

Meherrin, Chowan maintain strong ties

Meherrin Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, one of North Carolina's historic churches, has many strong, close ties to Chowan College. It serves as the church home of a number of members of the faculty, staff and student body.

Meherrin has also supported the college with financial gifts through the years over and above its normal support through the Cooperative Program.

A number of Chowan faculty and staff members and their families are active in Meherrin, serving in leadership positions in the various organizations, activities and services.

The church also shows a vital interest in college students. At the beginning of the school year, the church sends letters to all Chowan students, inviting them to Murfreesboro and worship at Meherrin Baptist Church. A number of the college students attend Meherrin.

Served as President

One of Meherrin's former pastors, the late J. M. Duncan, served as interim president of Chowan from September 1935 until February 1936.

Meherrin is one of the older churches related to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The

church dates to 1729 when Joseph Parker settled on the land that adjoins the present church buildings. According to *A Brief History of Meherrin Church* by J. M. Duncan, Joseph Parker "set up public worship at once; and later with the aid of his neighbors and friends he erected about the year 1735, the first house of worship on this spot, which was dedicated to the worship of God."

"Parker's Meeting House"

After many years, this log building was replaced with a frame structure. A new building was erected in 1914-15 which was replaced in August, 1952, with the present building.

The congregation was first called Parker's Meeting House, after its founder. Sometime after his death, the church was referred to as the Church at Meherrin. The first reference to this name is in the minutes of the association meeting at Sandy Run in 1794.

Meherrin claims the honor of being the birthplace of the North Carolina General Meeting of Correspondence. This eventually was merged into the Baptist State Convention and in 1842 the convention held a memorial meeting with Meherrin Church to honor the for-

ming of the congregation.

"Mother of Churches"

The church is regarded as the "Mother of Churches" because of the many other congregations which grew from this one. Many churches in Hertford, Gates, Bertie, and Northampton Counties trace their roots to the Meherrin Baptist Church.

The church celebrated its 250th Anniversary in August, 1979. The present pastor, the Rev. Gerald Riggs, began his service in 1977.

Although proud of its heritage, Meherrin Baptist Church offers its members an active program designed to provide them with opportunities for spiritual growth and outreach to non-members.

The Wednesday Night program attracts some 125-150 people of all ages for meetings of mission groups, choir rehearsal and the prayer service.

Sunday School Growth

Unlike many churches, Meherrin experienced an increase in Sunday School members in 1984-85. In addition, new members are joining the church on a regular basis.

Chowan College appreciates the interest and support of its programs, progress and service of the Meherrin Baptist Church.



MEHERRIN BAPTIST CHURCH . . . has close ties with Chowan.



Planning a mission emphasis with the pastor, the Rev. Gerald Riggs, are three of Meherrin Baptist Church's deacons, from left, Vernon Joyner, Henry Miller and Walter Francis. Joyner is chairman of the Board of Deacons, Sunday School director, and chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. Miller is treasurer, and Francis serves as assistant Sunday School director and a member of the Offering Counting Committee.

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