

Central Christian Church **Banner**



CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF MINISTRY IN MID-TOWN MEMPHIS

www.cccmemphistn.org

May 2013

A Note from Pastor Bill Russell



When my kids were young, I remember how the excitement built toward a giant crescendo as Christmas drew near. I hear, see, and feel that same crescendo growing as May 5, and our anniversary celebration, approaches. It's a good thing to celebrate and remember the past and all of the people and memories, bittersweet though some may be. It is an even better thing to look at those sitting beside us on our journey now, our friends and our families, freely and thankfully acknowledging the important role which they play in our lives as we wend our way through the maze of life. However, the best comes as we look ahead, trying to figure out how we best accomplish the tasks that God continually places before us. The promises that He has made to us in His word allow us to work with certainty. The history that He has given us as His church, on our little corner in mid-town Memphis, gives us knowledge and wisdom as we remember our mistakes and our successes.

And, finally, knowing that He will always be with us, guiding and directing our efforts, lets us look to the future with eagerness and excitement and anticipation. I can hardly wait for Sunday. morning worship at 10:45; dedication of Penny's Chapel Garden at 11:55; historical preview at 4:30; and THE CELEBRATION at 5:00. And remember, this is just a dress rehearsal for our 100th birthday. I'll see you Sunday.

90th Anniversary Edition

Pentecost Offering

On May 19th we will collect the Pentecost Offering to help fund The New Church Movement.

Dick Hamm, former general minister and president of the Christian Church, challenged the Christian Church to start 1,000 new Disciple congregations by 2020.

This offering will help create opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus. When you give to the Pentecost Offering, one half of your gift stays in our Region and the rest goes to Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation to support the recruitment, assessment, training and coaching of new church pastors, spouses and core team members.

A note from our Board Chairman Debra Goodnight

As we celebrate our 90 years of ministry beginning in 1923 with East End Christian Church's first worship service, I know that each of us feels the tremendous importance not only of our past, but the opportunities for our future. Central's motto in the past was "The Church that Love Built" and it was amended to be "The Church that Love is Building." Certainly, love is the reason we continue to minister to our members, our neighborhood, our city and our world.

We know that God is at work at Central—he wants us to go into the world and make a difference, a positive difference. We are honored to be part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who are a 'movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.' God may lead us in many diverse ways in the future: sharing our building and resources, supporting worthy organizations, presenting new programs and witnessing through our wonderful fellowship. We are ready to go where God leads!

**IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE
BANNER BY E-MAIL CONTACT**

GEORGE GOODNIGHT AT

901-497-4385

or by e-mail at:

wesalsdadd@hotmail.com.

**All contributions for The Banner
must be with the Editor and Church
Secretary, John Bennett, by the last
Wednesday of the Month.**

Our Visitors

We have had many visitors this month including Donna Owen and the Grey Family. Our thanks go to all our visitors for all the joy they bring to our Church.

Our 90th anniversary Celebration

Our celebration started with a concert by our old friends, the Adam's Avenue Camerata Men's Ensemble, who gave a concert at our Church on April 21st, entitled Faith and Love.

On May 5th we are holding a Worship and Celebration in the Sanctuary at 5:00 pm. We are honored by having Dr. Glenn J. Stewart, Regional Minister, and Dr. Scott Pricer, our former minister, who will both assist in the service. The Worship will be preceded by a viewing of historical documents, photographs etc., relating to our church history.

Following the service there will be a reception.

The History of Our Church

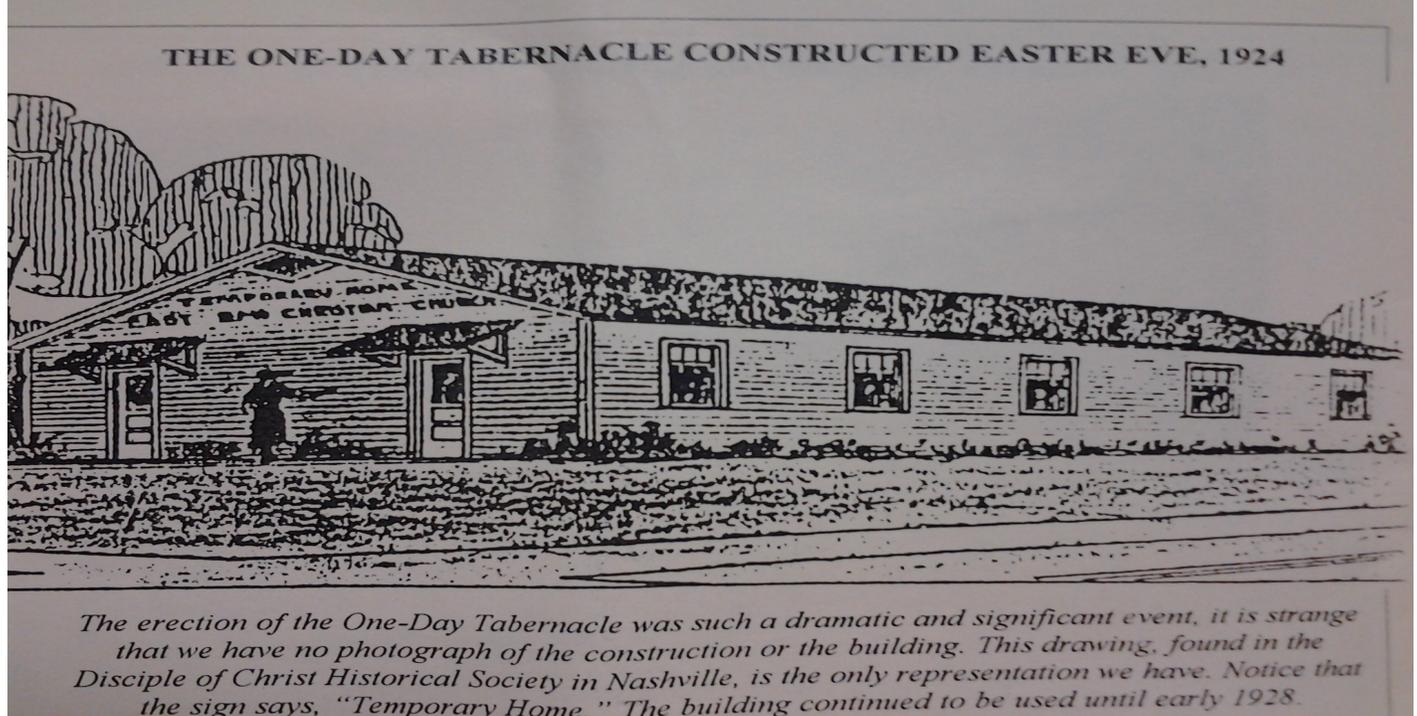
In 1923, a small group of people rented a small frame church building which had formerly been Lenox Methodist Church, on the corner of on Cortland Place at Summit Street, for \$25 a month. Cane bottom chairs were provided and the first service was held on April 8th under the name “East End Christian Church”. The Charter was issued later that year with 100 charter members.

On New Year’s Eve 1923 the Church burned to the ground, allegedly by a rogue firework! The Church then found a temporary home in the American Theatre near Cooper and Union. A large banner spread across the front of the theatre proclaimed “East End Christian Church Temporary Location”. It was said that the new pastor W.P. Crouch prayed on the Lord’s day and Will Rogers played during the week. On Sunday mornings the members arrived early to clean the sticky floors and air out the smell of pop-corn. By this time the Church boasted a 7 piece orchestra and an average attendance of 150!



Before the fire the congregation prepared plans for a permanent building with a magnificent entrance with a flight of steps, four huge columns, massive stained glass windows etc. But as they worshipped in the theatre they had to face reality and plan a less grandiose place of worship. What they did build, however, was built in a grand way. A plot of land, at the corner of Peabody and McLean had been purchased and on March 29th 1924 the whole congregation assembled and, with materials supplied by the members, they erected a timber frame building. This project gave an enormous boost to the morale and confidence of the fledgling congregation. Older members still speak with pride of the “One Day Tabernacle”. This building had no insulation, no plumbing and no heat. The sign on the front announced “A Temporary Building of East End Christian Church” and yet this was the place of worship for the next four years. (continued on page 4)

Our Church History Continued



In 1924 work was started on the foundation for the proposed new Church building but the funds ran out with only the base-ment walls completed and despite appeals for financial help by the pastor, W.P. Crouch, work stopped and worship continued in the frame building.



W.P. Crouch promoted this plan for the Church. (Editor's note: Strange how this drawing looks very much like the later Methodist Church built on the corner of Union and Cooper, and which was recently demolished to make way for a C.V.S. pharmacy!)

Our Church History Continued

In the Summer of 1925 W.P. Crouch died and his successor J.J. Walker had a roof put over the basement and this became the place of worship. Today that basement room is still named Walker Hall in his honor.

Construction recommenced, in 1927, of the Education Building and, as the basement could not be used during the building work, services were held on the lawn as was the “Sunset Sunday School”. They moved into the new building on October 1st 1927 and on thanksgiving Day served dinner for 144 people.

Walker also had great plans for the new sanctuary but the depression of 1930 halted further work and it was not until 1940 that work on the present sanctuary was started though the mortgage on the existing land and buildings was paid off in 1938.

The new sanctuary, while not having all the features of Walkers dream “Cathedral”, has an enduring quality that has withstood the changing tastes in architecture. The Church remains beautiful in its own right both inside, with the hammer beam wood ceiling, and outside with its simplicity of design. Construction was completed in October 1940 and this coincided with the change of the name of the congregation to the present style of “Central Christian Church” which, at the time, was the fastest growing Disciples Church in Memphis. Walker ended his 23 year ministry in 1948.

The new minister Leo Physter was both charismatic and eccentric. He led the congregation through the post war period and for a time Central was, perhaps, the most electrifying Church in Memphis and hundreds flocked to hear him preach. The sanctuary was so packed that the building had to be expanded, by building wings on each side, bringing the seating capacity to 700. There are pictures showing every pew filled during Physter’s peak years. His ministry ended in 1957.

The most recent stage of the building development took place in 1968 with the construction of the Fellowship Hall, Gym and offices. Unfortunately this expansion coincided with a steady decline in Church attendance both nationally and locally with the accelerated rush to the suburbs. Despite this the Church survived and the mortgage on the new building work was paid off. The present congregation has every reason to be grateful for the foresight of the early members in providing such a wonderful place of worship in mid-town Memphis.

While it is true to say we lack the numbers of those early days the Church is as dynamic as ever. In the past year a series of property improvements has taken place and this has happened alongside the Church taking part in the Disciples of Christ “New Beginnings” program and having the leadership of our new pastor Bill Russell.

Our outreach programs, through both the Disciples Women’s Ministry and the Church as a whole, have been expanded to include a monthly clothing closet while we continue to support such organizations as Rachel’s Kids and The Compassion Clinic. The future looks as bright as the lighted blue cross at the top of the Church proclaiming our Ministry to Mid-town Memphis for the past 90 years. (Many thanks to the anonymous author of the history of the Church contained in the 75th Anniversary Celebration newsletter for much of the content of this article.)

Property and Grounds

Rather than give a detailed report on our recent achievements, regarding repairs and improvements to the Church buildings, I feel that some pictures of the work that has been finished will tell the story far better than I can.

Mark Rutledge, Chairman, Property and Grounds



The Chapel Garden, now completed, will be Dedicated after the morning service on May 5th. Grateful thanks to all who contributed their time and money to this project and to Evergreen Earthcare for their vision and hard work in bringing the garden to completion in time for our 90th Anniversary Celebration.



Other projects completed recently are the re-flooring and decoration of the parlor and repairs to the roofing and guttering of the church. Thanks go to Carol and Floyd Scarberry for their gardening work around the Church buildings. Once again the congregation and friends of the church must be thanked for their commitment to the support of these and other projects. Work in progress includes refurbishing the library after many years of water damage and the refurbishment of the side Chapel.

Building from the Board

Highlights from the April 21, 2013 General Board Meeting are as follows:

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Total Income:	\$ 9,351	\$ 30,324
Total Expenses:	\$ 17,816	\$ 33,361
Net Income/Expenses	(\$ 8,465)	(\$ 3,037)

Note: The \$10,000 down payment for gutters and roof repairs is included in the \$11,348 amount listed under Expenses for "Maintenance and Repairs."

The majority of the meeting was spent fine tuning the plans and format for the 90th Anniversary Celebration. The Wednesday night work nights continue in preparation for our exciting event!

The Chapel Garden has been completed and will be formally dedicated following church services on the day of the Anniversary Celebration.

A new wedding brochure has been developed by Connie and John Bennett with a revised fee schedule. Work will begin in the near future to make the chapel more appealing, and the new Chapel Garden has been added as a venue.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Johnson, Board Secretary

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FAMILY DINNERS

The Wednesday Night Family Dinners and Study Programs took a different course for the month of April. The first Wednesday Night in April was taken as a "Day of Rest," with no meal and no program in order to get ready for the busy weeks ahead leading up to the 90th Anniversary Celebration. Carol Scarberry served her delicious chicken spaghetti with garlic bread and green bean casserole. Denise Price has been added as the newest member to the cooking team and showcased the meal with her delicious tiramisu dessert. Marcus Mitchell and Betty Lou Jones presented a bar-b-que feast the third Wednesday of the month, and Daphne Brown brought a delicious lemon cake to the table. The last week in April Pastor Bill Russell served his delicious spaghetti, made from his own special recipe, a green salad and garlic toast. Amy Lindeman prepared sautéed mushrooms as an added treat and Ann Russell's delicious banana pudding was served for dessert. The program hours that would ordinarily follow the meals were spent in preparation for the 90th Anniversary Celebration.

Our Wednesday Night Family Dinners and Study Programs will come to a close late in May at when a cook-out will be hosted by the men. We will have special meals that will be announced during the summer recess and, of course, Family Dinners and programs will resume after the Labor Day Holiday. Please refer to the last page of this publication for the May dinner hosts and programs.

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This Month at Central

Sunday: May 5th

10:15am Bible Class

10:30am Coffee in the Narthex

10:45am Worship Service

4:30 pm Historical Display Preview

5:00 pm 90th Anniversary Celebration Service

5:30 pm Reception and Fellowship

Morning Service

Worship Leader: Mark Rutledge

Loaf: Kathy Young

Cup: George Goodnight

Prayer and Communion: Dr. Glen Stewart

Wednesday: May 8th

There will be no Family dinner or program.

Sunday: May 12th

10:15am Bible Class

10:30am Coffee in the Narthex

10:45am Worship Service

12:00 noon Fellowship

Worship Leader: Richard Brown

Loaf: Mark Rutledge

Cup: Carol Scarberry

Dinner Prepared by: Micki and Rob Artman

Wednesday May 15th

6:30 pm Family Dinner

7:00 pm Bible study

Sunday: May 19th

10:15am Bible Class

10:30am Coffee in the Narthex

10:45am Worship Service

12:00 noon Fellowship

Worship Leader: Kathy Young

Loaf: Daphne Brown

Cup: Jack Artman

Wednesday May 22th

6:30 pm Family Dinner

7:00 pm Bible study

Men's Cook Out

Sunday: May 26th

10:15am Bible Class

10:30am Coffee in the Narthex

10:45am Worship Service

12:00 noon Fellowship

Worship Leader: Debra Goodnight

Loaf: Carol Scarberry

Cup: John Johnson

Wednesday May 30th

No Family Dinner or Program

Diary Reminders

May 1st

National Day of Prayer

May 5th

90th Anniversary Celebration

4:30 pm Preview of Historical Documents

5:00 pm Worship/ Celebration followed by a Reception

Cinco De Mayo

May 12th

Mother's Day

May 19th

Pentecost

May 27th

Memorial Day

Birthdays

7th

Martha Bishop

8th

Linda Johnson

11th

John Bennett
Dorothy Feimster