

BEAUTIFUL SOUNDS

The magnificent Steinway concert grand piano returned to the Sanctuary this month, just in time for the sounds of Christmas. Five months ago, the thousand-pound piano had traveled (very carefully) to New Jersey for a total restoration by the famed Lindeblad Piano workroom. The nine-foot Model D was originally built in 1965 and had been owned locally. It was purchased and

restored under direction of the E.E. Forbes Piano Company.

In 1996, the family of Harold and Elouise Williams wanted to place a memorial piano in the Sanctuary—one that was suitable to the space. Dr. William G. Bugg of Samford University School of Music was Mountain Brook Baptist Church's music minister at the time. He helped the Williams family evaluate possible concert grand pianos then on the market. The final decision was left to the Williams' daughter, Anna, a noted pianist and composer. She chose the Steinway. The experts agreed that a seasoned piano was a better investment than one from New York which was not "broken in."

The piano was presented in concert on January 28, 1996 during the worship service. The instrument was rolled in front of the pulpit. Anna Williams played, and she included two of her compositions which were sung by Dr. Bugg. Anna is a graduate of Samford with majors in music theory and composition, and she earned a law degree from Samford's Cumberland School of Law. In 1996 she was living in Montgomery, where she clerked for a federal judge and served as the long-time pianist of First Baptist

Church. Anna is now pianist at Brookwood Baptist Church. (Harold Williams was moderator of Mountain Brook Baptist Church from 1980-2002.)

Inside the Steinway concert grand piano is a plaque of dedication. It reads: *to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Gladys Sparks Wilkins (1902-1995) and Richard Gilbert Wilkins (1893-1952) by daughter Elouise Williams and Harold, and grandchildren Anna and Richard, 1996.* Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins were both volunteer part-time church musicians. In her later years, Mrs. Wilkins was an active member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

The restored piano will be dedicated again on December 13 with a Christmas concert by Anna Williams at the ACTIVE Christian Living Christmas Gala. The concert will follow dinner in Hudson Hall which begins at 6 p.m. (Tickets for dinner are \$25; contact the church office to make a reservation.) The concert in the Sanctuary is open to all, with arrival suggested at 6:45 p.m.

The church has enjoyed other fine pianos in worship halls. A baby grand Howard piano is enjoyed in Heritage Hall. It was a gift to the church in 2014 by Tzena and Tom Gauldin III and their daughters Josie and Eliza. Its dedication plaque reads: *in honor of our teachers and friends, Traci and Leland Allen.*

A baby grand K.Kawai was purchased by the church for Hudson Hall in 2004, soon after Hudson Hall was put into use.



Anna Williams, daughter of Elouise and Harold Williams and pianist at Brookwood Baptist Church, will offer a dedication recital for our church's Steinway concert grand piano on Thursday, December 13.



DECEMBER 9, 2018

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

EXPERIENCE CHINA

The Missions Committee of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, in cooperation with Christian Church in Pingdu, Shandong Province, China, hosted a partnership experience May 30-June 11, 2016.

Members from Mountain Brook Baptist Church were Senior Minister Dr. Doug Dortch, Lee and Catherine Allen, Doral and Brenda Atkins, and Sitao Chen. Not only did we experience China, but more importantly we experienced the growth among Christians and churches in China. We saw the result of mission work long ago. We were thrilled that our own church is helping to continue that effort in a way that is effective in China today.

Ron Winstead of Missouri, former missionary with the International Mission Board in Taiwan and with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in China, traveled with the group to serve as interpreter and commentator. Sitao Chen was also a valuable asset helping with language and customs.

Phil and Irene Bennett, just ending a long term of service in Hong Kong, joined our group. We visited places important in the life of Lottie Moon, a well-known missionary to China from 1873 to 1912. One of the most memorable sites was Monument Avenue Church in

Penglai, Shandong Province, where there is an engraved obelisk which tells of Lottie Moon's work with the Chinese people.

Traveling through Shandong Valley we saw beautiful fields of wheat and orchards where the apples were individually covered by small brown drawstring sacks.

Our main destination was Christian Church in Pingdu. Our relationship with this church goes back to the 1990s, with a partnership led by Dr. Moebes. Mountain Brook Baptist Church gave money to help fund their church building, which was dedicated in 2006 (the dedication was attended by a larger group from Mountain Brook Baptist Church). During the 2016 trip, our group was able to attend their 10th Anniversary Celebration, marking the 10 years they have been in their current building. We also delivered a love gift to help build a second church in the city.

Our group was honored guests, seated on the front row, for the exhilarating music and folkloric dances performed in beautiful costumes by the women, men, and children of the church. Dr. Dortch gave the main sermon, with translation by Ron Winstead. The presentation of the monetary gift from



In 2016, Doug Dortch, Catherine Allen, and Doral Atkins visited the 2006 building of Pingdu Christian Church. Encouragement, prayers, and considerable financial support were given by Mountain Brook Baptist Church to make this structure possible. The history is given in a memorial marker.

Mountain Brook Baptist Church was in a private room with the staff and other dignitaries. This is the congregation that grew from the one Lottie Moon organized in 1889.



The delegation from Mountain Brook Baptist Church at the 2006 dedication of the building in Pingdu. The congregation dates back to Lottie Moon's ministry in 1889, but it did not have an adequate place to meet.

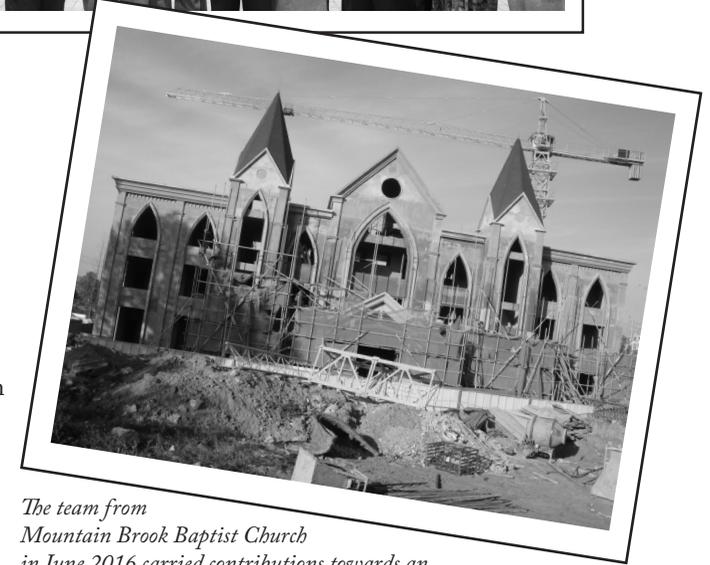
At 6 a.m. the following morning, we went to the ground breaking ceremony for the second church. The ministers in robes read Scripture and led in prayers. The ceremony began with fireworks, music, and dancing. A ribbon cutting ceremony was followed by shovels of dirt being turned.

The next tour stop was Beijing. Upon arrival there was a ride on a traditional Beijing rickshaw into a traditional neighborhood called a hutong. The group had three days of touring major historic sites.

The tour's last stop was Shanghai where Lynn Yarbrough of Nanjing joined the group as we visited important sites of Christian growth. Lynn formerly lived in Birmingham and has assisted Mountain Brook Baptist Church on numerous occasions with the Pingdu Christian Church project. We visited Grace Church where several top Chinese Christian leaders met our group for an afternoon of consultation and visitation and where old friendships were renewed.

Subsequent to our visit, Mountain Brook Baptist Church has continued to convey financial support to the Pingdu Christians, so that they can complete furnishing the new building which reaches more than 700 people.

Brenda Atkins



The team from Mountain Brook Baptist Church in June 2016 carried contributions towards an additional church building in Pingdu. This is the new building under construction. It was occupied in 2017, with a regular congregation of more than 500.