

## Unity Presbyterian Church Brief History A Firm Foundation

Unity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) was founded in 1782 by Rev. Joseph McRea , pastor of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church. This church is located in the Steele Creek community in nearby Mecklenburg County, NC.

The church was a log building built on the knoll overlooking the intersection of present day Merritt Road and Springfield Parkway where it crosses Steele Creek. At that time, the community was known as little York and the economic center of the area anchored by the Garrison/Webb mill located on the creek.

The foundation stones of that first log church were found and placed in the columbarium garden, when the ministries building was completed in 2000.

There still exist one grave in the cemetery of the original church. Andrew Spratt who died in 1804 occupies the last identifiable grave.

To put the founding date in perspective, Rev. Dr. Dan Holloway included the following in his sermon on November 3. 2013 commemorating Unity's 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary. "The year was 1788. The U. S. Constitution finally received the necessary votes for implementation after ratification by both South Carolina and New Hampshire. George Washington was the leading candidate to become our first president. There was a huge fire in New Orleans that destroyed 843 buildings and 25% of the city's population. New York City became the first capital of the United States, while later that same year Maryland ceded land to the federal government for what was to become the new capital, Washington, D. C. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart completed his last three symphonies, numbers 39, 40 and 41. Among the deaths recorded that year was that of Charles Wesley, who along with his brother John had helped to found Methodism.

Since its beginning, Unity has occupied four sites and five sanctuaries. They are:

- (1) 1788 sanctuary which was a log building
- (2) 1804 was a log building located on the east side of the intersection of Unity and Summersby Streets.. There remains the cemetery that served this church. It is enclosed by a rock wall. There are a number of Revolutionary War veterans buried in this cemetery.
- (3) 1838 a clapboard church was built on Tom Hall Street just to the east of the present sanctuary. Like the two previous church buildings, this building was destroyed by fire. The bell was recovered after the fire and is now in the historic sanctuary. Also, saved was a casket stand which sits in the narthex of the historic sanctuary.
- (4) 1881 This building (the Historic Sanctuary) sits on the current church campus. It was built of handmade bricks and the windows came from England. This building served as the place of worship for the congregation until the new sanctuary facility was built on the campus in 2010. The Historic Sanctuary continues to serve the church's needs.
- (5) 2010 The "new sanctuary" was built in 2010 to meet the ever growing needs of the Unity congregation.

Unity Presbyterian Church has a strong foundation laid in the past and built on by successive generations of Christians. It has a strong history of serving God in the local community and throughout the world. As we continue to build on and add to that strong foundation, making it even stronger, Unity looks forward to working the will of God and proclaiming the gospel throughout the world.