

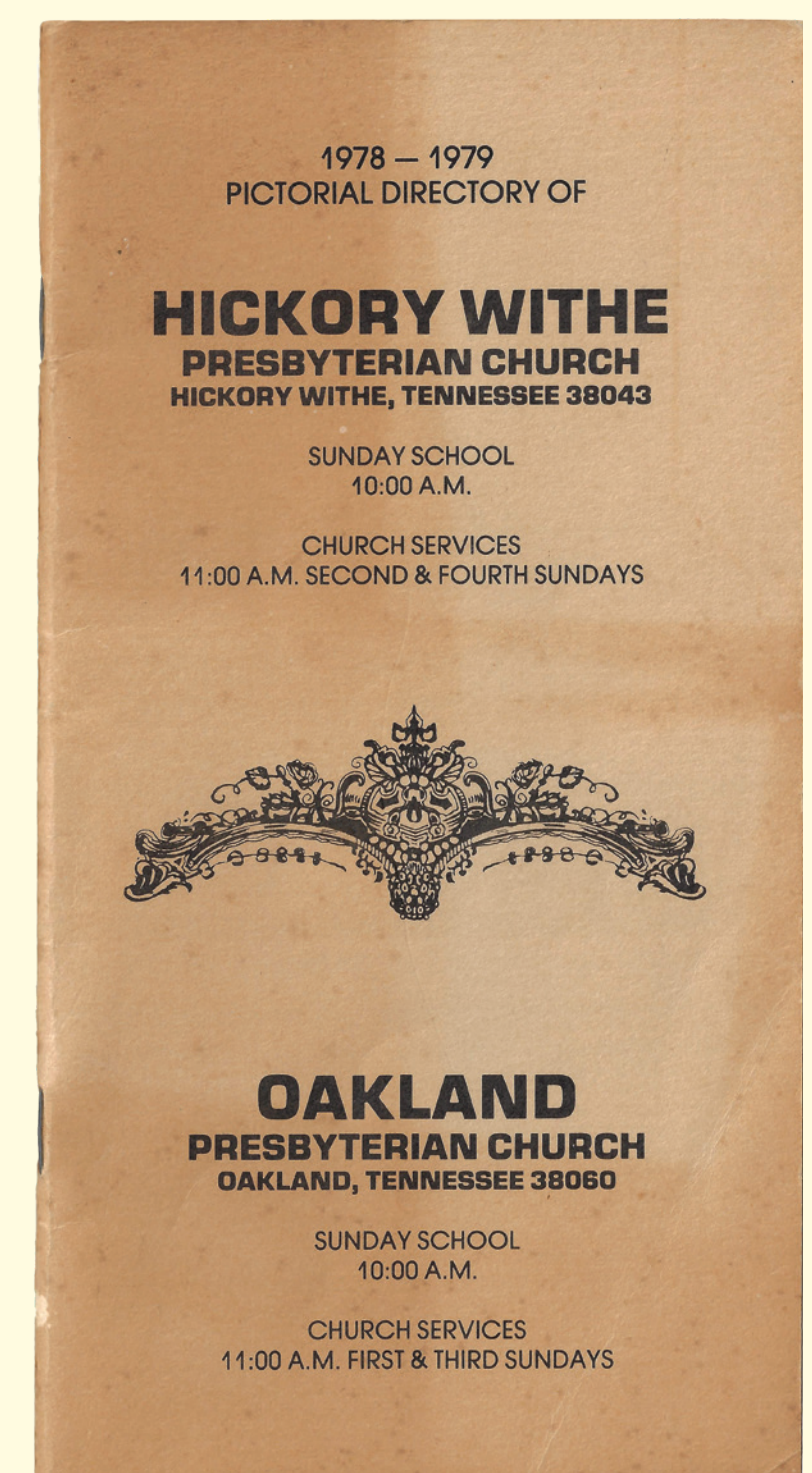
A New Era: 1907 – 1980

May 10, 1907, commenced a new era for Hickory Withe Presbyterians, especially the former Cumberland congregation. The Hickory Withe Cumberland Church and Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church (HWPC) have now merged and aligned with PCUS. The joint congregation initially worshipped in the PCUS church at the southeast corner of Highway 196 and Donelson Road. Eight years later, upon the completion of the former Cumberland church renovations in 1915, the congregation relocated to its present-day location at 2420 Donelson Road.

Although a stronger combined church, HWPC could not afford a full-time minister. During this time, the spiritual and physical needs of the HWPC congregation were cared for by the ruling elders, the deacons, and the Women's Auxiliary. These individuals prayed zealously for the church members, for the community, and for the church to be able to sustain a full-time pastor.

Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church and Oakland Presbyterian Church

Upon Oakland Presbyterian Church's founding in 1889, the two churches shared pastors with Oakland having worship services on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month and HWPC on the 2nd and 4th Sunday. The pastors were often retired ministers or ministers supplied by the presbytery. In addition to sharing pastors, the Hickory Withe and Oakland churches jointly owned a manse which housed the pastors and their families.



Cover of the Hickory Withe & Oakland Presbyterian Churches Joint Directory. Note the church services schedule.

Worship Services and Sunday School

In the early years of HWPC, members traveled to church on horseback, in buggies and wagons, or walked. The church lacked the luxuries that we take for granted today. Imagine attending a church service without air conditioning, central heat, restrooms, or running water.

Every Sunday morning, worship opened with responsive Scripture readings, hymns, and a closing prayer followed by dismissal to Sunday School and a sermon on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

Since the church annex had not been built, creativity was key in where the Sunday School classes met. The beginner class traditionally met in the classroom to the right of the church foyer, the primary class in the classroom to the left of the church foyer, the junior class in the choir loft, and the adult class on the back rows of the sanctuary.

A New Era: 1907 –1980

Prior to having a full-time minister, the church was never without activities for all ages. There was “Story Hour” for the young children and Youth Fellowship for the older children on Sunday evenings, Vacation Bible School in the summer, fellowship meals on the grounds, and even picture show parties.

Women’s Auxiliary

The women at HWPC have always graciously volunteered to serve the Lord with their talents. The women would typically meet monthly in a home with the meetings known as “Home Circles”. This was a wonderful time of Bible study and fellowship followed by a business meeting with minutes recorded that are a valuable source for much of the church’s history.

In 1928, the church youth and the Women’s Auxiliary purchased for \$38.25 a communion service with individual glasses. Some of the women were heard to say, “thank goodness no more following mustaches from the cup.”



Photo of the communion service purchased from Thomas Communion Service Company in 1928. Reverend J. G. Thomas was a physician and a minister who received the first patent for an individual cup communion service in March 1894. Historically, Protestant churches practiced communion with a single cup but transitioned to individual cups in the early 20th century.

The Women’s Auxiliary coordinated thirteen conferences from the 1930s until the mid-1950s with the women of the African American churches in the area. These conferences were often held at Bell Grove Church located just north of Highway 64 between Hickory Withe and Oakland or at the Fields Schoolhouse which was located at the corner of Highway 196 and Fields Drive.

Church Renovations and Acquisition of Fellowship Hall

In 1959, major renovations were made to the church building including a new roof and new finishes throughout the sanctuary. On August 23, 1959, lunch was enjoyed on the church lawn following the worship service, and afterwards, the public joined the church congregation for a consecration service in the newly renovated sanctuary. Worship at HWPC became much more comfortable in 1969 when central heat and air were installed at the church.

Hickory Withe School closed in 1968, and the school building was located adjacent to the church. After leasing the former school building for a number of years, HWPC purchased the building and two acres from the Fayette County Board of Education for \$2,000. The building has served the church as its fellowship hall since that time.

As you can see, HWPC persevered through many years without a dedicated pastor. The church experienced the truth, *“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved.”* Psalm 55:22.

Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church Exits PCUS and Joins PCA 1980

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) separated from the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) in opposition to the long-developing theological liberalism which denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the inerrancy and authority of Scripture.

In December 1973, delegates representing some 260 congregations that had left the PCUS gathered at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, AL, and organized the National Presbyterian Church that later became the Presbyterian Church in America.

Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church (HWPC), which had been affiliated with the PCUS since the end of the Civil War, held a congregational meeting on August 10, 1980, and voted unanimously to leave the denomination. In discussions that led to the vote, it was disclosed by the ruling elders that the PCUS was openly questioning the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Miss Linnie Mai Luck, a lifelong member of the church and retired teacher who taught at Hickory Withe School, exclaimed “We have got to get out of here!” And our small church without a pastor did just that.



Hickory Withe Church Elders, 1980

First Row Left to Right: *Hartwell Morrison, Russell Barkley, Mayes Webb*
Second Row Left to Right: *Robert Russell, Alfred Hodges, W. A. Whitworth, Sr., Wallace Keith*

On August 17, 1980, the congregation unanimously voted to pursue membership with the PCA. In the words of Mrs. Sarah Russell drawn from the 1980 HWPC Historian Report, “The PCA is new and small but growing for the Lord, accepting God’s Word without questions and learning of His glorious blessings from the Word.”

At the 30th stated meeting of Covenant Presbytery, which convened on November 11, 1980, a commission was established to examine the session of HWPC and to act on its request for membership.

The commission examined the session in Hickory Withe on December 16, 1980. After the commission’s examination and approval, the commission joined the congregation for a celebratory dinner followed by a special service to praise God’s providence for our church since 1834.

On March 17, 1981, the commission presented its report to Presbytery, and HWPC was officially added to the roll of Covenant Presbytery, Presbyterian Church in America.

Generations of Prayers Answered

1980 – 1995

Upon joining the PCA, Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church (HWPC) began its search for its first full-time pastor since the 1880s. The session of HWPC voted on September 24, 1981, to call Kenneth L. Camp as pastor. A congregational meeting followed on September 27, 1981, and the session's decision was affirmed by the congregation. Reverend Camp was installed as pastor of HWPC on Sunday, November 29, 1981.

Reverend Kenneth L. and Sarah Camp

During Reverend Camp's ministry, the church significantly expanded its services. In addition to having worship services every Sunday, evening services were added on Wednesday and Sunday as well as regular Bible studies for the youth. Jane Mitchell and Gay Dickinson led a very active youth ministry that included Pioneer Club, Vacation Bible Schools and community softball every Thursday night in the summer. Ken's wife, Sarah, excelled at teaching the women's Bible studies, and she had a beautiful voice which she graciously shared in worship.



Reverend Kenneth L. and Sarah Camp

Sesquicentennial Celebration

In 1984, HWPC celebrated a significant milestone in its history – 150 years since its founding in 1834. On September 30, 1984, a Sesquicentennial Celebration was held at the church that included a worship service followed by lunch in the fellowship hall. The congregation and guests were encouraged to dress in 1834 attire. It was a day of joyous celebration and praise to God for his sustaining HWPC for 150 years.

First Church Addition Since 1861 Construction

On June 1, 1986, the congregation approved the architectural drawings for the church's first addition since its construction in 1861. The annex to the church building included two restrooms and six new classrooms which are now home to the pastor's office, Sunday School classrooms, and the church nursery. At this time, a metal roof was also installed on the church building.

Reverend Camp Returns to Chattanooga

Reverend Camp was pastor of HWPC until July 1995, with Covenant Presbytery granting him the status of "Honorably Retired" in 1996. Ken and Sarah returned home to Chattanooga where he continued his ministry as Minister of Visitation and Senior Adults at First Presbyterian Church for ten years.

Reverend and Sarah Camp's ministry at HWPC was a special period in the church's history as the congregation enjoyed the blessings of having a full-time, dedicated pastor which was an answer to generations of prayers.

A Series of Full-Time, Dedicated Pastors

Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church (HWPC) had three successive pastors from March 1996 to December 2009: Reverend Cecil Wells, Reverend James (Jim) E. Hayes, and Reverend John Edgar (Ed) Eubanks, Jr. During these years, the church realized the truthfulness of God's promises to sustain His church.

Improvements to the Church and Fellowship Hall Buildings

In early 1995, it was discovered that the church's foundation was unsafe for church services. From March 1995 through June 1996, worship services were held in the fellowship hall while structural improvements were made to the foundation, and extensive renovations were made to the sanctuary including the addition of cushions for the wooden pews. The brass plates on the pews are the result of the pew fund established to purchase the cushions. A celebration service was held in the renovated sanctuary on July 28, 1996, with over 200 in attendance praising God for His providence.

In 1998, the fellowship hall was remodeled with the installation of storm windows and a metal roof, the rebuilding of the front and back porches, and other needed repairs.

Trial and Renewal

The church went through a difficult time in 2005-2006 resulting in the resignation of Reverend Hayes in 2007. But God in His Sovereignty showed His faithfulness to HWPC and revitalized the church under the leadership of Reverend Edgar (Ed) Eubanks. The church members saw God at work restoring His historic church in Hickory Withe with the addition of new members. A renewed HWPC hosted Covenant Presbytery's regional meeting on May 26, 2009.

175th Anniversary Celebration

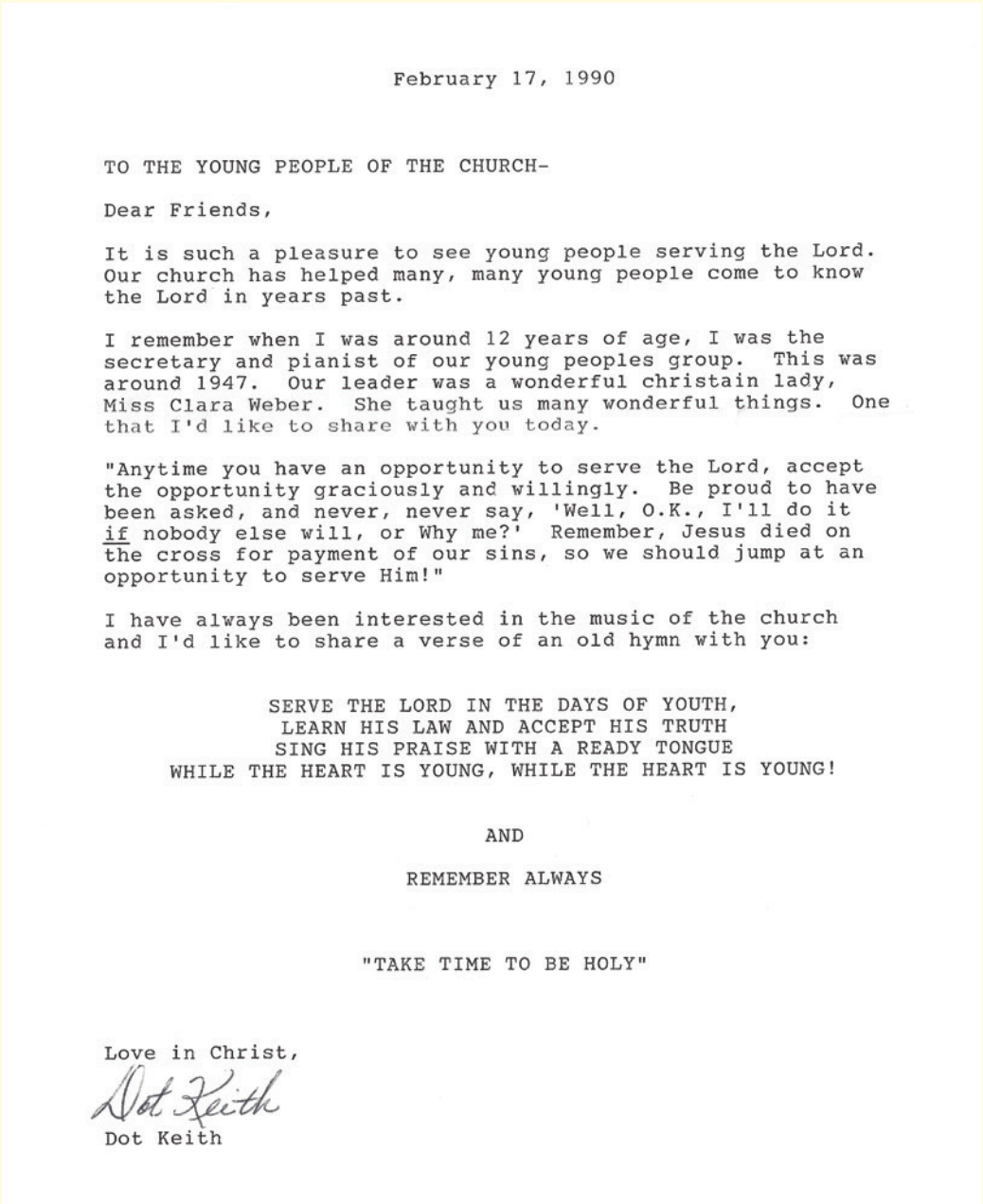
On the weekend of September 11-13, 2009, Pastor Eubanks hosted the 175th anniversary celebration of HWPC. The time capsule from the 155th Anniversary Celebration was opened and letters were read, some from church members who had gone to be with the Lord. Letters from current church members were put into the capsule to be opened on the church's bicentennial.



Dot & Wallace Keith



Dora Elizabeth & William A. Whitworth, Sr.



Dot Keith's 1990 Letter, included in the 155th Anniversary time capsule

Dot Keith and Dora Elizabeth Whitworth, Faithful Servants

Doris (Dot) Keith, resigned in 2009 after serving as the church pianist since January 1982. Prior to Dot Keith, Dora Elizabeth Whitworth served as the pianist for nearly 40 years.

Looking Forward to a 3rd Century of Ministry 2010 – 2023

In February 2010, Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church (HWPC) called Douglas M. Barcroft to be its first associate pastor. Reverend Barcroft then became senior pastor in August 2011.

Pastor Barcroft was raised in Macon Road Presbyterian Church in Memphis. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, and served Baptist churches before receiving a call in October 2000 to become assistant pastor of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Cordova, TN.



Douglas & Lynn Barcroft

During Pastor Barcroft's ministry at HWPC, the church has experienced growth despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2011, his ministry has emphasized the importance of Scripture, the relevance of Presbyterianism, and the urgency of Christ's Great Commission. Pastor Barcroft's wife, Lynn, is an exceptional Bible teacher and leads the women's Bible studies.

COVID-19 Pandemic

2020 was a unique year in the church's history. Due to COVID-19 and the government's shutdowns, the session on March 14th cancelled all onsite church activities. However, the Sunday worship service continued via live-stream each Sunday allowing the congregation to watch the sermon on the HWPC YouTube channel.

During the pandemic, Pastor Doug finished a series in Romans and began another on the prophet Elijah. Thanks to the hard work of our officers, onsite worship services resumed on June 7, 2020. It was a joyous day of worship and praise. The COVID-19 restrictions made the congregation realize afresh the importance of corporate worship. Thanks was given to God that none of our members suffered a case of COVID-19 resulting in a hospitalization or death.

50th Anniversary of PCA

In June of 2023, commissioners from HWPC joined 2,300 others in Memphis to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in America. God has blessed the PCA with significant growth since 1973. The denomination now has approximately 2,000 churches and 400,000 members globally.



Since 1834, God has showered HWPC with untold blessings. The legacy of our past provides hope for our future. God's faithfulness through wars, a depression, pandemics, and other trials will sustain us in the years to come.

We look back and think of Psalm 100:5, *"His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations."*

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

DECEMBER 2023

Reverend Douglas M. Barcroft

Ruling Elders

Louis A. Cardamone, Clerk
Dana Jeanes
James (Jim) Mitchell
Stephen Len White