

HISTORY OF THE GEORGETOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In 1729, when Elisha Screven laid out Georgetown's lots, he included a lot for a Presbyterian Meeting House. However, today no church exists on Church street. In all likelihood the presbyterians moved to Black Mingo Creek (near the Williamsburg County line on the Black River 12 miles north) around 1734 to get away from the state-established Episcopal Church. The church on Black Mingo was shared by the Baptists, Huguenots, and Presbyterians. In 1754 it was solely a Presbyterian meeting house. By 1840 the Black Mingo Presbyterian Church was dissolved.

On October 24, 1897, a band of eight presbyterians petitioned Harmony Presbytery to organize a church in Georgetown. The first meeting was at the fire department. The first minister was Rev. James E. Dunlop, a 64 year-old described as "a rugged Scotsman of massive size and height with flowing white beard and locks." He also served the Union Church in Salters.

Services were regularly held at Winyah Indigo Hall until a sanctuary and manse were built at the corner of Winyah Road and Hazard Street. A hurricane severely damaged the wooden structure in 1906.

In 1907 a brick church was built on the same location for \$10,600 in 1907 with the assistance of Harmony Presbytery and the Synod of South Carolina.

In 1953, under the pastorate of Ace Tubbs, the church built a brick manse at the corner of Front and St. James Streets; the manse was subsequently sold in 2005. The present sanctuary and educational wing behind it was built in 1957. It is located on a four-acre site donated by T.S. Ragsdale, a presiding elder.

Georgetown Presbyterian Church aided in founding the ecumenical summer chapel on Pawleys Island, and also helped establish Friendfield Presbyterian Church (organized 8/9/53). Georgetown and Friendfield shared the same minister until 1983.

In 1987 the church raised \$120,000 in benevolent dollars to provide a health clinic in Zaire, (Congo) and raise funds for a missionary to supervise the clinic, and funds to help build a new sanctuary for Pawleys Island Presbyterian Church.

Through the years the present campus of Georgetown Presbyterian Church has undergone many changes. The fellowship hall was added in 1976 under the leadership of Rev. Bobby Wilkes. On April 17, 1983, the congregation dedicated a family center and new administrative wing. In 1997, the church celebrated its 100th anniversary by building a Habitat House, and laying a time capsule in its new Memorial garden and columbarium. On September 15, 2002 the church dedicated its new preschool/music wing. The first floor is dedicated to ministry with young children and will house our child development center and Sunday School. Our second floor has a choir room, music office, and large meeting area. In the fall of 2013, the congregation completed a series of capital improvements to our facility, including the construction of a chapel, a new kitchen, and our youth center in the building next door to the main church building.

But Georgetown Presbyterian Church is far more than bricks and mortar and a series of capital improvements; we are a congregation of dedicated men and women of faith who seek to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. In 129 years we have had more than 2,600 members, 800+ baptisms, and 18 ministers. We have helped start two churches and helped begin Habitat for Humanity and Helping Hands of Georgetown County. Looking back, through pain and pleasure we can see God's guiding and blessing hand upon us. An understood motto of this church is that we are blessed to be a blessing.