

Chester Baptists To Dedicate New \$360,000 Church

By VIRGINIA DAVIS

The new sanctuary of the First Baptist Church of Chester will be dedicated in special services Jan. 31.

The \$360,000 edifice will be dedicated by Dr. R. G. Lee, pastor of the church in 1921-22, and an outstanding minister in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The new church adjoins the present sanctuary which will be razed shortly. The new structure has been under construction 16 months by C. Y. Thomason, Greenwood contractor. It was designed by Harold Wagoner, Philadelphia, Pa., leading authority in the United States and Mexico on church architecture and designer of the First Baptist Church in Washington, D. C.

The Chester sanctuary has a seating capacity of 865. The exterior is dominated by long panels of stained glass in modified designs of the Cross. The design, created by the architect, was installed by High Point Glass Company.

The tower is 97 feet high and supports a cross almost 18 feet high. Entrance flagstones are of Vermont slate.

Foyers and lobby walls are separated from the nave by plate glass and aluminum. The floor of the foyers are crab orchard tile.

The interior ceiling of the nave is 37 feet high. All furnishings in the nave and chancel are made of

walnut and were designed by the architect. Stained glass windows are set in limestone.

A unique feature of the sanctuary is the unbroken wall of Locher Colonial brick extending from the balcony level to ceiling. Beneath is a left off-center aisle with white column supports of contemporary design.

The chancel area is supported by columns of imported Travertine marble of volcanic origin from Mt. Vesuvius in Italy. The best features of the divided chancel have been combined for the program needs in Baptist churches to produce a beautiful and functional area.

The off-center, raised pulpit enables the speaker to face every person in the church. The unified choir, in contrast to the regular divided choir, is to one side of the chancel; the piano and organ will be located behind the raised pulpit. In the center of the chancel are the communion table and baptistry. A dorsel curtain of gold falls from ceiling to baptistry base. Suspended before the curtain is a large walnut cross.

The sanctuary includes drawing room, pastor's study, balcony, cry-

ing room, choir and baptistry dressing lounges. Furnishings of contemporary design were selected by Aaron R. Powers, interior decorator. The building is fully air-conditioned. Technical installations provide ample acoustical affects throughout the building. Many appointments of the sanctuary have been given as memorials and include a communion service, a flower urn, offertory plates, all in silver.

The construction is a 10-year building program which also includes the erection of a new home for the pastor, the Rev. W. R. Bussey, an acquisition of adjacent properties for educational ministry.

The building program has double the church budget, including expenditures of \$18,000 for adjacent church properties, \$27,000 on a new pastor's home on Sunset Dr.; and the cost of the sanctuary.

The budget for 1960, largest in church history, is \$79,749.08. Fifty years ago, the church treasurer, J. T. Perkins, began those duties. He recalls church receipts in 1910 were \$2,400.

Dr. K. L. Black is chairman of the finance committee.

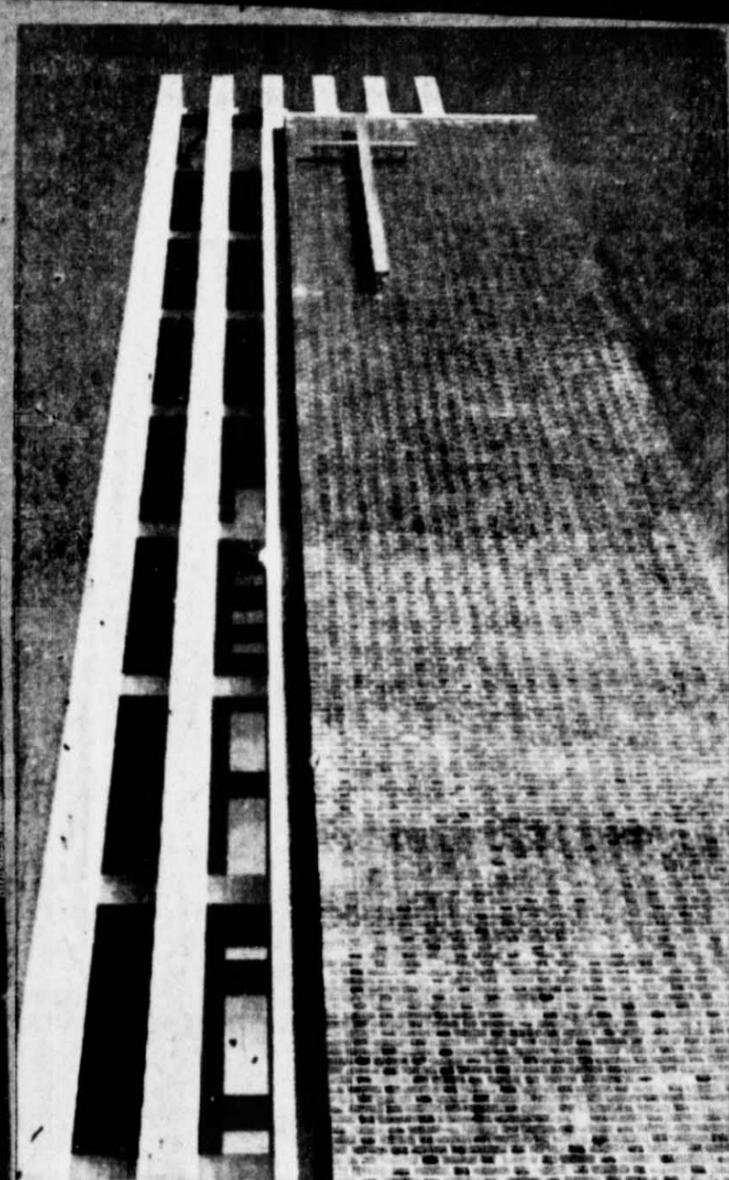
The chairman of the planning and building committee from 1952-59 was H. N. Heckle, district engineer of the state highway department.

He was succeeded by E. B. Bagby, chairman also of the plans and specifications committee and ex-mayor of Chester for six terms.

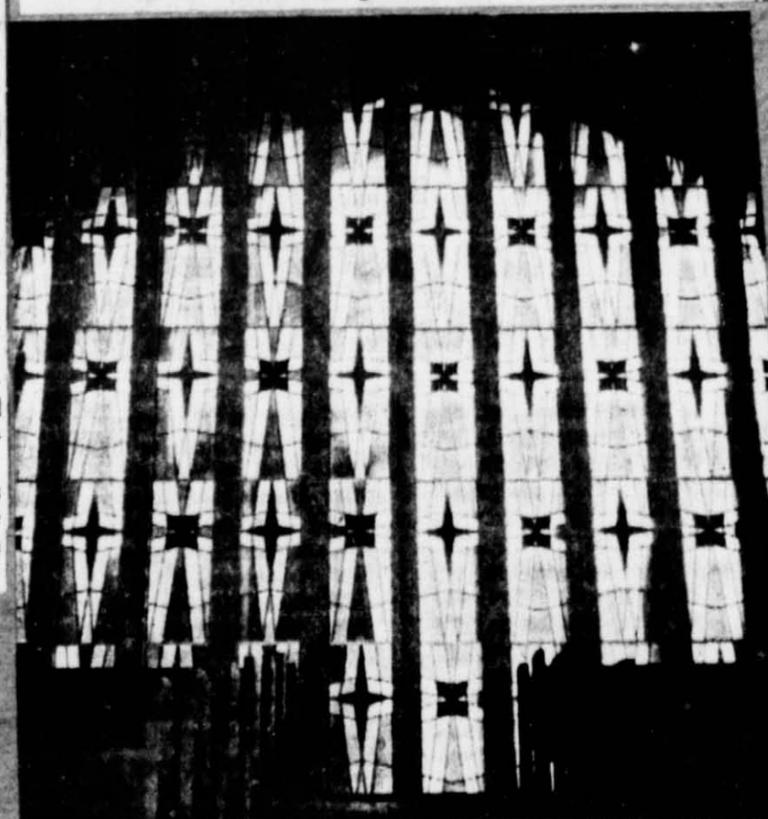
The church architect in 1954 was recognized by colleagues as the outstanding church architect in America."



Entrance To Impressive New First Baptist Church Of Chester



Church Tower — This view will greet members of the First Baptist Church of Chester as they look up when entering their new sanctuary for worship service. The church tower is 97 feet high and supports a cross almost 18 feet high.



Stained Glass — Looking up through the balcony, church members see this stained glass window, a series of blue, white and red glass panels in modified designs of the cross.

Rev. Bussey Is Pastor

The pastor of Chester's new First Baptist Church sanctuary is the Rev. William R. Bussey.

He will be in charge of an inaugural service in the new quarters on Jan. 24, a week before special dedication services will be held. Bussey has been pastor of the Chester church since February of 1951.

In October, 1952, he started double morning worship services.

A native of Florence, he is the son of a minister who served at Emanuel Baptist Church for 27 years. He is married to a Florence native and is the father of three small daughters.

A specialist in pastoral counseling, he has done seminary work at Bowman - Gray Baptist Hospital at Winston - Salem, N. C. He is a veteran of Naval service in World War II.

He is a graduate of Furman University and of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky.