

Redeemer

Charlotte

In the summer of 1950 The Board of American Missions made a survey in the western part of Charlotte, and recommended that a mission be established to serve that area. A pastor was called in 1952, but refused; on July 1, 1954 Rev. Charles A. Ridenhour began work to establish "The Wilkinson Boulevard Mission." On September 5, 1954 the first service was held in the cafeteria of Ashley Park Elementary School. A complete Sunday School was soon established, and Women of the church organized in November, 1954.

The congregation was organized January 16, 1955, and Pastor Ridenhour was called as first pastor July 1, 1955. A lot was secured on the corner of Ashley and Dublin Roads, a gift of interested laymen from the other Lutheran Churches in town. A chapel and educational building was completed March 10, 1957 at a total cost of \$106,400.00. This was the first modernistic design in the synod, and was built over the objections of the synod mission committee. Since then all mission churches in the state have been of similar design.

Pastor Ridenhour retired May 31, 1958, and rev. C. Marion Starr became pastor on July 1, 1958. On January 1, 1960 the congregation became completely self supporting, and began plans for a sanctuary. In 1964 all indebtedness on our first building program was paid off, and works begun on the sanctuary which was completed in April, 1966, with a total cost of \$125,000.00.

Pastor Starr resigned June 1, 1966, and Rev. David R. Barnhardt of Grace Church, Erie, Pa., became our third pastor November 20, 1966. Pastor Barnhardt left January, 1971 and our fourth pastor was Rev. Wilbur V. Newby, who started August 1971 and left March 14, 1976. Our fifth pastor, Rev. Ronald O. Heinze, began work January 1, 1977 and resigned after a long and fruitful tenure in June, 1988 as he was called to serve at Philadelphia Lutheran Church in Granite Falls, NC.

Our sixth pastor, Rev. J. George Gilbert, Jr., was called in June 1989 and moved to Redeemer from Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Welcome, NC. Pastor Gilbert's first year at Redeemer saw 42 new members join the congregation and a new period of new and exciting growth took place with his arrival. The Vacation Bible School program doubled in size as did the activities of the entire congregation, including involvement in Via de Cristo, Stephen Ministry program, the Lay Ministry program, a Mentor-Tutor Volunteer program with Westerly Hills Elementary School which continues to be successful, and annual events such as a Council Retreat to Lutheridge, Campfirmation Program, and Congregational Retreat to Lutheridge.

Pastors

1954-1955	Dr. Charles A. Ridenhour Mission Developer
1955-1958	Dr. Charles A. Ridenhour
1958-1966	C. Marion Starr
1966-1971	David R. Barnhart
1971-1976	Wilbur V. Newby

1977-1988	Ronald O. Heinze
1989-1996	J. George Gilbert, Jr.
1997-	Steven L Piphon