

## Salient Sketch of Catawba Springs Christian Church

Two years after happening upon the tiny crossroads community of Sippihaw in southern Wake County, David Crockett Fuquay began purchasing 1000 acres of nearby land at the lofty price of fifty cents per acre. His intent was to eventually relocate from Virginia and raise his family on the newly acquired tract. Little did he know that not only would he raise a family, but would, through his son Stephen, also, raise up a town which would bear his surname. But even while these birth pangs of pioneering were being felt, just up the road some half dozen miles, the Catawba Springs Christian Church was already realizing its golden fiftieth anniversary.



Founded in 1802 when Thomas Jefferson was President; Washington, DC, only then developing into an actual city; Thomas A. Edison's first electric light bulb yet another 77 years away and the state of North Carolina still being a fledgling having only been introduced into the Union as the twelfth state a mere 13 years prior, the church has remained steadfast for the purposes of evangelism and Bible preaching and teaching for over two hundred ten years.

Historically, the church had its inception in 1794 when James Holland, a schoolmaster from England, built a framed weather-boarded structure on the Atkins Road in the Swift Creek township which was used as a place of worship and education until 1802 when the congregation of 23 members, under the leadership of Abel Olive, formally organized as the Pleasant Springs Meeting House, becoming the first chartered Christian church in Wake County. In 1871, due to progressive growth in membership, the church decided to relocate two miles west to its present location on Ten-Ten Road one and one-half miles west of highway 401 so as to become a more central meeting place. Dr. Allen Adams donated a parcel of land along with a small house near a set of bubbling springs of crystal clear water known as the Catawba Springs, which were widely acclaimed throughout the area. As such, the congregation voted to re-name the church in conjunction with its new location, hence, the name Catawba Springs Christian Church. After renovation and use for nearly 30 years, the house was sold to the county and moved for use as a school, at which time the church constructed a new building solely for the purpose of worship. This frame structure was expanded over the years with the addition of right and left wings to accommodate additional growth. In 1946, the wooden structure was destroyed by fire, only to be rebuilt of brick in 1948 and again expanded in 1979 once again due to phenomenal growth in attendance. In 1999, with its heartfelt need for better facilities to serve the youth of the church, a multi-purpose activity center, complete with classrooms, kitchen facilities and a regulation-size indoor basketball court was completed and in 2002 extensive nursery renovations were made. Additional land adjoining the church property



to the north was purchased in 2007. This land has two houses on it...the smaller house has been renovated and now serves as the “Bethany House” to house visiting guest.

The buildings, grounds and cemetery are well maintained as is the Celeste Penny Annex next door, used to house missionaries, evangelists and special guest speakers. Yet despite the amenities and upgrades, Catawba Springs has not forgotten nor strayed from its roots, neither in preaching, teaching nor in word or music. Bible preaching is still strong and music is used as an enhancement and not a substitute or distraction.



The stability of the church is evidenced by its pastoral leadership through the centuries, from 1802 to 1911, twenty-three men served as pastor and from 1911 through the present, only five have led the church; with two filling terms of over thirty years each—J. Lee Johnson, 1911-1949 and Franklin C. Pierce, 1948-1980, both of whom resided in Fuquay-Varina until their deaths. The church is now under the pastorate of Chuck Woodruff who began his ministry in 1997, with Mac Lynch serving as Music Pastor since 2013.

While the church carries the name of Christian in its title, it is not affiliated with the Congregational Christian Church or any other denomination. Instead, it is a self-supporting independent, fundamental, baptistic, evangelistic local church seeking to win the lost to Christ, assembling for prayer, spiritual fellowship and worship as well as preaching and teaching of God’s Word, the Bible, so that individuals and families may find their spiritual needs met in Jesus Christ. Catawba is actively involved in mission outreach supporting some many missionaries and agencies in more than 24 countries as well as carrying on weekly Sunday School and youth enrichment programs in addition to its Bible-centered preaching so as to equip its members for service for the Lord. Over the years, the church has seen at least sixteen of its members fill ministerial pulpits throughout the nation and has commissioned twelve of its own as missionaries throughout the world. Others have found their calling to rescue missions, orphanages, universities as well as to local servitude at home in a wide variety of fields.

The impact of Catawba has and is being felt not only across the seas but also across the streets with many members traveling from other counties just to be a part of this local assembly. There is always something good going on, be it neighborhood outreaches, weekly sporting activities, youth retreats and involvements or planned missions trips and family excursions. Graded Sunday School classes are conducted by aptly qualified teachers and Children’s Church is provided not to baby sit or entertain but to instruct and nurture each child in Bible truths through song, drama, participation, memorization and instruction.

The church remains vibrant and growing. It continues to extend an open door along with a friendly smile, a firm handshake and a genuine heart-felt desire to welcome each of you. With a membership of approximately 300, Catawba Springs is large enough to meet your family’s needs yet small enough to still greet you and remember your name. It is not simply a place to go but a place to belong and become.