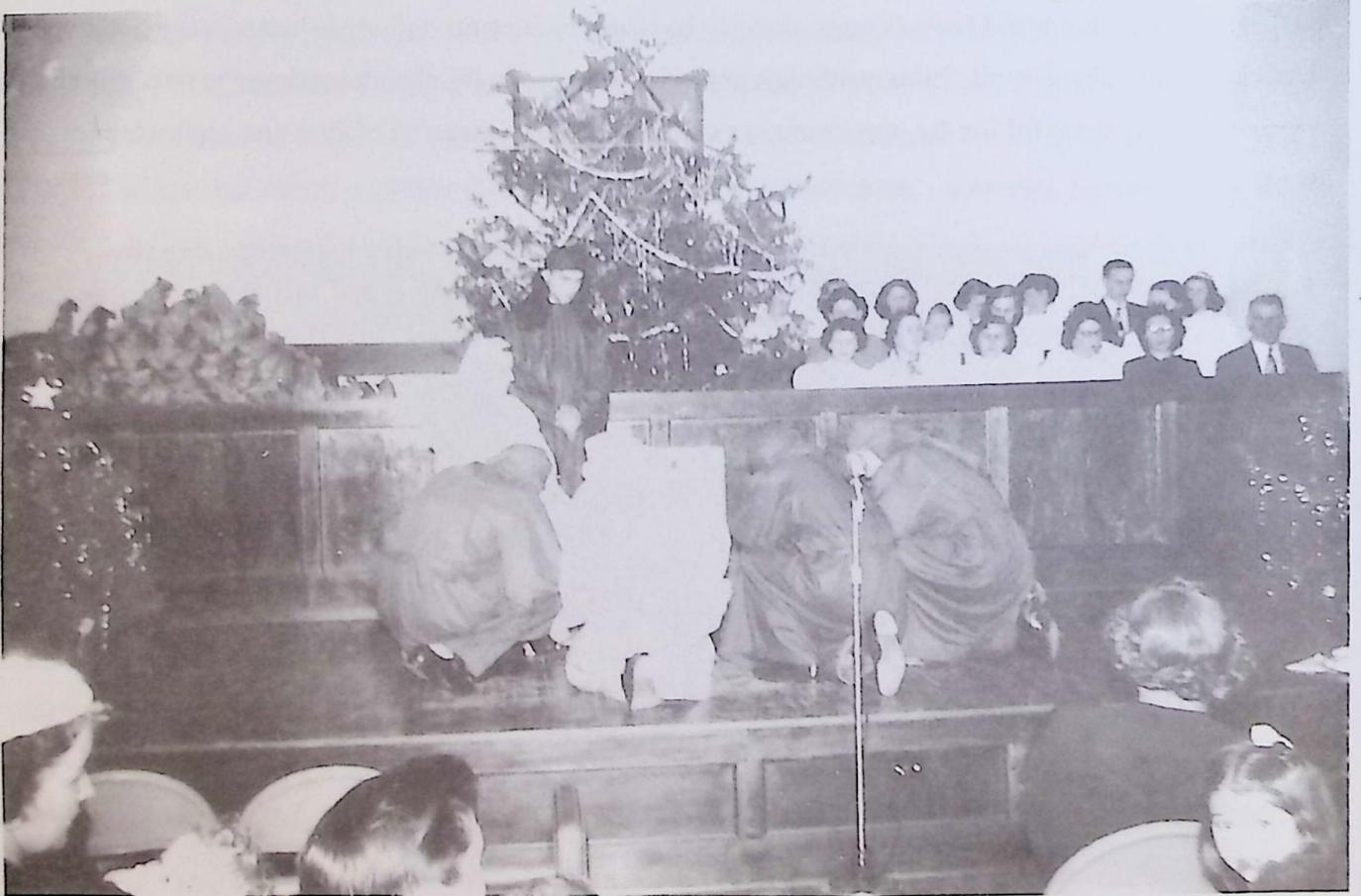
An annual part of the Christmas scenes is a wonderful breakfast provided by Aenos and Mildred Whitmer after the last night of performances. Costumes are removed, equipment stowed away and animals secured. Then a bountiful feast of eggs, country ham, gravy, biscuits and apple butter is enjoyed by all. Later as they trudge sleepily home with thoughts of getting ready for church services the next morning, the participants are thankful for the opportunity to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas in such a special way.



**Scene 5 from the first Christmas Scenes 1989. Joseph – Frankie Phillips, Mary - Debbie Sacra**

## Christmas Treat

The Tradition of giving a treat bag out at Christmas continues at Walnut Hill each December. In 1932, the Great Depression held the United States in its grip. Talk to someone who lived through that era and they might say that all they got for Christmas at home was a “treat” of fruit and candy for their present. We may take for granted year-round access to fresh fruit. In years past to be able to bite into a sweet orange or a crisp apple in the dead of winter was truly a “treat”. Each year after the children’s Christmas program, brown paper bags filled with fruit (apple and orange), candy and gum are handed out to everyone present. The deacons purchase the items, prepare and distribute the treats, usually with the help of some very willing youngsters. It is good that the tradition still lives on. May it remind us that simple things in life are just fine and help us to be thankful for the many blessings we have in 2007.



**A Christmas program in the early 1950s. Note the mound of Christmas treat bags in the choir loft to the left.**

## The History of Missions at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church

From its beginning, this congregation has had a heart for missions. You might say the Rev. Dan Graham was the first home missionary as he held evangelistic services and tent crusades over a five-state region of the south.

### Home Missions Projects- 2007

#### Abortion Alternatives and Crisis Pregnancy Center –

Located in Bristol Tenn. On Holston Avenue, established in 1985 as a nonprofit interdenominational Christian ministry, and is governed by a local board. The center is managed by the executive director who carries out the activities of the organization through a trained staff of volunteers. The current director is Rev. Steve Baker, former pastor of Walnut Hill. He left the church in 1990 to take this position.

Services are provided free to any woman who finds herself in a stressful pregnancy. The center serves the areas of Bristol and Southwestern Virginia. The ministry is funded through contributions from local churches, groups, businesses and individuals.

Services:

Pregnancy Testing, Providing information through peer counseling-  
Housing (in Christian maternity homes in the region)

Adoption – representing adoption as a respectable and responsible choice and referring clients to licensed, Christian adoption agencies

Networking with other Resources – medical, legal and community support

Clothing – maternity and infant clothing, accessories and baby supplies.

Community Education– Providing speakers, videos and literature for churches, students and youth groups on subjects including sexual abstinence until marriage, abortion and other matters related to the sanctity of human life.

Post-abortion Help-Peer counselors lead Bible studies in a support group setting for ladies experiencing post-abortion trauma, grief or depression.

#### Reformed University Fellowship at ETSU –

A campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America. Through RUF ordained ministers are sent to college campuses to minister to the students where they are. Its purpose is to reach students for Christ and equip them to serve. This is done primarily through weekly large group meetings in which students sing,

pray and hear God speak through his Word. Small groups are also used to build relationships. The campus minister is there on campus to meet with students individually as well. RUF presently serves on 110 college campuses in the US. The campus minister for ETSU is Rev. David Balzer. He has visited our church and was a special guest speaker at the first winter youth retreat in the Smokies in 2004.

### **WCQR 88.3 FM- Christian radio broadcasting**

WCQR ministers to the Tri-cities by allowing local residents access to Christian radio programming.  
 Contemporary Christian music, Regular Christian programming  
 Community calendar of upcoming concerts and local church events  
 Christian music headlines, Weekend Top Twenty Countdown  
 VBS Connection \_ local churches' dates and themes for Bible school  
 Mission of the week- serving to familiarize Christians with local opportunities for service  
 Links for anyone looking to become a Christian  
 Listeners Prayer Chain \_ taking prayers requests

### **Foreign Missions \_ 2007**

Early support of foreign missionaries started in 1930s with the beginning of Sunday School. Church history states that ½ of the "birthday offering" received during the Sunday school hour was set aside to support missions. In 1958, our church voted to tithe 1/10 of its offerings received to the support of foreign missionaries. The Women of the Church organization have always been an important part of supporting foreign missions, through prayer and helping to supply various items needed on the field. The formal on-going support of specific missionaries was first mentioned in the 1958 church history.

In 1958 Walnut Hill church supported four foreign mission works:

Pauline Rosenbalm - Brazil

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Watson - Korea

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Noell - Japan

Dr. T.D. Kang - Korea

Since that time Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church has faithfully supported a host of foreign missionaries one of which has always been Pauline Rosenbalm (Scarcela).

A Missions Committee was formed in 1991. In 1992, the Faith Promise method of supporting missionaries was adopted. It is still used today. Faith Promise is a gift that is considered to be above and beyond what is given to the church through tithes and offerings. Monthly commitments/gifts from the congregation average \$1400/month.

2007 Foreign missionaries supported by the church (year support began)

Pauline and Isaac Scarcela - in Brazil (since 1958)

Gary and Pat Johnson - in Israel and now Kenya (since 1972)

Sid and Louise Anderson - in Nigeria and now in Czech Republic (since 1975)

Bill and Susan Carr - in Australia and now South Africa (since 1990)

Rick and Debbie Sacra - in Liberia (since 1995)

Judith Newland - in Japan (since 2000)

**The following is a partial list of missionaries also supported over the years;**

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Knox – Cyprus	Mr. and Mrs. Billy Kim - Korea
Mrs. and Mrs. Burton Toms – Chile	Mr. and Mrs. Don Hoke - Switzerland
Mr. and Mrs. Paul McKnight – Italy	Mr. and Earl Pinckney – Pakistan
Mr. and Mrs Bill Ghrist – Kenya	Sardar Din - Pakistan
Mr. and Mrs. John Tucker – Mexico	Mr. and Mrs. John Young - Japan
Miss Julia Garst – Mexico	Hal Rickers - Brazil
Dr. Robert Rapp – Korea	Mr. and Mrs. Joe Harrell - Mexico
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Erb – India	Mr. and Mrs. Rod Pence - Korea
Mr. and Mrs Newton Kapp – Africa	Dr. Alfred Lau – Mexico
Mr. and Mrs Bill Bruffett -Brazil	Dr. Henry Breidenthal
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Davidson - Peru	Mr. and Mrs. John Tilson – Mexico
Mr. and Mrs. Danny Archaiga - Phillipines	Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Cox – Japan
Eugene Alger – Europe	Bill Balrop – Europe
Mr. and Mrs. Phil Davis – Brazil	Ed Read – Central America

### Pauline and Isaac Scarcela

Pauline and Isaac serve as missionaries in Brazil and are church planters in the rural areas surrounding their home in Natal, a beautiful coastal city.

Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church is proud to claim Pauline as one of its own. Pauline Rosenbalm or Dona Paulina as she is known in Brazil, was born December 19, 1932 in the Walnut Hill community. She later became a charter member when the church was organized in 1943. Pauline is the sister of Madeline Nichols and Margie Branscomb and the first cousin of Mary Leonard and James Houser, making her related to quite a few members of the congregation.



Pauline and Isaac

While attending one of Dan Graham's tent revivals at the age of eight, Pauline accepted the Lord. The Rev. Ted Fix was the visiting minister that night. She graduated from Blountville High School in 1951. As a teen-ager studying geography, Pauline knew she wanted to serve the Lord in either Brazil or Africa. Pauline worked and attended Graham Bible College at night until she went to Birmingham, Ala. to attend Southeastern Bible College. There she heard of the need for workers in Brazil and returned home to gather supplies and support to go.

In September 1957, she began the process of going to Brazil as a single missionary. She was told to expect it to take a year to get her passport, all the needed supplies and raise her financial support. With her determination and the help of her friends and church family (especially Miss Mary Perry), she was ready to leave for Brazil in January 1958, less than four months after she began the process. She had to purchase and pack everything she would need for the next four years including her appliances (kerosene operated refrigerator and washing machine) and furniture, even her bed which was donated by a furniture store in Bristol. A dedication ceremony for Pauline was held at the church on December 29, 1957. She left the next day for New Orleans, where she remained for nearly a month trying to get a permanent visa to Brazil. For the next decades, Pauline would on a regular basis, correspond with her home church, describing her work, the people and places of Brazil. In a sense, the church labored with her, praying in times of hardship, rejoicing in times of harvest, sending financial support and developed a heart for foreign missions.



Pauline's first year was spent learning the Portuguese language and later was assigned to work with married couples in different towns teaching Vacation Bible School and Sunday School classes, visiting in homes, and assisting the missionary couples.

Pauline had worked in several towns when she was sent to Taua, the hometown of her husband Isaac. Isaac comes from a family of 16. He was a new convert when he and Pauline met. He received his ministerial training at Instituto Biblia Maranata in Fortaleza, Brazil. He is gifted musically and plays the guitar and accordion. Isaac worked in the local church and in 1968 Pauline and he were married at Walnut Hill. Soon after their marriage, they began working with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

They worked in several interior towns before coming to the First Church of Natal. Pauline wasn't very happy about this assignment because she preferred "country" or "interior" churches as they are known in Brazil. Pauline saw God's hand of protection on her life as shortly thereafter she was diagnosed with cancer and the doctor she needed most was a member and elder of this church. After surgery and treatments, Pauline has been cancer free for many years.

After pastoring the First Church of Natal for 10 years, Isaac and Pauline were asked to serve small congregations until they were large enough to support a pastor. For the next 20 years they served small churches helping them to become self-sufficient.

With the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil becoming more and more liberal, Isaac and Pauline, after much prayer decided to withdraw from the denomination and start Emanuel Bible Churches in 2001. The first of which was interior in the city of Cajueiro. From there the vision is to establish a Bible believing church in the seven surrounding small towns. Four have already been built and work has begun on the fifth.

Every Friday Isaac and Pauline prepare to go interior to spend the weekend ministering to the Emanuel Bible Churches of Brazil. They praise God for the growth of these churches both physically and spiritually. The trip interior is difficult. The first half of the trip is by a paved road full of potholes. The second half of the trip is on a very narrow and dusty dirt road. They sleep in one of the Sunday School rooms while interior.

The culture is very different interior compared to the big coastal city. The homes are far apart, most have dirt floors, no running water, but do have electricity.

Church services are well attended and some of the people walk several miles. The churches are filled with the presence of the Lord. The singing, testifying and preaching of the Word makes for a long, but wonderful service. Pauline and Isaac are supported by 19 congregations and Walnut Hill has supported this work since 1958. In 2007, the congregation was blessed to be able to spend time with this special

couple while they were home on furlough. Together they have served almost 40 years as a team. On August 5, 2007, a Sunday was set aside to honor the work of all of the mission work supported by Walnut Hill. Isaac brought the message and Pauline was presented an engraved rocking chair commemorating her 50 years of service in Brazil.

### **Gary and Pat Johnson**

Gary and Pat Johnson serve as missionaries to Kenya, near Nairobi. They serve through the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions. They have also served in Bethlehem, Israel. Gary was appointed in 1965, Pat in 1968. Gary and Pat serve as medical missionaries and church planters. Gary is a lab technician and is able to do basic dental work. Pat is a Nurse Practitioner.

In 1967, Gary moved to the Bristol area to attend Graham Bible College. He and Pat worked at Holston Valley Hospital, and attended Walnut Hill.

In October 1995 Gary and Pat opened Clinics of Care in Mwingi, Kenya. The building houses a clinic as well as lab, dental and eye departments. This clinic is staffed by national workers that have been trained personally by Gary and Pat. They often see as many as eighty patients in a day. The message of the Gospel is shared with every patient by a full-time evangelist unless there is an emergency. They also conduct mobile clinics out in the "bush", where Gary puts his solar powered dental drill to work. Since coming to Kenya they have opened Bethel Bible and Technical School and built a Team House.

Bethel Bible School prepares young men to be pastors. The technical school teaches dress-making skills as well as Christian principles to young ladies. Gary and Pat enjoy hosting young people teams of 2-15 coming to learn and work with the various outreach ministries. The Team House provides a comfortable place for them to stay.

Gary drives for the Gideons International, escorting representatives to many area schools. They expect to give 10,000 Bibles and new testaments this year.

In 2007, Gary and Pat are excited about a new ministry opportunity. They have been invited by the government to share HIV/AIDS videos in the school system.

### **Sid and Louise Anderson**

Sid and Louise Anderson are well-known to many in our congregation. Sid grew up in Bristol, attending Tennessee High and King College. He then studied at Columbia Theological Seminary, completing his education at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. His wife is from Florida. Sid states that he

has personally known all of our pastors. His parents Dr. and Mrs. George Anderson were the greatest influence in his life, his father being a prominent minister in this area. His father preached from time to time in at Walnut Hill. His mother was at one time a member of our congregation.

Sid pastored two churches before going to the field as a missionary. From 1975-1988 Sid and Louise served in Nigeria, West Africa. Since 1993, they have served in the Czech Republic. Sid and Louise serve through Mission to the World of the PCA.

Sid is a church planter. He first planted a church in the capital city of Prague. For much of the past three years he has worked as the pastor of the Zlin Reformed Church, a Czech-speaking congregation, preaching, counseling and being involved in personal evangelism. Zlin is in the far eastern part of the Czech Republic. He and Louise are at work to begin a seminary in this area. Men called to the ministry cannot leave their work and families to go away to study. This new seminary serves the local men.

Most recently Sid traveled to Uganda to establish a radio station in the far east part of the country, a great undertaking. He said he thought Dan Graham would have enjoyed that project. Sid fondly remembers listening to Rev. Graham's radio broadcast many years ago.

#### **Bill and Susan Carr**

Bill and Susan Carr met at ETSU. Both hold Masters degrees in education. In 1989, after teaching in the private and public sectors, they were called to Canberra, Australia to work with a church planting team. From September 1989 until June 1990, while gathering support for the mission field, Bill served as youth minister at Walnut Hill. He was the first director of the Christmas Scenes. Upon returning to the U.S., Bill attended Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and completed a Master of Divinity degree. They presently serve in South Africa. Bill is an administrator and primary instructor of biblical studies at a seminary/Bible institute in the Johannesburg area. Susan coaches children in remedial learning skills. They have two daughters, Vanessa and Rebekah.

They also work at community development, attempting to break through racial barriers. They have a ministry to HIV/AIDS victims and do research/networking for church planting purposes. They serve through Mission to the World of the PCA.

#### **Rick and Debbie Sacra**

Rick and Debbie Sacra spent three years at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church, from 1989 until 1992 while Rick was in the ETSU Bristol Family Practice Residency Program. They came to Tennessee from

Massachusetts, where Rick had grown up and attended medical school. One thing that encouraged them to attend Walnut Hill was that even though it was a small church, it was mission minded. While at WHPC, the Sacras participated in the choir, leading music on Sunday evenings and Debbie played on the softball team. Rick and Debbie have three sons: Max (born in Bristol), Jared and Caleb.

Rick set out to be a physician with the intent of being a missionary, so after he worked in Massachusetts to pay off his medical school debt, the Sacras left for Liberia, West Africa in 1995, serving with SIM (Serving In Mission) a world wide mission organization. However, an ongoing civil war in Liberia forced them to evacuate in 1996 and they lived in the Ivory Coast until 1998, when they could return to Liberia. Rick works at the ELWA (Eternal Love Winning Africa) hospital, and Debbie is a teacher. They are now leading the SIM team in Liberia as the Country Director and Personnel Coordinator. The civil finally came to an end in 2003 and a legitimate government was installed in 2006 with the support of the UN Peacekeeping Mission.

SIM in Liberia works with two Liberian partner organizations: ELWA Ministries, which operates a radio station, elementary school and hospital, and the Evangelical Church Union of Liberia, which has over 100 members churches in 6 of the 13 counties in Liberia. Rick and Debbie oversee SIM missionaries who come to minister with these organizations and work part-time with the ELWA hospital and school.

### **Judith Newland**

Judith Newland serves in Chiba, Japan an area in the eastern part of the metropolis of Tokyo. A Kingsport native, Judith grew up in Arcadia Presbyterian Church, which is one of the sister churches in Westminster Presbytery PCA. Many in the congregation are acquainted with Judith and her parents. She graduated from Sullivan North High School and Virginia Tech. She has served twice as a short-term missionary to Japan – 1989-90, then again 1994-97. Since 2000, Judith has served as a PCA long-term missionary on Mission to the World's Tokyo/Chiba Church Planting Team. Some of Judith's areas of service include teaching evangelistic English classes, leading evangelistic Bible studies, disciplining young believers, orienting new missionaries and assisting with various administrative duties.

Over 99% of the Japanese population does not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. There is only one church for every 16,300 people. The people that produce the world's second largest economy are hurting. Money has not satisfied. The daily headlines tell of scandals, hopelessness and tragedy. Judith asks that you pray for wisdom for herself. For the people of Japan, she asks that you pray for their eyes to be opened to the Gospel.

Not to be taken from this room

# Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church

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Bristol, Tennessee 37620

423-764-8729

**Email address: [walnuthill@chartertn.net](mailto:walnuthill@chartertn.net)**

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

We have a wide range of weekly services and also many special services throughout the year.

## ***SUNDAY***

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 10:45 Morning Worship
- 5:15 Choir Practice
- 6:30 Evening Services and Youth Meeting

## ***WEDNESDAY***

- 6:30 Fellowship Meal
- 7:15 Adult Bible Study & Prayer time and Pioneer Club Youth Program

Our special services throughout the year include Easter Sunrise service and breakfast, Easter Cantata, Vacation Bible School, Homecoming, Live Christmas Scenes, and our Children's Christmas Program.

## ***DIRECTIONS***

Traveling north on interstate 81, take the Blountville exit 69, right toward Blountville, left at the first light onto the Highway 126 (Blountville Hwy) toward Bristol, go 6 miles and you will see Liberty Baptist Church. Take a left onto Walnut Hill Road, go 100 yards and take a left onto Midway Drive, then you will see Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church on the right.

Traveling south on interstate 81, take exit 74A and drive about 1.5 miles toward Bristol. Turn right at the light beside Taco Bell onto Highway 126 (Blountville Hwy). Drive about 2 miles and you will see Liberty Baptist Church. Turn right onto Walnut Hill Road, go 100 yards and turn left onto Midway Drive, Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church is on the right.



# *Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church*

*75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History*



*1932-2007*

*"The Light on the Hill"*