

COOKING FOR CHRIST

Our family has moved several times. As a trailing corporate spouse, I have experienced how difficult it can be to establish new relationships and find a group of close friends. A year after we moved here, we participated in the first Family Mission Trip. When Catherine Allen and Susan Wells came up with the idea of the Christmas House as a fundraiser for that trip in 2010, I became involved in that project and found my niche within MBBC. What I loved about the Christmas House was that it gave me an opportunity to meet and work with lots of other women within the church. And that group eventually led us to form Cooks On A Mission, which has become a huge blessing to me.

Sherrie Futch



Cooks Sherrie Futch, Joann Stramaglia, Kim Hardwick, and Lynn Williams serve at an event for The WellHouse held in Hudson Hall



JUNE 30, 2019

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

AIR CONDITIONING

"You who swelter in your clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind" (Job 37:17).

Most all members would acknowledge that they appreciate all the comforts of today's Montevallo Road campus. But for the early membership, it was not always so. One of the very first capital expenditures the Deacons of the newly formed Mountain Brook Baptist Church, as recorded in the January 1945 Minutes, was to authorize the purchase of a ceiling fan for the Jackson Avenue house used as the first church location. 73 years later in 2018 the Deacons, with approval of the membership, had to spend \$189,409 to replace the 52-year-old original heating and air conditioning equipment servicing the Sanctuary. It is fortunate that our prudent finance committee maintains reserves funding for expected, and sometimes unexpected, capital expenses. A big part of the 2018 expense was due to the equipment strangely being tucked into difficult-to-access space high above the baptismal pool.

The Chapel building, which was completed in December 1948, was built without air conditioning. In those years following the end of World War II, it was likely not practical to consider air conditioning. Even into the early 1950s, few homes, commercial buildings and, most likely, no schools were air conditioned. In 1953 when the four-story educational space behind the Chapel was being planned, air conditioning was considered an optional luxury. Deacon records document that the building committee, chaired by contractor Howard Buchanan, debated eliminating the planned air conditioning which would have saved \$13,843 of the ultimate \$232,475 construction cost. Subsequent Deacon's Minutes reporting on building plans record an "urgency for additional funds" and later that "a few men pledged an additional \$20,000" enabling the letting of the construction contract in January 1956. Likely these few families providing that extra \$20,000 in funding made the air

conditioning possible. Those Sunday School classes assigned space on the fourth floor during the hot Alabama summers no doubt appreciate the decision to include the extravagance of the cool air. Presumably the Education building project included providing the original air conditioning for the Chapel.

Likely one supporting, probably strongly supporting, the indulgence of air conditioning would have been Deacon John Bayliss. His daughter Mae Bayliss Coshatt recalled her early years in today's Chapel building. Her father owned an ice house in the Warrior section of Jefferson County, maybe 15 miles from the church. During the summer, the family would drive to Warrior, returning to the church with blocks of ice. Prior to the Sunday service, Mr. Bayliss would load the ice into the baptismal pool at the front of the Chapel. He rigged fans to blow across the ice, providing his homemade air-conditioning system.



Francis and John Bayliss Jr.

The Church has come a long way in 75 years from that first ceiling fan on Jackson Avenue. But maybe it hasn't. Director of Operations Vince Blackerby reports that much like the 1940s with fans blowing air across the ice, he had to improvise a similar system when the equipment had to be replaced in January 2018. During the weeks of installation, Vince assembled fans to blow the warm, heated air from other parts of the church into the Sanctuary during worship services.

Richard M. Adams

DEDICATED NEEDLEWORK FOR THE CHAPEL

The pulpit furniture in the Chapel displays unique needlepoint designs created by our own church members. The beautiful needlepoint was created in 1971. The work won two blue ribbons in an international needlepoint show sponsored by the Birmingham Museum of Art. One award was for design and the other was for workmanship. The idea came from Helen Crow Mills Pittman (then Mrs. John Mills), a leader in the Woman's Missionary Union. She saw the opportunity to make the Chapel more exquisite. Technical coaching was added by a needlepoint hobbyist, Mr. Hillman Mathis, a pharmacist who did needlepoint for relaxation.

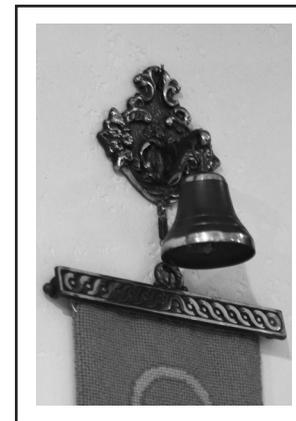
Not many Baptist churches had ecclesiastical needlework in their buildings, so designs with suitable theological meaning had to be created. A group led by Nita Collinsworth and Helen Mills studied church needlepoint already in use in Birmingham. Helen commissioned Pat Wright to paint the designs on canvas. Yarn was specially ordered. As news about the project spread, several church members volunteered to work on the stitching. These were the creators: Alice Barnett, Nita Collinsworth, Stella Lewis, Anne Michaels, Audrey Nelson, Gerry Pearce, Carolyn Reed, Esther Turnham, Charlotte Watson, and Hillman Mathis.

After the chair covers were well underway, the group decided to make a cover for the kneeling bench used in weddings. Again, Pat Wright created a design. This one is a trinity of circles embellished by dogwood. Hillman Mathis stitched the scene and Anne Michaels did the background. This same prie deux is used today both in the Sanctuary and also in the Chapel. The needlepoint chair covers were installed on refurbished pulpit furniture in the Chapel, just as redecoration was completed. Helen Mills selected a rich red carpet to complement the Wedgwood blue backgrounds of the needlepoint. At the next Christmastime, the Grace Nelson Sunday School class sponsored creation of a needlework bell pull to match the Chapel, with Pat Wright stitching the scene and Hillman Mathis the background. Mr. Mathis also created a bookmark for the pulpit Bible.

When Dot and Grace Nelson retired from the Mountain Brook Baptist Church pastorate, the bell pull was given to them for their home. After Dr. Nelson's death,

Mrs. Nelson moved to Anniston under care of their son, William P. "Buddy" Nelson. Buddy and his wife Becky kept the bell pull in a place of honor in their home until 2018. With the 75th Anniversary of the church in view, they returned the bell pull to Mountain Brook Baptist Church. It will be displayed in the senior minister's office, just as it was from the 1970s.

Most of the dedicated stitchers have passed away or moved away; carpet has been worn out and replaced with Wedgwood blue to match the needlepoint, stained glass windows have been added, but the needlepoint upholstery remains a beautiful appointment of our classical Chapel. From an archived account written 1971 by Helen Crow Mills Pittman



The bell pull, displayed in the office of Senior Minister Dr. J. Douglas Dortch Jr.

