

ASH WEDNESDAY

The first church observance of Ash Wednesday was February 13, 2013. Ash Wednesday is an important day in the Christian calendar as it ushers us into the season of Lent. While not a Baptist tradition, Lent commemorates the forty days Jesus spent fasting and praying in the desert. For Christians today, Lent is a forty day period of walking with Jesus towards crucifixion.

Ash Wednesday reminds us of our need for repentance and our need for Jesus. While Ash Wednesday is not observed by some Baptists, I have found it to be meaningful in my Christian pilgrimage toward Easter.

Mountain Brook Baptist Church had not observed Ash Wednesday before I joined the church in October 2011. I was hesitant to mark our people's foreheads with ashes, as many Christian churches do. I thought it might be a barrier to the objective of the observance. That objective is to turn people's hearts toward repentance and openness to the Lord.

Instead, we came up with the idea of burning flash paper as an "ash" element to the service. Each person is given a small piece of flash paper and asked to write on it a particular sin that he or she wrestles with. The writing is like a prayer for the Lord to deal with them during the season of Lent. At the appropriate time, all participants are invited to come forward to place the small folded paper into one of the glass containers.

As the congregation is prompted to make silent confession before the Lord, the glass bowls are a symbol of all the junk and sin in our lives. Once we have confessed, a minister reads Scriptures which remind us of God's faithfulness to forgive us when we repent. The last Scripture is Jeremiah 31:34: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (NIV). Ministers then ignite the bowls of flash paper. In an instant, a large ball of fire incinerates the paper, without smoke and without leaving any ashes behind.

What a powerful visual demonstration of how God deals with our sins when true confession before Him takes place. I love the empty bowls; what a powerful demonstration of the promise that God will forgive our wickedness and will remember our sins no more. May it forever be so!

Kely Hatley



MARCH 3, 2019

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

A HEALING CHURCH— HEALING PEOPLE TODAY AND TOMORROW

And Jesus said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course'" (Luke 13:32 ESV).

From the beginning of Mountain Brook Baptist Church in 1944, numerous members have given prime attention to the Baptist hospitals in the Birmingham area. Dr. H.A. Harris was one of the leading physicians in the hospitals, and he was also a charter member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church along with his family (and he is remembered in one of the stained glass window dedications of the Sanctuary). A growing sweep of physicians followed his example at Mountain Brook Baptist Church and Baptist Health.

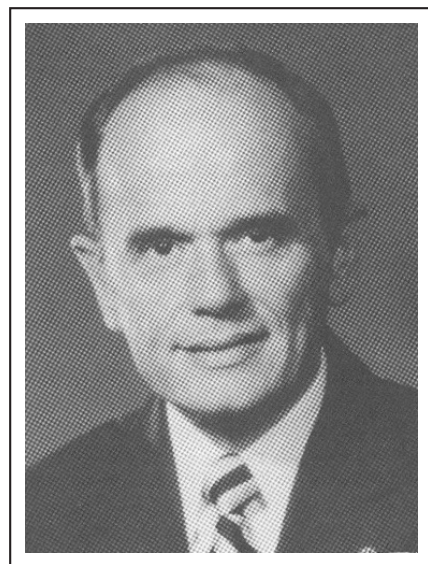
Sonny Jim Price was a trustee of the hospitals from their early days and he brought his interest into the membership of the new church. His good friend, John H. Holcomb Sr., was named to a special board to purchase a second hospital (Highland Avenue); then they led in salvaging both hospitals when they went into receivership during the Great Depression. Mr. Holcomb served for six years on the operating committee which oversaw daily hospital operations and cash flow. (Mr. Price and Mr. Holcomb each are remembered in Sanctuary stained glass window dedications.)

In 1964, Joe Boone Abbott was named chaplain of the hospital system and he became founding director of the clinical pastoral care program. He remained pastoral executive of Baptist Health Care for 35 years, and at the same time was a Deacon and teacher at Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

The hospitals have had a succession of corporate formats, but leadership of Mountain Brook Baptist Church members is a consistent thread. John H. Holcomb III became chairman of the board of Baptist Health System in 2012 and served two terms. He continues as chair of Brookwood Baptist Health. Keith Parrott became president of Baptist Health System in 2013 and also served as president of Brookwood Baptist Health through 2018. Chuck Redden is on the board of Baptist Health System.

In earlier years, the following church members chaired the board of Baptist hospitals:

Dan Hudson 1961-1966
B. Roper Dial 1969, 1974-1976
Harry Jeffcoat 1970-1974
Marvin Prude 1977-1983
Homer Lloyd 1987-1988 and 1993-1995
Lloyd Rains 1989-1990



Emmett R. Johnson, chief executive officer of Baptist Medical Centers beginning 1975

CEO leadership for the system came from these church members and Deacons:

L.R. Jordan 1964-1974
Emmett Johnson 1975-1993
Shane Spees 2007-2013
Keith Parrott 2013-2018

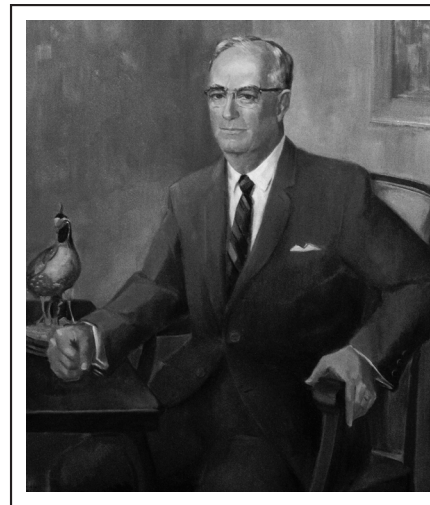
Special recognition should be given to Emmett Johnson. During his long tenure at the helm, Baptist Medical Centers expanded into an extensive system with more than \$500 million in assets. At the same time, he chaired Deacons at our church and taught a Bible class.

In 1972, the Baptist medical network made the bold step of adding women to the board of trustees. No women had served since the 1930s. One of the first in 1972 was Billie Cope, a member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, who continued to serve for more than 10 years. In 1976 she was followed by Rachel Hubbard, Betty Eschelman, and Emma Jean Rucker.

Board members from Mountain Brook Baptist Church are almost too numerous to mention, especially when the board of Baptist Health Foundation are counted. In addition to the women listed above, there were Lloyd Rains, M.C. Crow, Willie Warren, Wallace Malone, Tom Merrill, Wallace Bunn, Myron Sasser, Leo Bashinsky, David Pittman, Milton Bagby, Dr. James D. Moebes, and Edward Powers. Likewise, many Mountain Brook Baptist Church people have worked as executive staff members of the Baptist Health Care Network. Dana Hensley was president of Princeton and Montclair hospitals in the 1990s. Mountain Brook Baptist Church members serving as Baptist Health executives and administrators recently have included Scott Fenn, Stan Breaux, Cody Walker, and Michelle Rushing. (This is in addition to numerous Mountain Brook Baptist Church physicians and nurses who work at a Baptist hospital.) The 1972 history of the organization was written by Janie Lott, and Josephine Early was the longtime director of nursing at Princeton Baptist Hospital—both longtime Mountain Brook Baptist Church members. Although she was not a member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, Ida V. Moffett's pageant-like funeral service was held in our church in November 1996. She was the iconic director of nursing and dean of the Ida Moffett School of Nursing at Samford University, and a very large crowd attended the service.

At times, Mountain Brook Baptist Church also earmarked monetary contributions to Baptist Health projects, especially related to charity and chaplaincy.

Researched by Michelle Rushing and Catherine Allen



This portrait of Dan Hudson resides in Hudson Hall, which is named after their family. Betty and Dan Hudson gave many generous gifts to our church. Dan was an insurance executive. He also served as chairman of the board for Baptist hospitals and led in the building of a new hospital at Montclair Road and Dan Hudson Drive, which opened in 1966.



L. R. "Rush" Jordan, president of Baptist Medical Centers 1964-1974