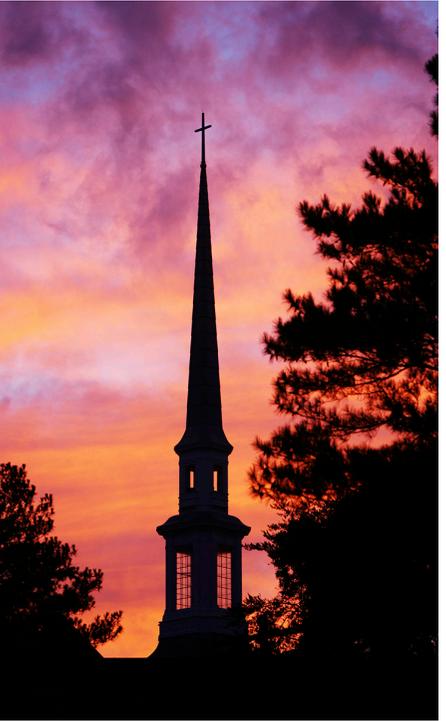


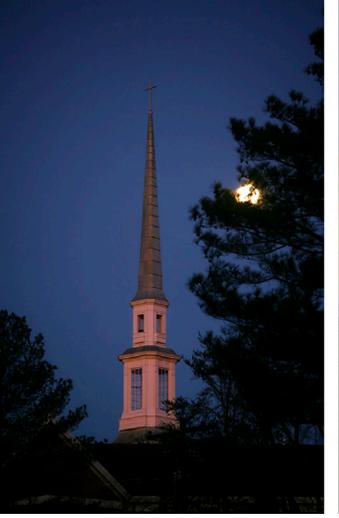
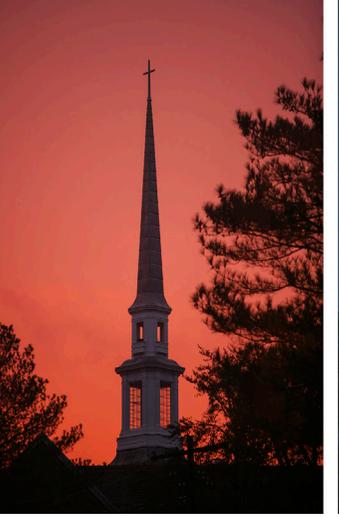
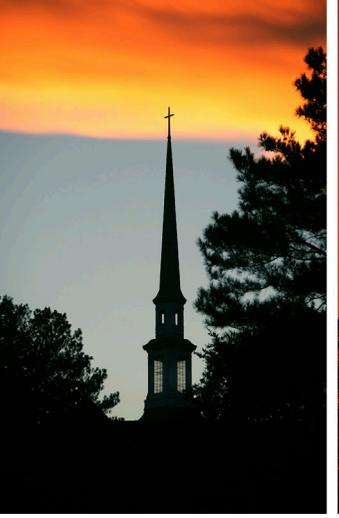
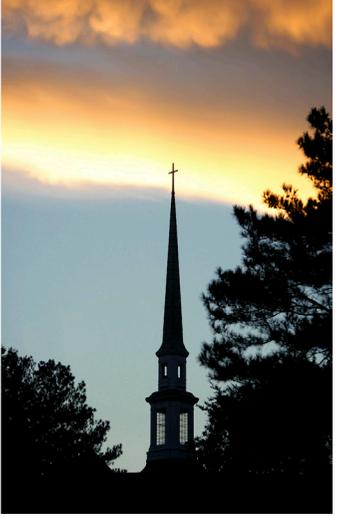
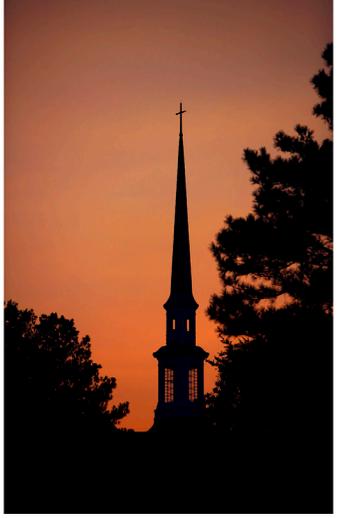
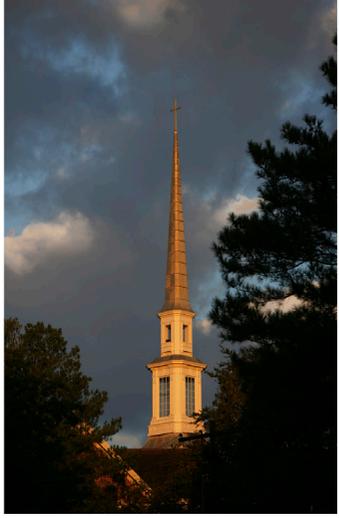
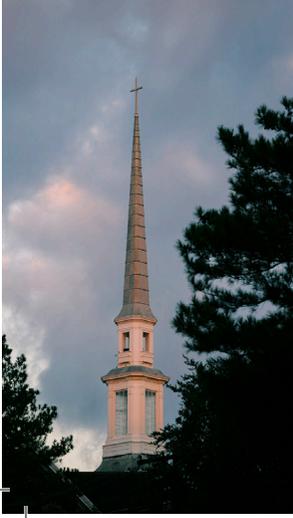
The steeple of Mountain Brook Baptist Church tells our story. It represents our 75 year history. It represents the heritage and customs of church through the centuries. And it proclaims Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Construction of the Sanctuary and adjacent steeple began in 1965, with approval of the Federal Aviation Authority because the steeple was to be so high. From the start, the steeple caught the attention of photographers.



WE'VE
A STORY
TO TELL

*75th Anniversary
Memories
of Mountain Brook
Baptist Church*



WE'VE A STORY TO TELL
 75th Anniversary Memories of Mountain Brook Baptist Church

PUBLISHED WEEKLY SEPTEMBER 9, 2018 – SEPTEMBER 29, 2019

A year of historical memories comes down to today—to you and to me. The faithfulness of heroes and heroines of Mountain Brook Baptist Church cannot be perfected unless we follow their example in our own times. Hebrews 11 tells the biblical account of heroes of faith. The scripture writer says in verse 40 that it's up to us to be the answers to their prayers.

Our history can be seen in buildings. With each additional building, the church grew larger and more effective in ministry. Without buildings that were tailored to people's current needs, the church was frozen in time. As Dr. Doug Dortch has said, facilities make ministry possible.

No part of the building dramatizes this more than the steeple. Need for a larger sanctuary was well known in the mid-1950s. Members longed for it and tried to set aside money for it. Then in 1961 the planning began in earnest. Every part of the planning was controversial—except for the steeple. The only request was to style it like colonial America and make it really tall. The Sanctuary could be modernistic, but the steeple must show heritage. The Mountain Brook Baptists wanted a steeple to function like the historic cathedrals of Europe, where high steeples dominated entire cities and called people to faith through pealing bells and aspirations of the heart. Our steeple topped out at 162 feet and 8 inches, which is 758 feet above sea level.

Our church did not need a steeple. It had no practical function (other than to house tons of air conditioning equipment). Yet the church did need beauty and inspiration that would make people dream of a divinity beyond themselves. The steeple was important enough that many members signed a mortgage guaranteeing to pay for it. The steeple requires upkeep, and it can be expensive. Yet it is an ongoing blessing to the congregation and to thousands of passersby. The steeple is part of our story and our witness.

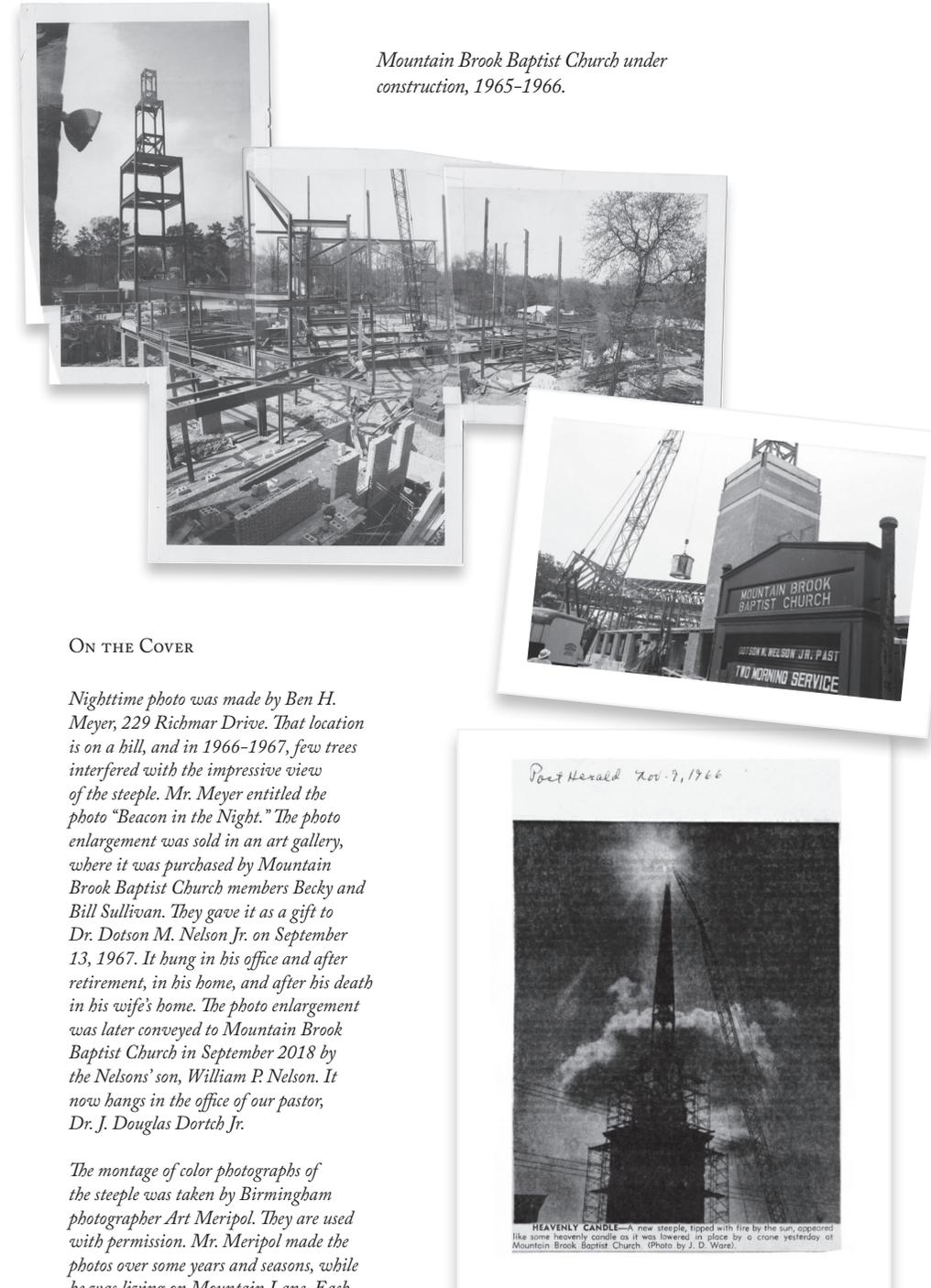
An amazing thing began to happen when our forefathers built a steeple with a giant cross on top. The church reached out farther than ever around the world, to encourage and support mission partners in dozens of spots where the message of the cross of Christ is not widely known. Our missions giving actually grew at a faster rate than our steeple. Our spiritual ancestors meant not only to beckon people, but also to beam the story of Jesus farther than ever before.

The entire community, even the world, needs to lift vision to the heavens, where the heart yearns to go. The steeple proclaims that our church exalts God and inspires the people to holy lives. We need to point to God.

Look up, to the point of the steeple! Atop our steeple there stands an enormous cross, calling us to the cross of Jesus Christ. Records do not say, but engineers today calculate that the height of the crowning cross is about "life size"—big enough to crucify a grown man.

Jesus Himself said, "When I be lifted up, I will draw all people unto Me" (John 12:32). He was referring to His crucifixion on a Roman cross. Yet surely Jesus knew that a symbolic cross lifted across the community also draws people to Him. (Could this be the reason why dictators fear crosses on church steeples? And governments forbid them or tear them down?) The cross of Christ is the means by which human beings can gain salvation and experience the holy presence of God throughout eternity. The cross on the Mountain Brook Baptist Church steeple proclaims the pinnacle meaning of our church. This is our story through the ages. We've a story to tell today.

THIS SOUVENIR ART PIECE CAN BE POSTED IN YOUR HOME OR WORKPLACE. IT CAN BE FRAMED.
 OR, IT CAN BE FOLDED FOR USE AS A COVERING FOR YOUR COLLECTION OF WEEKLY STORY PAPERS: "WE'VE A STORY TO TELL."



Mountain Brook Baptist Church under construction, 1965-1966.

ON THE COVER

Nighttime photo was made by Ben H. Meyer, 229 Richmar Drive. That location is on a hill, and in 1966-1967, few trees interfered with the impressive view of the steeple. Mr. Meyer entitled the photo "Beacon in the Night." The photo enlargement was sold in an art gallery, where it was purchased by Mountain Brook Baptist Church members Becky and Bill Sullivan. They gave it as a gift to Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr. on September 13, 1967. It hung in his office and after retirement, in his home, and after his death in his wife's home. The photo enlargement was later conveyed to Mountain Brook Baptist Church in September 2018 by the Nelsons' son, William P. Nelson. It now hangs in the office of our pastor, Dr. J. Douglas Dortch Jr.

The montage of color photographs of the steeple was taken by Birmingham photographer Art Meripol. They are used with permission. Mr. Meripol made the photos over some years and seasons, while he was living on Mountain Lane. Each photo was made from the same vantage point. In the course of time, one tree was removed and others grew. The steeple remained steadfast. Mr. Meripol is a freelance photographer specializing in food and culture.

Newspaper photograph of topping out the steeple. "Heavenly Candle" is the title. The photographer took advantage of the sun glare which created a halo around the cross.

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