



# Fourth Presbyterian Church

## *Our History*

Organized on December 12, 1912. Organizing committee included E. A. Smyth, R. C. Hudson, L. A. Cothran, John Reynolds, J. D. Woodside, and J. A. Smyth, Jr. The land was given by Ellison Adger Smyth, the founder and president of Pelzer Mills. There were 38 charter members when the church was chartered by Enoree Presbytery on April 8, 1913.

The sanctuary was designed by the noted architect, Joseph Emory ("J. E.") Sirrine, and was dedicated on December 28, 1913. The cost was a little over \$7,500. The two circular stained glass windows depicting the story of the resurrection are original to the building.

The first pastor was the Rev. Rollin T. Chafer, a Vermont Congregationalist minister, who was installed on April 29, 1913. His wife, from First Presbyterian Church of Princeton, NJ, was organist. After two years, he left to join his brother, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, in the founding of Dallas Theological Seminary.

He was followed by a succession of pastors who served brief pastorates, generally two years or less. The longest pastorate was that of the Rev. Charles T. Squires, 1924-1945. He was followed by Dr. John McSween, who had served as President of Presbyterian College from 1927-1933 and was President of Tusculum College from 1942-1945. He retired in 1951.

In 1949, the property was purchased on which the Education Building was built in 1956-1957 during the pastorate of Dr. Alfred Graham Taylor. Later Dr. Taylor would serve as organizing pastor of St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Greenville.

From 1960-1973 the church was served by a number of pastors: Dr. Joseph M. Gettys (interim), Rev. Edward Hopper, and Rev. Thomas Walker. During this period the church sponsored the formation of what became Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mauldin, SC, and also donated the entire classroom space of the Education Building on a daily basis for the use of the Meyer Center for Special Children.

In 1973, the Rev. Bob Lawrence was called as pastor from Anchorage, KY, and Dr. Ramon Kyser, professor of voice at Furman University, began his service as Minister of Music. Shortly thereafter Nancy Powell began her work as organist. An activities building/gymnasium was built in 1974. At the same time the Schantz pipe organ was installed in the sanctuary and the stained glass windows that depict the biblical drama of salvation from the binding of Isaac to the conversion of Saul. The remaining sanctuary windows were converted to stained glass over time from 1983-1985. In 1985, the church opened a Mother's Day Out program, which has since grown into the Little Folks of Fourth Child Development Center. Rev. Lawrence served alongside Rev. Robert Piephoff (the church's first full-time associate pastor) and later Rev. Peggy Are. After his retirement, Rev. Lawrence was named Pastor Emeritus.

Dr. Allen C. McSween, Jr. (grandson of Dr. John McSween) came here in May of 1991 from The Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, KY. In 1998, an extensive building program tied the three existing buildings together, constructed a new fellowship hall and class rooms, and renovated the gym. The "Generation to Generation" capital campaign received gifts of over \$3.6 million. At the same time, funds were given for new church development in Foothills Presbytery, Habitat for Humanity homes in Greenville, chapels in Cambodia, and to help with the construction of a new library at Columbia Theological Seminary. Dr. McSween retired in 2010 and was named Pastor Emeritus.

Recent associate pastors include Todd Speed, David Lindsay, Wain Wesberry, and Buz Wilcoxon. Dr. Steve Vance was hired in 2007 to serve as interim associate pastor and was followed in 2010 by Rev. Patricia C. Gwinn. After Dr. McSween's retirement, the church entered an interim period in its pastoral ministry. Dr. Robert Bruce Meyer began serving as interim pastor in August 2010. A search was conducted by a very gifted Pastor Nominating Committee, and on March 4, 2012, the congregation elected the Rev. Dr. Michael J. Hoyt to be out next Senior Pastor.

On December 12, 2012, we celebrated 100 years of ministry as a congregation! During that year, were led by Associate Pastor Rev. Buz Wilcoxon in a series of worship services entitled Worshipping Through the Ages. Activities leading up to the Centennial Celebration were numerous and a wonderful way to remember where we came from as a church. Our aging facilities created a need for a capital campaign which began in 2014 and will end in 2017. The success of the Legacy Moving Fourth campaign is visible in a new Youth Wing on Manly Street, additional rooms to host GAIHN families, a refurbished gym and meeting room, new HVAC, campus-wide WiFi and an improved AV system, and a \$700,000 building endowment. As our congregation continues to plan for ways to serve our community and one another, additional staff has been added. In 2014, Rev. Patricia Gwinn was called as Associate Pastor for Adult Education and Congregational Care; in 2015, Rev. Jennifer Fouse Sheorn joined our staff as Associate Pastor for Young Adults and Mission; in 2017, Christian Antwi was called to serve as Director of Youth Ministries, and Rae Knobloch to serve in the new position of Communications Assistant, focusing on the expansion of our effectiveness in digital communication. As we journey together into the days and years ahead, we look forward in hope to all that God will accomplish in and through this community called Fourth Presbyterian Church.