

Unity Church overflows

By ELIZABETH REED

Over a span of three centuries the word Unity has had a peculiar meaning to the Presbyterian families of the Fort Mill area.

Although its early history in detail has been lost in the maze of time, its four fold program today, according to its pastor, the Rev. J. E. Wayland, is "the surrendered life, the morning watch, the minimum and the daily witnessing for Christ."

"Old in experience, vigorous in growth" is the way its pastor characterizes this church organized in 1788.

A few years ago the church was

seriously considering if the time would not soon be reached when Sunday school would have to be discontinued. Thirty-five was the maximum number that could be enrolled in Bible school. This summer the enrollment of workers and children reached 150.

Today approximately 60 attend the annual youth camp at Piedmont Springs in upper York County. Approximately 50 young people actively engage in Sunday evening activities under the direction of the pastor and Mrs. Charles Bixler, director of Christian education. Approximately 65 boys are in the Boy Scout and Cub Scout program of the church.

Just this spring membership arose from 342 to 402.

Last year the church budget was \$38,191.

Among the church leaders are A. O. Jones Jr., clerk of the session; W. C. Kimbrell, chairman of deacons; Mrs. J. A. Patrick, president of Women of the Church; Dr. R. A. Martin, president of Men of the Church; W. C. Kimbrell, superintendent of the Sunday school; Bobby White, president of the Youth Fellowship; Mrs. C. M. Reynolds, choir director and Miss Sallye Brown, church organist.

The interior of the church is finished in light tones. Wall to

wall carpet with a pink cast, light pews, white woodwork, and other appointments offer a modern setting for a church with a long history.

Church history

Kanawha Spratt gave the land on which the first and second churches were built. He had received the land on lease from the Catawbas. Rabbit hunters, the story goes, burned the small log structure in which Fort Mill area Presbyterians worshipped first. Old Unity Cemetery adjoins the site of the second building.

The third church, built in 1849, was on Camden Road. The present church on Tom Hall Street, built in 1881, is atop a promitory

planted to pines and other trees. The manse is near the church. The church is floodlighted at night. A 309-pound bell, which sounds the time of Sunday school and church services, was installed in 1877.

At the sesqui-centennial celebration in 1938 a much needed educational building was dedicated. In 1956 another educational building, a two story structure detached from the church proper, was begun.

The Rev. J. H. Thornwell was first pastor and today there is only one living former pastor, the Rev. J. W. Conyers who served from

1940 to 1944. He lives in Gainesville, Fla.

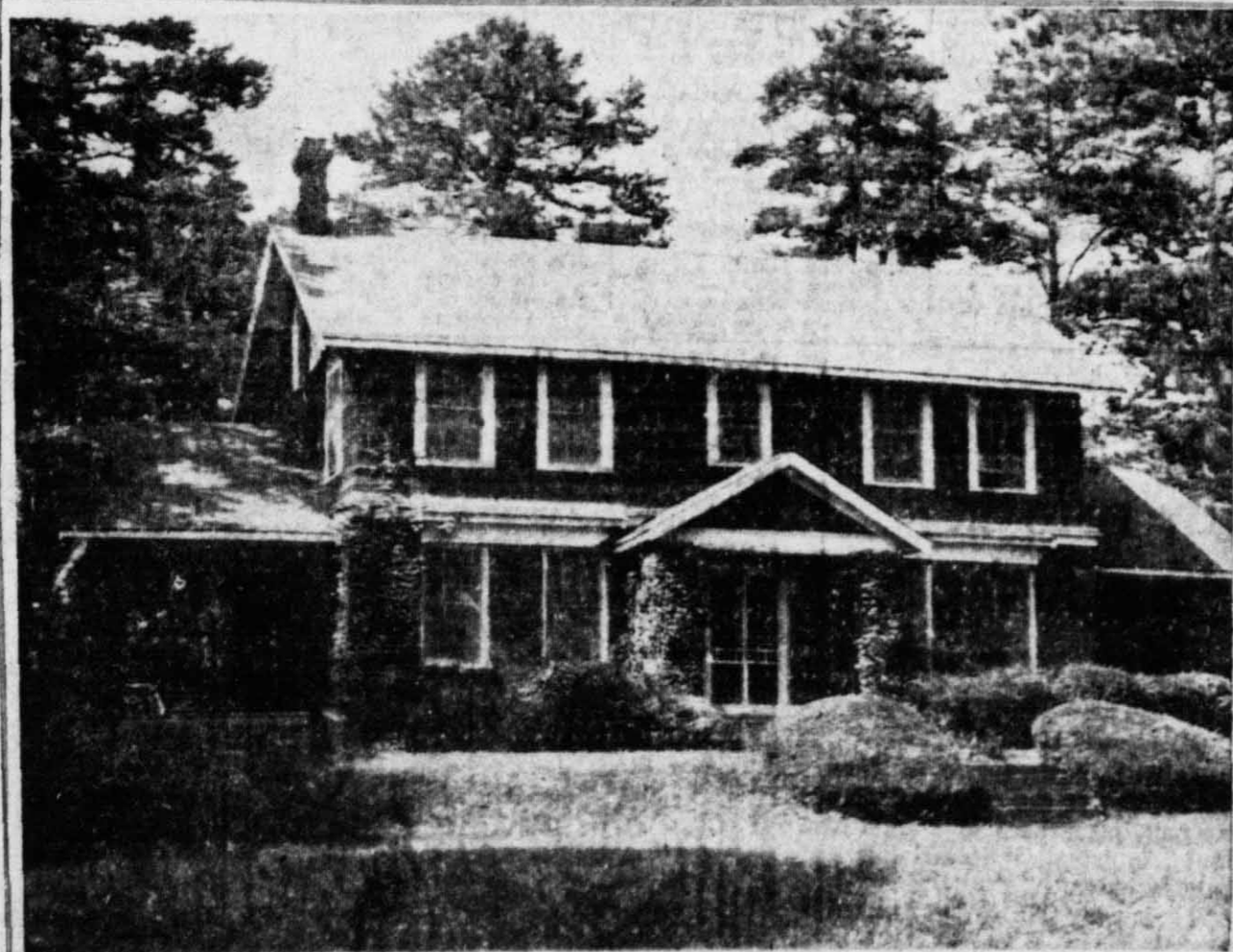
The church has sponsored both Doby's Bridge and Riverview Churches near Fort Mill and is sponsor for a community mission which will soon be organized into a church. The mission has an average attendance of 100.

The Rev. J. E. Wayland, now rounding out his eighth year as pastor, went to China as a missionary in 1920, after a five and one half year term, he returned; then refuged to Korea after the Revolution broke out in 1927. After a 14 year term as pastor in Malden, W. Va., he came to Hopewell Presbyterian Church, Hunt-

ersville, N. C. where he served eight years.

Some 33,000 copies of his booklet "Vital Bible Truths" have been distributed, some as far away as India where it has been translated into one of the many Indian languages. He is also author of another booklet, "Vital Bible Study".

Of the three children, one, Cora, is a missionary in Korea, John E. Wayland Jr. is a minister in Cornelius, N. C. and daughter Lucille is married to Martin L. Harkey, an electrical engineer, who after about 12 years out of school, will begin studies at Columbia Theological Seminary this fall.



Church Manse — The red-brick mansse of the Unity Presbyterian Church in Fort Mill is located on the four-acre church grounds which slope gently to the street. The manse, built of red brick, harmonizes with the church building.

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Incorrect. Rev. Bryce Miller was the first minister. Rev. J.H. Thornwell served from 1772-1907

J. E. W.