



Church Of The Week

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Carson Memorial Baptist Church

Remembrances of the Past - 40 years of ministry • 1952-1992

In the fall of 1951, the Lord began to work in a wonderful way in the area Kings Mountain. Four young men from Bob Jones University - Dick Hasler, Jack Moore, Jim Avey and Wayne Kirk - began an extension ministry to the area of Kings Mountain, North Carolina. They had become acquainted with the area through other students. They were introduced to the home of Pastor H.S. Scruggs and his family.

Pastor Scruggs had been holding prayer meetings in the home of his friends, Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Carson, and introduced the young men to the Carson family. They conducted prayer services in the Carson home for three or four weeks. As they were leaving one day, Mr. Carson told the men they could hold services in his old store building as it was no longer in use. The building was located on the opposite hillside from the present building (the old store building was torn down many years ago).

This offer was taken as the leading of the Lord to start a church. On January 26, these young men from BJU, plus several local children, cleaned out the old store building. Rev. H.S. Scruggs, who helped get the prayer services started, obtained some old theater seats to use in the old store.

On January 27, 1952, four young men began what is now Carson Memorial Baptist Church. Some 40 children plus two older teen girls were present that first Sunday. The following Sunday, one adult man plus the children were present. From there the church continued to grow. After returning from Christmas vacation, they began to get the old building ready for church services. They continued coming through the end of the spring semester. Dick, Jack and Jim went home to work. Wayne was impressed of the Lord to stay as the new church was going well. Jack and Jim returned to school in the fall of 1952 and resumed working with the new church. Dick did not return to school and all contact with him was lost.

The new work continued, blessed of the Lord. Pastor Kirk did the preaching and Jack Moore and Jim Avey helped with the music. Many professions of faith were made the first year and many were in the evening services. A few that were saved that first year are still members of the church. Rev. Kirk continued as pastor until the fall of 1954 when he left to begin his duties in Africa as a missionary. Rev. Jim Avey followed as pastor until 1959. Rev. Earl Shannon was pastor for two years followed by Rev. Charles Britt who pastored here from 1961-1965. For a brief time in 1965, Randall Ray was pastor.

Early in 1966, Rev. Wayne Kirk returned for a revival meeting. The first Sunday of the meeting the Kirk home in Illinois was destroyed by fire. Since the new parsonage was empty and the church without a pastor, the Kirk family moved temporarily to fill in the pastorate until they returned to Africa. The Lord, however, led Pastor Kirk to remain as pastor at the church. Mr. Jim Avey returned in 1969 in the capacity of Music Director.

Sometime between the first and second year, a building was erected on the spot where the church is now located. The building measured 30 by 40 feet and became the permanent church building. In the late 60's, the block building was covered with brick and later the front was enclosed. In November of 1957, a new building was erected adjacent to the main building and included kitchen facilities. A parsonage was built on the property in 1965 which included three bedrooms, two baths, living and dining rooms and a utility room.

A new building program was begun in 1970 that included major excavations in order to extend the back of the main building forty-five more feet and add a side addition. Early in 1971, the \$50,000 renovation of the main auditorium was finished. This also included the addition of Sunday School rooms in the basement, rest room facilities, an office and two nurseries.

The church has been known under three different names. Mr. Carson had made it known at the beginning that he wished the church named after him. At first it was called Carson's Chapel. After that it became known as Carson Memorial Church. As the years passed another name change was needed to let the community know the specific beliefs of the church. The name "Baptist" was added and ever since the small community church has been known as Carson Memorial Baptist Church.

Since its inception, students from Bob Jones University have come to the church on a regular basis to help in the different ministries. They have ministered through preaching and teaching, music and visitation. Many have helped through the years and made various ministries possible that would otherwise have been impossible.

The ministries of the church have been varied. Beginning in 1971, the church went on the radio on station WGNC in Gastonia. In 1977, the church broadcast was heard on WMUU in Greenville, South Carolina and continued until 1991. From 1980 thru 1983, the broadcast was also heard on WOEL in Elkton, Maryland. Weekly broadcasts of 15 minutes have aired on the Caribbean Radio Lighthouse station on the island of Antigua. This was changed to a five minute daily broadcast that also aired on WSZF, the station located on the island of Pohnpei. The Lord be praised for the opportunity to minister on radio over the years.

The longest running ministry of the church is the Missions Program. The program was started by Pastor Britt in 1963. Ten percent of the church offering was divided among three missionaries. The first Faith Promise Program of the church was held in November of 1986 by Dan Truax. In 1969 over \$4000 was given to missions. The faith promise giving continued to climb until in 1972 over \$10,000 was given. In 1977 over \$15,000 was given. In 1985 over \$22,000 was given. These figures are total Missionary giving including special gifts and the ten percent that comes from the church offerings.

We believe the life of the church comes from our mission program. The more we give out the more the Lord sends in. We now help support 40 missionary families scattered around the world in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, North and South America and the islands of the Pacific. We are proud of our missionary families and the work they are doing. We also have missionaries that are working with American Servicemen at home and abroad. We are very selective in choosing the missionaries we support.

The following will give you an idea of how the church has progressed in giving. In 1961 the total offerings were \$3,135.00. In 1966 the offerings were \$7,760.23. By 1970, total offerings were above \$22,000. In 1980, offerings totaled \$61,518.98. This year total offerings were \$112,560.33 with \$35,254.29 from this going to missions.

The church also operates a tape ministry. Everything spoken from the pulpit is recorded. From time to time special music is recorded and made available. This ministry was started primarily for the benefit of our missionaries that wanted to share in this ministry and those that want to hear sermons in their native tongue. Thousands of tapes have been sent out and used in various ways.

The Nuggets of Truth is the weekly publication of the church. It is in many ways different from papers published by other churches. This ministry started as a trial for a few weeks in 1966 and has continued to the present day. It has been a blessing to many. Approximately 350 copies are printed each week. It circulates in the local area as well as many states and foreign countries. Many pastors across the county have seen a copy and have written and asked to be placed on the mailing list. This publication is sent free of charge to anyone who asks. It is a ministry of the church but often people do send donations and some sizeable.

Revivals have long been a part of the ministry here at Carson Memorial Baptist Church. Since the first revival service, many notable preachers, evangelists and Bible teachers have held services at the church. They include Charles Britt (former pastor of the church), Darrell Dunn, Ron Comfort, Bob Kelley, Bob Shelton, Jerry Sivnksty, Dave Barba, Gary Gilmore, Milton Ker, David Baughn, Hal Webb, Bill Hall and others. The list also includes speakers from Bob Jones University including: Bob Jones Jr., Bob Jones III, Gilbert Stenholm, Richard Rupp and Bud Lyles. Missionary conference speakers have been: Billy Martin, Doug Couch, Gene Gurganus, Bill Wingard, Dan Truax, Les Frazier, Tom Freney, Roland Garlick, Ernest Gambrell, Jack Manley, Frank Rosser and others.

The following speakers and events are scheduled over the next two years:
 April 15-May 1, 1992 - Revival Services with Bill Hall
 October 18-23, 1992 - Revival Services with Gary Gilmore
 November 11-15, 1992 - Missions Conference with Ernest Gambrell
 April 11-18, 1993 - Revival Services with Blaine Farley
 September 28-October 3, 1993 - Revival Services with Don Jasmin
 November 17-21, 1993 - Missions Conference with Billy Martin

There have been many professions of faith in the 40 years of the church. Thank God for those that were saved here through the ministry of Carson Memorial Baptist Church. The church has had a very fruitful ministry in gathering souls in the harvest.

Since 1952 the church has grown, not only in numbers but also spiritually. To God be the glory for all the wondrous works he has done here in the church. He has blessed Carson abundantly for many years. He has used His many faithful servants to carry out his work. Many who were not named here have been instrumental in various aspects of the ministries of this church. Though names and faces have been forgotten through the years, the Lord knows each person who has ministered faithfully. May he bless each one.

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