



OCTOBER 7, 2018

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

## SACRED SUPPER

On a sweet spring day in 1944, 19 people “most solemnly and joyfully entered into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.” On April 25, in Crestline School building, they agreed to launch a new Baptist church. They would wait until September 3, when they had their own little Chapel, to list the charter members who agreed to the same covenant.

The chartering covenant spelled out their responsibility to God and to one another.

*“A visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ.”*

Ever since, the operating rules of our church have stated that we observe two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In 1944, the membership covenant stated this about the Lord’s Supper:

*“...the Lord’s Supper, in which the members of the church by sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.”*

“Lord’s Supper” is the formal terminology Baptists traditionally use for what some Christians call “Communion.” The Baptist understanding includes community and commemoration with Jesus Christ and with fellow believers. At Mountain Brook Baptist Church, the terms “Communion” and “Lord’s Supper” are used interchangeably.

The beautiful declaration of 1944 required practical action. Two months before the church organized, Mrs. Walter Fowlkes Jr. (Helen) was authorized to form a fundraising committee to furnish and equip the church meeting place across from Crestline School. Helen Fowlkes personally gave the church its first Lord’s Supper utensils.

The first-ever Lord’s Supper service for Mountain Brook Baptist Church was held on January 1, 1945. The occasion must have been deeply impressive, because next week the congregation adopted a policy about regular observance of the Lord’s Supper. They decided to hold the ceremony on the first Sunday of each quarter year.

With growth in members, additional equipment and supplies were needed. Today, nobody in the church knows what happened to the originals. No doubt they were outgrown and worn out.

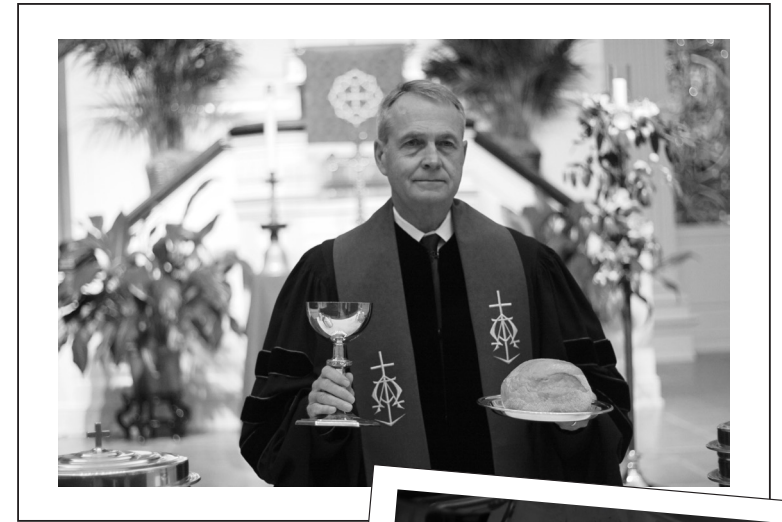


In 1972, a sterling silver chalice was added to the Lord’s Supper equipment. It was the gift of Al and Anne Lee, suitably engraved to honor the memory of the late Rev. William E. Waterhouse, who was the second pastor of the church. This chalice continues to be regularly used on the Lord’s Supper table.

The communion table at Mountain Brook Baptist Church has worn out a succession of tablecloths, contributed by members. Currently, the table is laid with a hand-tailored cloth with heavy piping on the edge. It is embellished by a cross in a design which is considered to be the official cross style of our church. Martha Isom designed and crafted the cloth and embroidery, with the assistance of Kay Davidson.

Historically, some Baptist churches have practiced “closed communion.” This meant that only members of the local church could partake. Insofar as is known, Mountain Brook Baptist Church has always practiced “open communion.” The pastor or officiant always invites all who are baptized followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to “come to the table” to partake of the symbolic bread and wine.

The church follows a variety of procedures for serving and partaking. Usually, Deacons walk among the congregation to pass plates containing bits of bread and small cups of juice. Sometimes participants are invited to walk forward to the serving table, to receive first the bread and then the juice. On occasion, the intinction method has been administered, with a participant taking a bit of bread and dipping it into a common cup before eating. The variety of service helps to remind participants afresh of the meaning.



*Dr. J. Douglas Dortch Jr. prepares to serve the Lord’s Supper during the Maundy Thursday service on March 29, 2018.*



*This sterling silver chalice was given to the church in 1972 by Al and Anne Lee in honor of the late Rev. William E. Waterhouse.*