

Morris Jordan sang 'just like dad'

First Baptist Minister of Music retires to begin new ministry with senior adults

ELIZABETH STEWART
Herald Correspondent

"Teach me how to sing a hymn like my Dad," were Morris Jordan's first words to his voice teacher at Carson-Newman College in 1958. Kings Mountain people who have heard Jordan sing and direct choirs at First Baptist Church would agree that the teacher kept her promise.

Jordan, who is retiring after 19 years as Minister of Music to work part-time as First Baptist Minister to Senior Adults, said there was no choir in his dad's early church in northern Alabama and his dad was the song leader and sang from the Broadman Hymnal and was such an inspiration that young Morris wanted to be just like him. Jordan's father, George Jordan, was 6'3" and a farmer and when the family moved from Alabama to Georgia, both Mom and Dad were in the choir. Like his father, Jordan sings tenor and plays trumpet.

Jordan has served four Baptist Churches in North Carolina and began his career at Dover Baptist Church in Shelby where he met his bride of 40 years, the former Marjorie Hamrick, in 1966. The couple moved to New Bern in 1967 and Morris was minister of youth and music for 2 1/2 years before a call came to the Canton Baptist Church

as music director. Before moving to Kings Mountain, Jordan was Minister of Music and Senior Adults for 17 years at the Canton church.

Jordan graduated in 1961 from Carson-Newman College and completed his master's degree at Appalachian State University while serving the Shelby church. He has participated in numerous Southern Baptist seminars and clinical pastoral educational classes and said he thought he had been called into the gospel ministry to preach but in effect his music has been a calling for him and a ministry to the hundreds of people who have been in his choirs and in congregations in which he sang to the glory of God.

Jordan said that one of the newest happenings in the First Baptist congregation, which numbers 1,400 with Sunday attendance of about 700, is the involvement of lay people in directing youth and children's choirs.

"I made this change several years ago because we had so many musically talented people in the church who brought their kids to choir practice on Wednesday night. Those parents who didn't serve as volunteers were invited to participate in an educational program while their children practiced for choir.

"This new program worked well to involve more

adults," he said.

First Baptist has also begun a contemporary worship service every Sunday at 8:30 a.m. with 150 more people in attendance than in the 11 a.m. service. "We were surprised by attendance when we decided to offer a contemporary service but have been well pleased with attendance at both services but the early service has featured the praise team and band and people like it," said Jordan.

Singing with The CenturyMen has been a double blessing for Jordan and another avenue to praise the Lord which he said came by accident. He auditioned for this professional chorus of 100 Baptist Ministers of Music in 1972. His pastor in Canton heard about the audition which was advertised as the Baptist Answer to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Morris sent in a tape and auditioned at Ridgecrest Assembly Grounds.

For Jordan, traveling the world with the professional choir changed his life and



MORRIS JORDAN

gave him a different outlook on the ministry. The group sang in the Crystal Cathedral in California, and in foreign countries including Brazil, the People's Republic of China, Russia, Poland, The Czech Republic, Spain,

Portugal, Greece, Switzerland, Israel, and Turkey. The CenturyMen's 2001 East Coast Tour afforded them appearances at the United States Capitol and on the CBS Early Show. Public performances include extensive touring in the United States, nationwide telecasts and church and concert hall appearances. In 2008 Jordan plans to be on the international tour to Wales and Ireland.

"We've never sung the hymn 'Rise Up Oh Men of God' as this men's group sings it," says Jordan, who says worshippers can feel the moving of the Holy Spirit as those voices blend in the familiar words. The 100 Ministers of Music march into the churches in black tuxedos and as they sing surround those in the

pews on all sides of the sanctuary.

This week Jordan and other Senior Adults enjoyed the regular Tuesday monthly luncheon at the church. The Golden Fellowship welcomed retired highway patrolman E.T. VanHoy for his "gospel magical show" and made plans for the senior trip to Hershey, PA and Dutch Country next week.

The Jordans have one son, Michael Jordan, a 1990 graduate of Kings Mountain High School who is publicity and promotional director for Coastal Heritage Historical Society in Savannah, GA and has just returned from a trip through the Mediterranean for a TV series on troops aboard the USS Enterprise and their families.

In retirement Jordan's wife has already presented him a 'honey do' list and they plan to travel to Hawaii later this year to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. Mrs Jordan has been the church secretary for nearly 19 years and has no plans for retirement. Rev. Chip Sloan has been pastor for 18 years and other ministers on staff include Jonathan M. Bundon, worship; Jeff Johnson, students; Shane Doty, education and recreation; and Jackie Fisher, children's preschool. Traci Aderholdt is church pianist and Mike Sisk is church organist.

One of the policies of the

church that Jordan applauds is the encouragement for every member to participate in a foreign mission trip at church expense. There have been mission trips to Rumania, Haiti and currently youth are on a second trip to Honduras and two of the young people, Chris and Donna Myers Keeter, plan to remain in Honduras as free-lance missionaries. Jordan has participated in three adult mission trips and in semi-retirement hopes to be able to go on more of the trips to help spread the gospel.

First Baptist Church has not only grown in members but in staff since Jordan came to work in 1987. The Christian Ministry Center has been a much needed and added addition and parking facilities have increased along with new office space and a new youth ministry center as well as renovation of the youth department and children's rooms. On any given day of the week, workmen are busy at the church renovating and building more to make room for a large and growing congregation.

"It has been exciting for me to direct the music program but now I will be singing in the choir under a new, young, versatile director leading our choirs and contemporary worship service," said Jordan. "I am pleased to welcome my friend and colleague."

Bundon new Minister of Worship at First Baptist

ELIZABETH STEWART
Herald Correspondent

Music is in Jonathan Bundon's blood and he is excited in his new position as Minister of Worship at First Baptist Church.

Whether he's leading the Praise Team and Band in contemporary songs for the 8:30 a.m. Sunday service or the choir at the 11 a.m. worship hour, Bundon, 27, expertly holds the baton given him by the retiring minister of music Morris Jordan and directs the splendid voices in an arrangement of "Here I Am To Worship" which can be sung in contemporary style or as an anthem. He will be busy with adult choir, orchestra, praise team and band, the contemporary service and children's and youth choirs and looks forward to also organizing a handbell choir.

Jordan and Jonathan's father are longtime friends and are both members of the 100 Southern Baptist Ministers of Music in the prestigious The CenturyMen, established in 1969, an auditioned men's chorus of professional musicians who travel the world to present church concerts. Jordan had heard Jonathan sing and direct choirs.

"I knew Jonathan would be great for our church," said Jordan who decided two years ago to retire as Minister of Music at First Baptist Church and has just begun this month a new calling as the part time Minister of Senior Adults at First Baptist.

Music is Jonathan Bundon's life. Fourteen members of his family graduated from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, TN where his father courted Jonathan's mother and where Jonathan also met his bride, Heather Hogan, four years ago when they were in school together and very active in the music program.

Jonathan's mother, Joy, is a music specialist in the Clinton City Schools and directs orchestra in Knoxville, TN and his father, the Rev. Mike Bundon, has been minister of music at Beaver Dam Baptist Church in Knoxville for 24 years. Jonathan and Heather came to Kings Mountain May 22 and have moved into a new home on Marcella Drive off Crocker Road.

Mrs. Bundon is an accomplished pianist, a Charlotte banker, and music major who directed the premier choir at Carson-Newman College. Jonathan's sisters are also alumni of Carson-Newman College: Michaela is in seminary and Lesley, with a business degree, is pursuing a career as an ophthalmologist. It's a proud tradition of this musical family that they all sang in A Cappella Choir at Carson-Newman.

Bundon earned a Bachelor of Music in Church Music in 2001 from Carson-Newman College and Masters of Divinity from Samford University and Beeson Divinity School in 2005 where he was graduate assistant to Drs. Banks and Lawhon for University Chorale. In May 2005 he also earned a Masters of Music in Church Music with emphasis in conducting and voice, also from Samford.

Before coming to Kings Mountain Bundon was Minister of Contemporary



JONATHAN BUNDON

Music and Worship for two years at Mountain Brook Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. For several years he was music and worship leader for the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Nashville and in 2000 he was assistant musical director for the Knoxville Nativity pageant. From 1998-2001 he was youth worship leader at Beaver Dam Baptist Church in Knoxville.

He studied with numerous music conductors, including his father, and voice professors and says that worship includes not only the familiar old gospel songs but contemporary versions that can be adapted to anthems that can be sung by a chancel choir. "Sometimes worshippers get hung up on choice of style instead of the words put to music," he said.

Jonathan, who sings high tenor, has been encouraged all his life by his father and now by his mentor, Morris Jordan, to try out for The CenturyMen and attend the group's next

concert in Dallas, Texas in September. If Jonathan passes the audition - and Jordan believes he will pass with flying colors - First Baptist Church can boast two ministers of music in the professional touring choir and a father-son team of Jonathan and Michael Bundon.

Since music is an important part of worship, young Bundon said God called him to share his love for music and he plans to involve everyone in the congregation in worship and music as testimony of God's love.

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