

1924-2024

100 Years of McFarlin



For 100 years, McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church has faithfully embraced and shared the life-changing good news of God's love in Jesus Christ.

This 100th Anniversary booklet is "dedicated to all" who worship and experience God's loving presence and provide caring service within and beyond McFarlin's walls, to all who came before us and lived out their faith here, and to all who find a home of faith and service here over the next century.

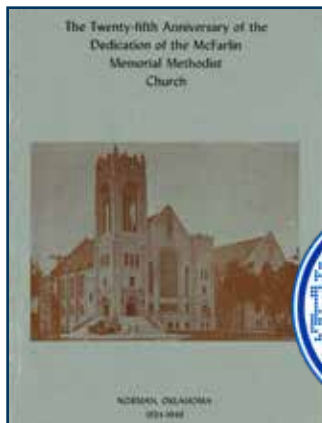


Celebrating Our Methodist Heritage

McFarlin's 100th celebration expresses gratitude for God's love and guidance and honors the servant hearts of McFarlin's people, past and present. This book represents four 25-year segments of the history, love, life, and service of McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church.

Changing Lives That Change the World

The following images are the cover pages of four McFarlin Anniversary booklets. Each booklet's content is available for more detail about early Methodism in Norman and McFarlin's history and its people. Scan the QR codes to read more about our history.



25th Anniversary Book



50th Anniversary Book



75th Anniversary Book



100th Anniversary Book



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*“May the God of the ages
empower us and all who
follow to overcome challenges
and embrace possibilities so
that hope may indeed abound
for the next century!”*



Centennial Greetings!

Hope abounds as we celebrate our 100th year! These memories inspire us with joy and gratitude for everyone who has contributed to this milestone since 1924. Through times both tough and tranquil, these highlights reveal the interplay of God's energetic grace with the collaborative effort of thousands of dedicated people. The strong and vibrant history captured in this book also gives us assurance for a future of living the Jesus-defined life luminously.

Here we find a witness to the inherited strength and vitality enabling us to launch our next century. The Apostle Paul once wrote to a congregation whom he loved, *"God who began a good work will continue to complete it."* We have such trust at this historic moment; McFarlin's presence and purpose is firm and bright. Our history gives witness to the fruition of a century of a love-generated faith in action. We rightly and prayerfully echo the words of Dag Hammarskjöld: *"For all that has been, thanks. For all that will be, yes."*

I give thanks to God for the people of McFarlin who recently have acted boldly and committed generously so that, in this centenary year, we rejoice both in the opening of our new Missions Center and in the completion of major renovation of the original structure, a multi-million-dollar effort to secure the next century of multiplied and vibrant worship and service. McFarlin has been bold to stand wholeheartedly on the promise of our future as echoed in the theme text for that effort: *"For in Jesus Christ every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.' For this reason, it is through Christ that we say the 'Amen,' to the glory of God."*

So now, in the year of our Lord 2024 and illuminated by this collection of memories, may our gratitude blossom into celebration and may our "Yes" to McFarlin's future become a resounding "Amen" that punctuates our hope for years to come. May the God of the ages empower us and all who follow to overcome challenges and embrace possibilities so that hope may indeed abound for the next century!

Pastor Rockford

The Rev. Dr. Rockford Johnson

Celebrating Methodist History in Norman Before McFarlin

The Early-Day Methodist Churches in Norman



Norman's Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1890, was located at the northwest corner of E. Gray Street and Porter Avenue in Norman.



Norman's Methodist Episcopal Church South, founded in 1896, was located at the southeast corner of Tonhawa Street and Crawford Avenue in Norman.

A Story of God's Love in Human Experience

- Love began the McFarlin's story—Ida Barnard married Robert M. McFarlin.
- Love embraced a baby boy born to Ida and Robert M. McFarlin in 1891.
- Love and kindness overflowed for Mr. and Mrs. McFarlin from Norman Methodists after baby Robert died at age 19 months from typhoid.



Memorial Canopy in the Sanctuary

***"And now these three remain:
faith, hope, and love.
But the greatest of these is love."***

1 Corinthians 13:13

Ida and Robert M. McFarlin's Story and Legacy

In 1890, Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. McFarlin left Texas near Waxahachie and came to live in Norman, Oklahoma, to raise livestock and open a feed store.

On December 18, 1891, a baby boy named Robert Boger McFarlin was born. Love for their baby son bound their lives together and expanded their hearts. On July 28, 1893, at 19 months old, Robert died from typhoid. The McFarlins buried him in the 100F Cemetery, where a sundial mounted on a small marble pedestal and benches mark his grave.



Ida & Robert M. McFarlin



Robert Boger McFarlin

When the McFarlins lost their only son, the Methodist Episcopal Church South provided Christian loving care during their grief and overwhelming sadness. The McFarlins never forgot the kind acts of the Methodists in Norman.

In 1895, Mr. McFarlin moved his cattle to better grassland near Holdenville. In 1903, Mr. and Mrs. McFarlin joined the Methodist Church in Holdenville. The McFarlins' financial situation could have been better, and they mortgaged their Holdenville home for \$800 to buy 40 acres of land near Kiefer, Oklahoma.

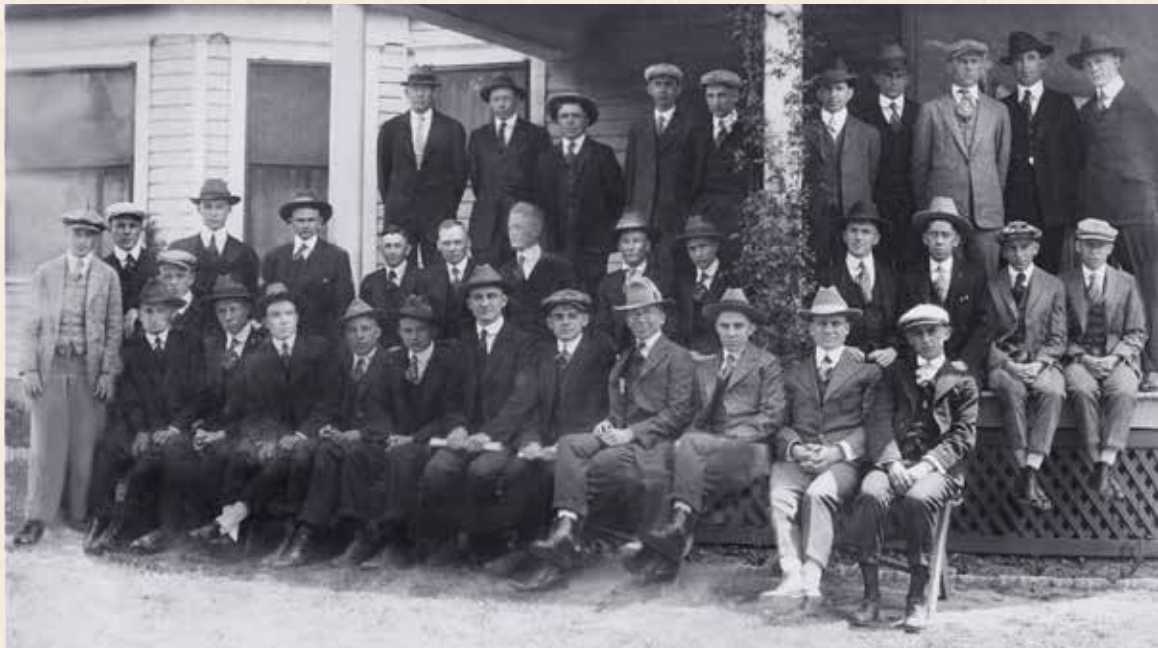
This area was near what became the Glenn Pool Field, and in 1905 oil was discovered. In 1906, Mr. McFarlin and James Chapman drilled and found a vast oil supply on his land. Immediately, the McFarlins were very wealthy. In 1908, James Chapman married Mr. McFarlin's daughter, Lela. Mr. McFarlin and Mr. Chapman formed the successful McMan Oil Company. Their financial success included shares in developing the Cushing and Healdton Oil Fields. In 1916, the McMan Company was sold to Magnolia Oil Company for \$38,700,000 and 20,000 shares of Magnolia stock. Mr. McFarlin became the largest shareholder in that company.

Ida and Robert M. McFarlin's Story and Legacy Continued

In 1914, Gilbert Smith, a sociology professor and an ordained Methodist minister, arrived at the University of Oklahoma and started teaching his Sooner Bible class. Professor Smith and his Bible class had a dream for a church close to the university. Rev. C. S. Walker and one hundred Methodist Episcopal Church South members planned for a larger church in 1919.

In 1921, Reverend W. L. Broome, the Pastor of the local Methodist Episcopal Church South in Norman, felt the need for a more appropriate building and equipment. His proposal to the two predecessor conferences, the MEC and MEC South, to raise \$200,000 jointly to erect a church structure was unsuccessful.

Professor Smith was chair of the fundraising campaign. A Bible class student, Eugenia Messenger, suggested that Mr. McFarlin could help build a new Methodist church in Norman. Rev. C. S. Walker knew Mr. McFarlin, and the Sooner Bible class paid Rev. Walker's travel expenses to Baltimore, Maryland, to visit him. Mr. McFarlin, from a hospital bed, agreed to build the church if he survived his illness and a pending lawsuit.



Sooner Bible Class 1920s

The McFarlins shared their prosperity with many others, including Methodist Episcopal Churches in Oklahoma and Texas. In the early 1920s, the McFarlin's financial commitment built the magnificent auditorium at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

Following his recovery, Mr. McFarlin asked for the privilege of building a church to serve Norman's growing Methodist members, OU's exploding student population, and the community. He had two stipulations for building the church. First, he would pay all the bills. Second, "it was to be so well built that if a tornado blew over, it would still hold together."

Mr. McFarlin's financial agreement and vision were threefold. First, erect a living monument for the baby boy they loved and lost; second, express appreciation to the Methodist church in Norman who helped them during unbearable grief; and third, to build a church that would be a place of worship for students attending the University of Oklahoma, and anyone who could come.

Rev. W. L. Broome worked on the plans for the new Methodist church for three years. Rev. Dr. L. S. Barton from Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Tulsa was moved to Norman as the Senior Pastor to oversee the building of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South, located at University Boulevard and Apache Street.

This location seemed perfect. Students could look southward from the church and see the University of Oklahoma's administration building. The students could look north from the administration building and see the church. The McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South tower, seen for miles, became a notable landmark. The money pledged earlier by the Sunday school class would be used to purchase five more property lots for the church.



McFarlin 1920s

Construction began on December 1, 1923. On December 7, 1924, the McFarlins fulfilled their threefold purpose, and McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South was dedicated. The Transcript headline stated: "McFarlin Church Offers Itself as a Community Center." Mr. and Mrs. McFarlin generously contributed \$700,000 for the entire build. (In 2024, this amount equates to a gift of approximately \$12,000,000.)

One hundred years later, McFarlin Memorial UMC continues the McFarlins' legacy by serving others through worship, discipleship, and music; through student, youth and children's ministries; through fellowship and care; and through regional, national, and global missions demonstrating God's love to all.

McFarlin 1924-1949





World Memorial Methodist Church School Staff
Norman, Okla.

Milestones 1924-1949

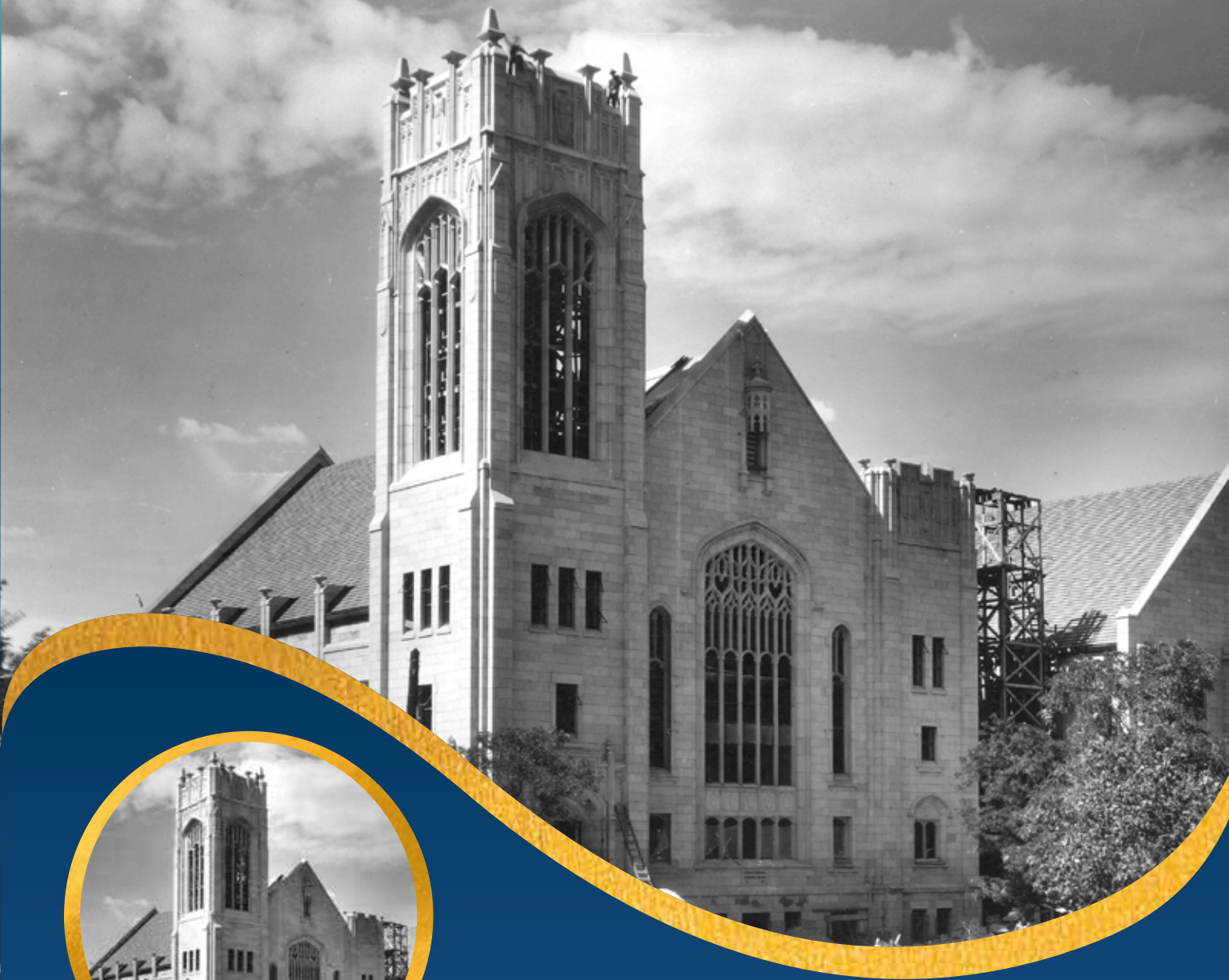
1924—December 7, opening day of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the Rev. Dr. L. S. Barton was McFarlin's first senior pastor.

1930—Mr. and Mrs. McFarlin created a \$200,000 endowment fund for church maintenance and programs.

1938—The Methodist Episcopal Church (north) united with McFarlin in their love for and faith in God and became one church—McFarlin Memorial Methodist Church. (In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church split over slavery, creating north and south churches.)

1943—Goodrich Methodist Church began with the help and blessings of McFarlin members and funds from the estate of Mrs. Emma Goodrich. The original church site was the north corner of North Porter Avenue and Frank Street.





1947—McFarlin increased efforts to strengthen its connection with the Wesley Foundation at the University of Oklahoma, creating the Campus Church Relations Committee and increasing financial support. In 1945, the Rev. Vaughn Smith came to McFarlin to work with the Wesley Foundation; by 1948, the student population had grown to 2,963.

The Building of McFarlin & Dedication 1923-1924

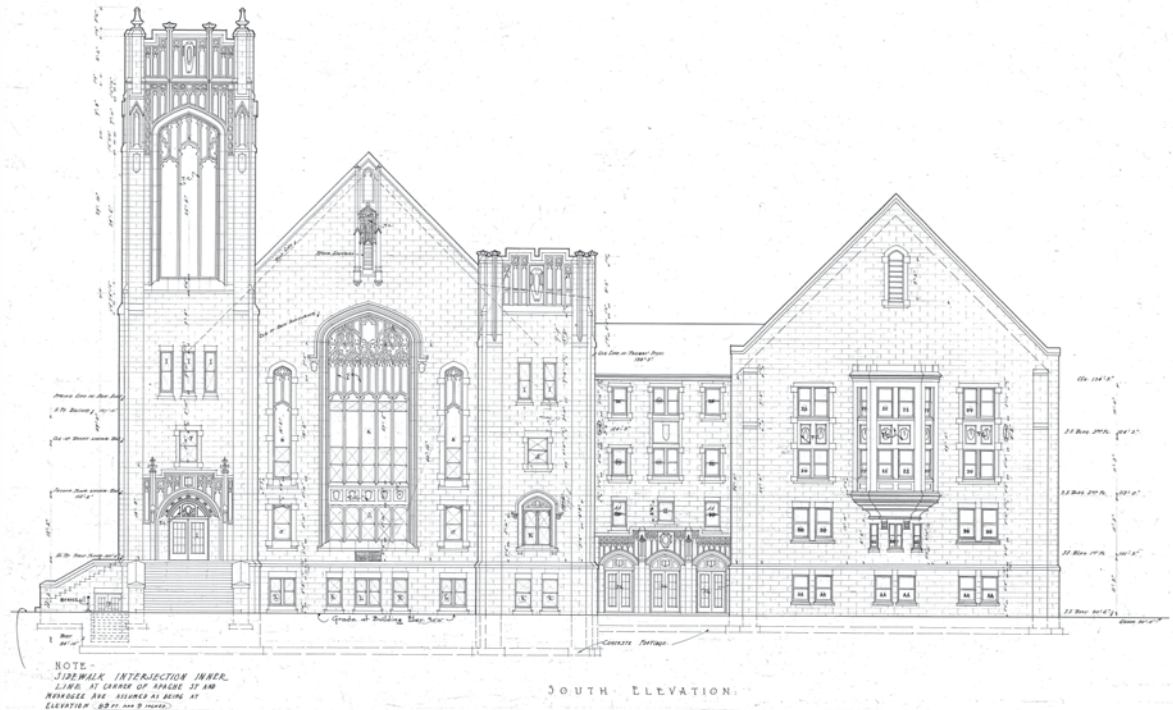
Building McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South—1923 to 1924



Construction of McFarlin 1923



McFarlin's First Bulletin, Feb. 8, 1925



Blueprint of McFarlin 1923

1924 Dedication of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South

Inside McFarlin's Sanctuary is a lighted canopy lined with gold mosaic marble containing a dedication statement for the church. The dedication states "McFarlin is a place where the youth and the people of Norman, and whomsoever should find it in their heart, can worship."



Finished Sanctuary Interior 1924

Mr. and Mrs. McFarlin attended the dedication of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and turned over the keys to the McFarlin Board of Trustees. Mr. McFarlin said, **"We present this house to the further worship of God."**

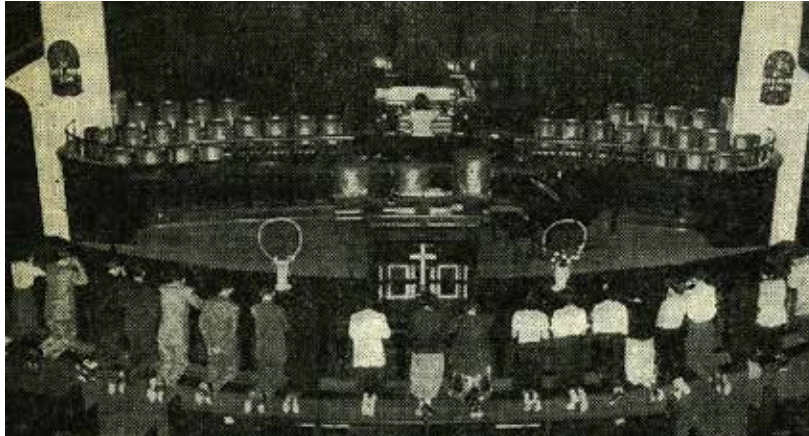
The following Scripture is from the first page of the *Twenty-fifth Anniversary and Dedication of the McFarlin Memorial Methodist Church's* booklet:

"A little child shall lead them."

Isaiah 11:6

Wesley Foundation at the OU Evening Vesper Services

The OU Wesley Foundation began in 1926. The Rev. C. V. Metzger came from the University of Illinois to be the Secretary (Director) of the Wesley at McFarlin. The evening Vesper Service of the Wesley Foundation molded, shaped, and stabilized many students' lives at the altar of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Church.



Wesley Foundation Vesper Service



Wesley Flyer from 1942

McFarlin's Doors Remained Unlocked

During WWII, there were two Naval bases for men and women in Norman. McFarlin's doors remained unlocked at night so soldiers and others could pray at the altar rail and feel God's loving, comforting Spirit inside the Sanctuary. McFarlin printed postcards for soldiers and others to write messages to loved ones. In 1945, a corporal used this postcard to write his mom in St. Paul, Minnesota. (His card was discovered on eBay on June 11, 2024.)

“Here at McFarlin’s altar, the lonely find the great Companion, the weary feel refreshed, sinners receive forgiveness, the young set their vision, and the old find comfort. McFarlin’s altar is like the burning bush in the wilderness; it is the assured presence of God’s loving Spirit.”

(Excerpt from the 25th Anniversary booklet)



McFarlin Postcard from WWII Soldier 1945

Pastors and Associate Pastors 1924-1949



The Rev. Dr. L. S. Barton

Senior Pastor from 1923 to 1927. He came from Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Tulsa to oversee the building of McFarlin. Mr. and Mrs. McFarlin were members of Boston Avenue Methodist Church then. Mr. McFarlin personally requested that Rev. Barton be moved to Norman to supervise the building of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South.



The Rev. Dr. A. Norman Evans

Senior Pastor from 1932 to 1943. First Senior Pastor to serve for more than a decade. During Rev. Evans' tenure, he presided over the 1939 unification of the North and South branches of the Church and also strengthened McFarlin's presence among OU students.



The Rev. Dr. Phil Deschner

Senior Pastor from 1946 to 1950. During this time, there was a significant influx of returning veterans to Norman, the OU campus, and local churches. His thoughtful, Bible-based sermons rendered in a lyrical Eastern European accent were inspirational, and all respected his wisdom and integrity. He graciously returned to McFarlin in 1956 as an associate pastor for six years.

Pastors & Others 1927-1949

John A. Rice, 1927

W. New Harris, 1927-1928

John O. Ensor, 1928-1929

J. T. McClure, 1929-1932

H. E. Gatti, Pastor to Students, 1930-1931

H. B. Cockerill, Co-Pastor, 1938-1939

W. H. Mansfield, Senior Pastor, 1942-1945

Chaplain Frank Wilder, 1943-1945

Robert J. Smith, 1945-1946

McFarlin 1949-1974





Milestones 1949-1974

1952—Wesley Foundation moves from McFarlin to a new home at 830 Elm Ave., home of former OU President W. B. Bizzell.

1952—McFarlin helped support two missionaries in Brazil, Edith Long Schisler, a former OU student and active member of McFarlin, and her husband, the Rev. Richard Schisler.

1953—McFarlin began Jolly Elders, a senior citizens program in Norman that included McFarlin members and others.

1956—McFarlin Social Concerns Committee started a community-wide Mobile Meals Program.

1957—The new Student Center at OU is the largest “Mission” project undertaken by McFarlin Church to date. Although The Oklahoma Conference supported the building of this new center, the most substantial financing of this project came through McFarlin’s benevolence funds.





1958—McFarlin leadership, several members of the church, and McFarlin's prayers and financial support helped build St. Stephen's Methodist Church.

1962-1969—McFarlin helped support missionaries Max and Claudia Webster in the Philippines.

1965—Candlelight Carol with choirs and bell choirs of all ages was started.

1967—On September 1, McFarlin opened its Day Care serving families in the Norman community. McFarlin's Education Commission identified a need for young children's care in Norman. At that time, women entering the workforce found few childcare options available.

1968—The Methodist Church and Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the United Methodist Church. The congregation extended its commitment to "Missions" by becoming involved in the United Methodist Church's global mission work.

1972—Mobile Meals, started earlier by McFarlin's Social Concerns Commission, became a United Way Agency, Meals on Wheels.

1973—The Women's Society of Christian Service became United Methodist Women.

1974—Through the "Golden Gift Tithe," McFarlin committed to assisting United Methodist missionary work in Brazil.

On World Mission Day, The Schislars, missionaries in Brazil for over 20 years, were present for worship. Rev. and Mrs. Schisler shared information about Brazil and Latin American Culture during the "Brazilian Fiesta" Family Night dinner. The newly renamed United Methodist Women sponsored the day.

Remembering the 50th Year: A Celebration of Blessings and Benefits *1949-1974*

"The early founders' vision, the builders' efforts, and the faithfulness of members benefit the church and community today. Within these blessings and benefits are the responsibilities and opportunities of moving forward into a future of continuous growth and service with a new vision, new ideas, and new strengths. However, some things are eternal, and it isn't possible to change nor improve upon the original Dedication of the Church in 1924." (Excerpt from the 50th Anniversary booklet—the word "blessings" added for this booklet.)

"To the Glory of Almighty God with Prayer That His Spirit May Dwell Here."
(Quote from the 50th Anniversary booklet)



Sanctuary Service during Advent 1950s

The Golden Anniversary Celebration

1. Our United Methodist Heritage

“As Methodists, we believe people can have a personal relationship with God that transforms lives. As followers of Jesus, we love our neighbors, near and far, and serve those in need.”

A 12-week sermon series titled “Our United Methodist Heritage” was based on the theology of John Wesley. McFarlin members wrote articles for the church newspaper titled: “Why I Am a Methodist.” The yearlong celebration ended with an emphasis on Christian education.

An original folk song, “Do All the Good You Can,” written by John Yarrington (Director of Music, 1965–1978) for the heritage celebration, was based on the following quote attributed to John Wesley.



Chapel Choir 1965

***“Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can.”***

John Wesley

2. A Unique Community of Faith and Love

The 50th celebration began with a “Love Feast,” remembering “The Faithful Acts of McFarlin.” Each of the following events focused on fellowship and friendship, strengthening the ties that “bind our hearts in Christian Love.”

- Family Evening Worship Service
- Youth-led Morning Worship Service
- Send-Off Supper honoring the Chapel Choir
- Salute to the McFarlin Staff
- Old Fashion Lawn Party at Kiwanis Youth Center
- Congregation Picnic
- Family Camping Weekend, Platte National Park

The Golden Anniversary Celebration Continued

3. Missions on Our Doorstep—and Beyond

The following is a list highlighting McFarlin's commitment to campus, local, regional, national, and global outreach.

- The Wesley Foundation staff enrichment event at the Methodist Student Center included "The Sooner Roundup" dinner
- Mobile Meals served people in Norman
- Neighborhood Services Organization in Oklahoma City
- United Methodist Global Ministry in Brazil
- World Communion Day Service and World Mission Day highlighted Global Ministries and provided a better understanding of the challenges of mission in the areas the congregation supported

4. Jubilee Month

December showcased the climax of the Golden Anniversary year. McFarlin members prepared banners in colors and symbols representing each month of the Christian year and hung them in the Sanctuary choir loft and from the balcony rail. Scriptures on the banners told stories and provided a festive backdrop for Jubilee Month. Many out-of-town guests and retired pastors arrived and joined the celebrations, including:

- the Congregational Birthday Dinner on Wednesday, December 4
- a reception on the actual Dedication date, December 7
- worship and rejoicing on Jubilee Sunday, December 8



Jubilee Service 1974

Music by John Yarrington, McFarlin's Director of Music, dedicated to Dr. Wayne Coffin, Senior Minister, and to celebrate the 50th Anniversary
 (This song is on the last page of the 50th Anniversary booklet)



Handbells at 50th Anniversary Dinner 1974

Make Us, O God, A Church That Shares

W. Victor Kane COFFIN 86, 86, D
 John Yarrington

The tune for this hymn was written for the fiftieth anniversary of McFarlin United Methodist Church and named in honor of Senior Minister, Dr. Wayne W. Coffin.

Music by John Yarrington 1974



Jubilee Sanctuary Service 1974

Missions & The Woman's Society of Christian Service

Missions

During McFarlin's 50-year history, \$767,000 from the Benevolences Budget, a budgeted line item in the Annual Budget, supported 25 local missions. The Outreach Team attended specific community events to emphasize the campus, regional, national, and global mission attributes of the church's responsibility to others.



Brazil Missionaries 1970

Woman's Society of Christian Service

Women's mission organizations began as early as 1869. Throughout 150+ years, women's mission organizations have changed and evolved to meet needs in an ever-changing world and church. The Woman's Society of Christian Service strongly supported missions through regular pledges to the Conference and McFarlin Circles. (The Woman's Society of Christian Service changed to the United Methodist Women after the Methodist Church and Evangelical United Brethren Church merger in 1968 and more recently to the United Women of Faith.)



UMW Circle 1974

Pastors and Associate Pastors 1949-1974



The Rev. Dr. Finis Crutchfield

Senior Pastor from 1950 to 1960. The congregation witnessed the 33-year-old pastor's inspiring sermons, his boundless energy and enthusiasm in fundraising for the Methodist Center, the Sanctuary air conditioning project, and building McFarlin's first elevator. Rev. Crutchfield and 14 McFarlin members oversaw the construction of St. Stephen's Methodist Church on McGee Drive in 1958.



The Rev. Dr. Poe Williams

Senior Pastor from 1960 to 1966. Rev. Williams' personal warmth, good humor, and willingness to experiment with innovation strengthened McFarlin's lay leadership. His leadership guided McFarlin through challenging times of national and worldwide church disenchantment and declining attendance.



The Rev. Dr. Wayne Coffin

Senior Pastor from 1966 to 1976. His refined manner, thoughtful and relevant sermons, and analytical and organizational skills were highly respected and appreciated. He encouraged and supported the development of a strong laity. Through his leadership and laity commitment, the church's financials were sound.

Associate Pastors 1953-1978

T. M. Moore, 1953-1956
Dr. Phil Deschner, 1956-1962

W. H. "Bill" Haynes, 1962-1972
Dan Stillwell, 1972-1978

McFarlin 1974-1999





Milestones 1974-1999

1974—McFarlin's 50-year commitment to community service and youth included providing space for Boy Scout Troop 241 to meet since its inception in 1924. Boy Scout Troop 241 had a roster of 61 Eagle Scouts in 1974.

1979—The building needed significant repairs. The church adopted a plan for a \$500,000 bond issue to finance the repairs and renovations.

1984—Food and Shelter for Friends began in Meyer Hall; Harriette Leigh and Kathryn Selmon initiated and helped launch this community-wide ministry.

1984—The first Handbell and Instrumental Concert was performed in December. This concert was created as the music department ensembles grew in number.

1986—Thursday Utilities Assistance began helping those needing financial assistance with electric, gas, and water costs. Rev. Fenn asked Vesta Bauman to lead this new ministry.

1987—The making of banners for All Saints' Sunday worship began at McFarlin. Venita MacGorman, Martha Lee, and Kathy Mash coordinated adults and children to make 64 banners the first year.





1988—The Noack Organ was purchased and installed to replace the rehabbed, outdated organ in the sanctuary. This was made possible by generous gifts.

1989—Life Ministries (which became Stephen Ministries) began and offered appropriate care resources for individuals, couples, families, and groups within the walls of McFarlin.

1991—An anonymous gift and other memorial funds created a new foundation, The McFarlin Foundation, worth \$1,500,000. Rev. Phil Fenn led this significant and strategic development designed to create this perpetual endowment fund to help secure the long-term future of McFarlin.

1995—United Methodist Men was officially activated by Rev. Fenn at McFarlin.

1998—Sunday, April 5, a groundbreaking gala for “The Spirit is Building” campaign for a new addition to the original building was held. By December of that year, 785 people (families and individuals) had pledged \$4,048,031 to fund the growing church with adequate space to continue making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Remembering the 75th Year: A Celebration of Christian Love, Witness, and Service *1974-1999*

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary—A Year Long 1999

McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church celebrated 75 years of Christian presence and witness. The anniversary book highlighted that three-quarters of a century of ministry in terms of McFarlin members' Nurture, Love, Service, and Fellowship. The Gospel of Jesus Christ influenced and changed people's lives within and beyond McFarlin's walls.



75th Anniversary Groundbreaking Service 1998

McFarlin Ministries

Worship

“Worship the Lord with gladness; come before the Lord with joyful songs.”

Psalm 100:2

The Sunday morning worship service was, of course, the perennial, first priority focus of Rev. Fenn’s 22-year tenure (1979–2001) as McFarlin’s Senior Pastor. His dedication to the task, his gifts for preaching, and the skill with which he delivered sermons proved very effective and memorable. He took biennial sermon planning retreats for rejuvenation, study, and preparation for the next six months in the pulpit. During these years, there was significant spiritual and membership growth and expansion of church programs both at McFarlin and among other United Methodist Churches.

Under Rev. Fenn’s leadership, women became ushers in the church and female clergy were invited to preach about twice each year. This helped prepare McFarlin for the day when a female senior pastor would be appointed. It was only in 1956 that the UMC granted women full clergy rights. Children’s sermons began on September 20, 1985, and were given on the fourth Sunday of every month.



Sanctuary Service 1990s

“Children are important. Just as Jesus gave them a place in the kingdom, so they have a place in our affairs of faith.”

(Quote from McFarlin Alive, “From Phil,” Aug. 3, 1984)

Music Ministry

***“The joy of music is that it can go beyond words—which are too precise.
Music can express what there is in the soul.”***

Oliver Messiaen

In 1982, the organ fund received a generous gift from the Perkinson family. With the appointment of Dr. Perry White as Director of McFarlin’s Music Ministry in 1983, the organ committee explored either rehabbing or replacing the existing organ. In 1986, the Board of Trustees signed a contract with the Noack Organ Company, and in 1988, the new Noack Organ became an integral part of McFarlin’s Sanctuary.

Music is vital to Christian worship and contributes to people’s spirituality. Dr. Perry White was Director of McFarlin’s Music Ministry for 25 years (1983–2008). The music program evolved into 17 vocal and bell ensembles providing musical opportunities for every age. Vocal and bell choirs ranged from kindergarten to senior adults, with more than 300 participants.



Noack Organ Installed 1988

“The organ is, in truth, the most daring, the most magnificent of all instruments invented by human genius. Surely, in some sort, a pedestal on which the soul poises for a flight into space—to cross the infinite that separates Heaven and Earth.”

Honoré de Balzac

“Throughout the years, our outstanding Noack Organ will mold and enhance our taste for excellence. It will also be an enduring reminder that the search for quality, even though it requires a tremendous investment of time, energy, and resources, is not only a worthy human endeavor but also one which is pleasing to God.”

The Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn

Weekly worship services resounded with the beauty of blended choir voices, solos, bells, the organ, and other musical instruments. The climax of the year's music program was the Christmas Candlelight Carol Service showcasing McFarlin's musical talent. This inspiring musical service, begun in 1965, drew a crowd from all over the community.



Candlelight Carol Service 1990s

Under Dr. Perry White's leadership, adult choirs performed nationally and internationally. The Pumpkin Patch sales served as a choir fundraiser to support these tours. Each of the following countries welcomed and showed appreciation for the choirs' talent and visit to their country from 1990-2002: Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Germany, England, Scotland, Wales, Canada, Brazil.



Youth Playing Organ 1990s



McFarlin Ding-A-Lings 1988

Care Ministries

Care Ministries was organized to provide care for those within McFarlin's walls with special needs due to aging, illness, and temporary or permanent disabilities.



Stephen Ministries 1997

Life Ministries

Life Ministries began in 1989 and offered resources for individuals, couples, families, and groups. In 1996, Jane Cook was named director. The Life Ministries group became Stephen Ministers, and 38 McFarlin members committed to 40 hours of special training in Christian service for people in crisis.

The Stephen Ministry offered grief counseling, with professional therapists available for individuals with greater needs. Seminars on life changes, challenges, and choices included a marriage enrichment series and a "Choices and Challenges" seminar.

Stephen Ministers, like earlier care groups, continued to greet new members, receive prayer requests, coordinate prayer chains, hospital visits, meal provision plans, and send personalized notes to families experiencing births, baptisms, and loss of loved ones.



Stephen Ministries 1999

Older Adult Ministry

Older Adult Ministry was a spin-off from the earlier Jolly Elders and ministered to senior members. The Bonus Years program for the 55+ group planned short-day and overnight trips to areas with interesting attractions and monthly luncheons. Middle Adult Ministry was known as "The Action Faction." This program met the growing need for this age group. Activities included "Breakfast Devotions," dinners with noted speakers, and trips.

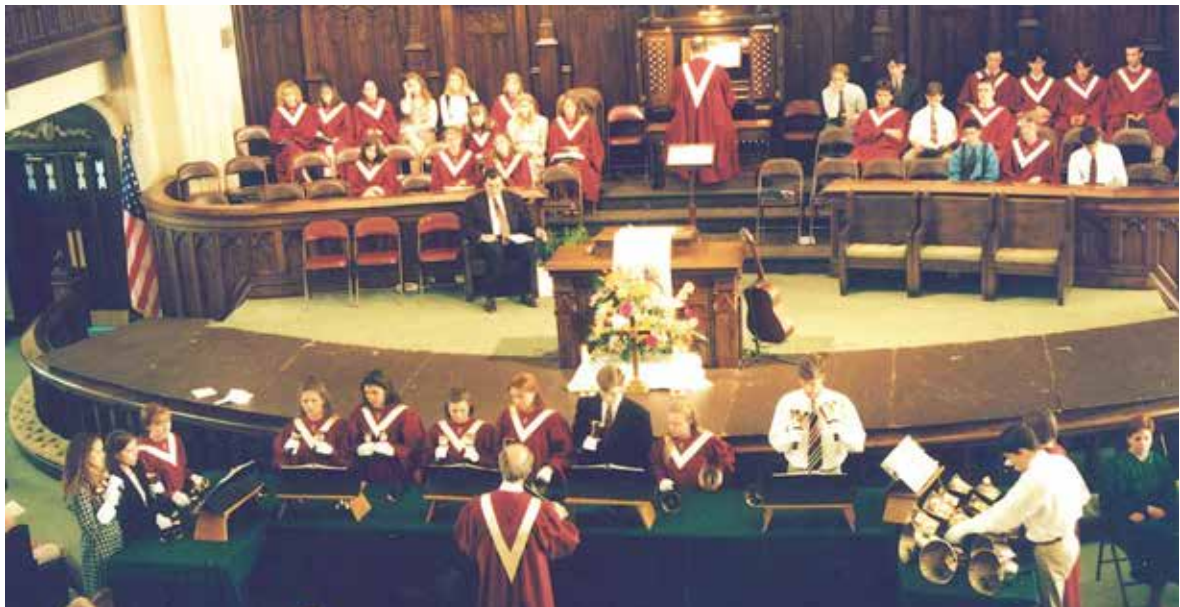


Bonus Years Trip 1990s

Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry has always been a priority. In August 1993, Scott Meier arrived to lead approximately 150 youth in participatory ministry. The program included Sunday morning and evening activities, weekday Bible studies, and recreational events, including lock-ins at the church for middle school and high school youth.

The youth looked forward to participating in numerous mission trips to Mexico, Chicago, Denver, and Oklahoma City to provide services to those in need. In addition to staff leadership, a large group of parents, friends, and congregational support made this outstanding, vibrant youth ministry possible.



Youth Sunday Service 1990s

Singles Ministry

Singles Ministry provided opportunities for single adults to develop and deepen their faith, make new friends through Christian fellowship, and receive and give support during life challenges and changes. This ministry was the only church-based group for single adults in Norman and became a citywide and metro-wide ecumenical group.

The Singles Ministry focused on building an inclusive community that became an extended family. Singles felt connected to the church groups and enjoyed celebrating annual holidays in different family-style cultures with their McFarlin families.

In the mid-90s, Harriette Leigh led this multifaceted program that included Sunday school classes for all ages and different life situations. A divorce group, a Saturday morning breakfast group, and a "Circle of Friends" ensured frequent contact and ongoing support.



McFarlin Singles Christmas Party 1999

Special Study Programs and Fellowship (1974-1999)

The Religion and Race Commission created a Brotherhood Sunday Program, a Sunday school lesson series related to Civil Rights and called "Teaching Tolerance." That fellowship and study experience opened hearts and minds to learn about and gain respect of differences and to practice love for all people—our neighbors. *All people are God's good creation.*



75th Anniversary Celebrating Love Sanctuary Service 1999

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:39

A Norman Transcript article written in 1984 pointed out that Methodism is America's most racially inclusive denomination. The following is a quote from Rev. Fenn in *McFarlin Alive*, August 3, 1984: “It makes me proud that our church so visibly demonstrates that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, Galatians 3:28.”

Acts of love, worship, discipleship, fellowship, and service within and beyond the church's walls developed and sustained McFarlin's missional brand throughout the community.

A 34-week intensive study program, Disciple Bible Study, was initiated and well attended. Christian love and fellowship created an environment for nurturing friendships and support groups that influenced and changed lives within and beyond McFarlin's walls.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Acts 2:42

Sunday School Classes

The Education Commission focused on the nurture, enrichment, heart, and fellowship opportunities for all Sunday school classes. By 1999, Sunday school classes numbered 12 for children, six for youth, and 23 for adult classes.

- Nursery-age children listened to stories and songs about the Bible.
- Elementary children learned about the Bible, songs, and Christian living.
- Third-grade children received their Bibles in Sunday worship and were encouraged to use their Bible study skills learned in Sunday school.
- Adult Sunday school classes ranged from young, single adults to adults ages 40 and up, and diverse couples' groups met for Bible studies.
- The children, youth, and adult Sunday school class curriculums met the needs of many and helped people feel a greater connection to their faith and McFarlin.



Rev. Fenn with 3rd Grade Students 1998

Missions

During these years, McFarlin's active missions ministry was active both within and outside its walls. For over 40 years, McFarlin supported the Schislers' ministry in Brazil, where they started at least ten new Methodist Churches. After the Schislers retired, McFarlin contributed to Darla and Glenn Rowley's missionary work in Dakar, Senegal, Africa. Darla and Glenn later served in Mozambique from 1987–1993. McFarlin helped support the Rowleys and their two daughters with weekly prayers during Sunday worship service and throughout the week and with budgeted financial contributions.

In 1991, six teams from McFarlin participated with Volunteers in Mission (VIM) trips, at their own expense, to Bolivia (twice), Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, and Guatemala, plus several trips within the US, including Alaska. McFarlin members and financial contributions also supported 50 other missions initiatives.



Service Project 1990s



Mexico Mission Trip 1990s



Food for Christmas Store 1990s

United Methodist Men

A Methodist men's service group performed tasks around the church, yard work, minor repairs, and building wheelchair ramps beyond the walls of McFarlin. Many Methodist men participated in the ecumenical men's Prayer Breakfast hosted in Meyer Hall for over 60 years.

In January 1995, the Rev. Phil Fenn officially reactivated the McFarlin "United Methodist Men" (UMM). Within a year, the group grew to 100 members. The newly formed United Methodist Men quickly became active within the community and in connection with the United Methodist Men of the Oklahoma Conference.

Early projects included gleaning efforts, Farmer's Market food donations, support of the UMC Boy's Ranch in Gore, OK, involvement with Habitat for Humanity, and minor repair projects for local church members.



UMM Building a Ramp 1998

United Methodist Women

Methodist women's organizations formed as early as 1869, and although Methodist women's group names changed through the years, their commitment stayed the same: "to serve God and women, children and youth locally and globally." The birth of "United Methodist Women" (UMW) in 1973 followed the 1968 merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church with the Methodist Church to form the "United Methodist" Church. This new women's organization provided more flexibility for individual circles to determine their preferred type of study or missional service.



UMW Circle 1980s

McFarlin's United Methodist Women's ministry committed itself to missions to raise awareness and help women's and children's needs at home and worldwide. The UMW budgeted financial support for United Methodist Missions, Neighborhood Services Organization in OKC, and Cookson Hills Methodist Mission Center in NE Oklahoma. Locally, United Methodist Women supported Norman's Women's Resource Center, Christmas Store, and Meals on Wheels.

The Building of the 1999/2001 Building Addition Including Fenn Hall—Growth, Challenges, Completion

In the late 1980s, the church needed more space to accommodate an increased staff, Sunday school classes, and other programs. New growth was exciting and challenging. Ten significant challenges identified were demographics, church growth, staffing, space utilization, property needs, parking lot construction, fire-alarm system, window replacement, landscaping, and building expansion. In 1992, the Building Planning Committee met regularly for three years and determined necessary changes to the church to meet current needs. The church contracted with an architectural firm and another firm specializing in church fundraising to assist with the project's financial planning. A preliminary cost estimate was \$4,000,000.



Sanctuary Service 1980s

The campaign's theme, "The Spirit Is Building," emphasized financial and spiritual dimensions and became McFarlin's watchword for building a new addition. The plans included the following.

- Expanding the Day Care facilities
- Building a multipurpose two-story fellowship hall
 - This new space would include a commercial-type kitchen with seating for up to 500 people for church dinners
 - Stage with lighting, an audio-visual system, and dressing rooms
 - Flexible usage included retractable basketball goals and three large Sunday school classes with accordion doors
 - Improved office space
 - New youth center
- Finishing the exterior of the new building in Indiana limestone to blend with the original church stonework



Palm Sunday Lloyd Noble Center 1997

The grand climax of "The Spirit Is Building" campaign occurred on Palm Sunday, 1997. This monumental pledge service held at the Lloyd Noble Center on the OU campus was one of the largest and most memorable McFarlin worship services ever. There was a large choir, instrumental music, and a sermon for the occasion. McFarlin members felt like a family uniting to help build McFarlin's future. In December of 1998, 785 families and persons pledged \$4,048,031 for the new build.

The Building of the 1999/2001 Building Addition Continued

In 1998 a gala ceremony celebrated a groundbreaking for the new addition to McFarlin. Attendees used marker stakes to outline the building site and shovels for the ceremony which closed with the singing of "Amazing Grace." The celebration continued with a dinner and special guests, including former the Rev. Wayne Coffin and James Eagleton, Administrator of the McFarlin Endowment, who assisted with securing financing for the new structure, and Marion Bauman, Board of Trustees Chair.



75th Anniversary Groundbreaking 1998

Early in 1999, McFarlin members experienced two major challenges. First, the original \$4,000,000 cost estimate was insufficient. Members rose to the challenge and many extended their three-year pledge to the original campaign for one or more years to cover the overage. Second, the 1960 air-conditioning system failed in March and costly repairs occurred in June.



New Building Construction 1999-2000

The Atrium of the new addition connected the original building with the new Fellowship Hall. This space was dedicated to the Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn and his wife, Gloria Jean Fenn, with the Fellowship Hall named in their honor, Fenn Hall.

75th Anniversary Celebration Events Throughout 1999

The Cornerstone Celebration, January 21, 1999, tied together the old and new. The original Cornerstone Celebration included a time capsule for the future with mementos of the present.

This day included a continental breakfast and "Spiritual Renewal" workshop led by Bishop Bill and Marilyn Oden on Saturday, January 23. Bishop Oden preached on Sunday, January 24.



Cornerstone on Display in the Heritage Hallway at McFarlin

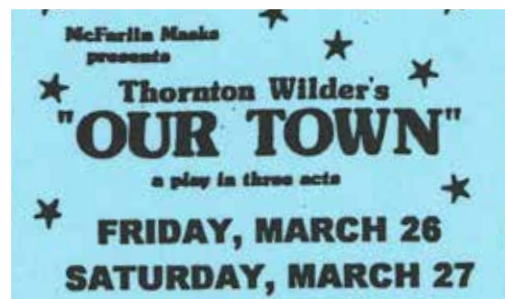
In February, the focus was on "Shining in Christian Nurture." John Yarrington, Director of Music Ministry from 1965 to 1978, directed the Yarrington Youth Alumni Choir at the first service, and at the second service, he led the Chancel Choir in the hymn, "Make Us, O God, A Church That Shares." Yarrington composed the music for this hymn in honor of McFarlin's 50th Anniversary and Rev. Dr. Coffin.



Joe & Beverly Sanders at 75th Anniversary Marriage Seminar

In February, people attended a Marriage Enrichment Seminar. Continuing with the marriage theme, 59 couples married for 50+ years were celebrated at Sunday's worship services on Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day evening, a "Wedding Vow Renewal Service" was complete with a wedding cake reception.

In March, the McFarlin Masks (the church theater group) presented the Thornton Wilder classic, "Our Town." Outstanding casting and authentic costumes ensured a memorable performance. The Sunday morning sermon included excerpts from the play.



McFarlin Masks "Our Town" Program



75th Anniversary Float in 89er Day Parade 1999

April, May, and June focused on "Christian Love." The first event was creating a homecoming float for the "89er Day Parade" featuring a large diamond to symbolize McFarlin's 75th Anniversary: "Shining Diamond Bright."

On Mother's Day, former member the Rev. Donna Newendorp, UM minister in Colorado, preached in McFarlin's pulpit. Christian Service activities for the third quarter events began on the Fourth of July and recognized all McFarlin members who had been or were in military service. In August, more than 600 Sunday school teachers—present and former—were honored. In September, McFarlin volunteers were honored for Christian Service at a dinner for "Outside the Walls" projects.



McFarlin Staff Honoring Ann Lassetter 1999

The Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn Honored for 20 Years of Service 1979-1999

The annual Green Grass Festival (a family-potluck get-together) surprise program was “This Is Your Life, Phil Fenn,” an evening to honor the Rev. Dr. Philip J. Fenn’s 20 years of ministerial service. The audience of approximately 350 people held fans that bore the face of Phil Fenn. The back side of the fan read, “I’m a Phil Fenn fan.” The climax of the evening was a joint presentation by the Fenn children. They agreed their father’s consistent theme had been his appreciation of the capable, fun, visionary, compassionate, and genuine people who make up the McFarlin congregation. They expressed their sincere yet humorous appreciation when they said in unison: “Thanks, Dad, for keeping a steady job.”



Rev. Fenn at the Green Grass Festival in 2000



Gloria Jean Fenn & Rev. Fenn

Gloria Jean, Rev. Fenn’s wife, was also recognized for her numerous contributions to the life of McFarlin: children’s Sunday school teacher, an active member of UMW and Chancel Choir, a friend to many, and a loving mother to two.

During those years, Gloria Jean also earned a master’s degree and worked as a Speech Pathologist with a local Head Start program.

Milestones in Rev. Fenn’s 20 years included building renovations, property purchases, and establishing The McFarlin Foundation—Gifts that Continue to Give. He led the planning for the “The Spirit Is Building” campaign to build McFarlin’s new addition. Rev. Fenn’s spiritual contributions of interpreting Scriptures to relate to the congregation’s daily lives, sharing his faith journey struggle, and sharing his family life were central to his ministry. Rev. Fenn was instrumental in the work of the church not only locally but in the wider workings of the UMC. Rev. Fenn also initiated the Disciple Bible Studies program at McFarlin.

The Wesley—Reflections at McFarlin’s 75th Year

The Wesley Foundation campus ministry at the University of Oklahoma was alive and thriving. Students at The Wesley exemplified a strong spiritual connection to local and global missions. Students worked as tutors in Norman Public Schools, and small groups volunteered for projects at the J. D. McCarty Center, Food for Friends, and Christmas in April Missions. Some students went on mission trips to Bosnia, Russia, Canada, and Mexico.



OU Students Kneeling During Vespers Service

Through the years, some things have changed to meet current students’ needs, and some things have remained the same. From the beginning of the Wesley Foundation, students participated in weekly Vespers (evening prayers). Tuesday night Vespers drew between 100 to 150 students each week.

After 75 years, The Wesley continued to be a place for Christian fellowship, friendship, worship, commitment to community and the university, and ever-expanding global learning.



The Wesley on the OU Campus

McFarlin's 75th Year Celebration in 1999

The Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn expressed the following in a 1999 sermon. "What we and our parents and our grandparents have been about is *Space Engineering*—not the kind of engineering that has taken the human race to the moon and beyond in the 1900's—but *Inner Space Engineering* concerned with Value Creating and Value Inculcating. This is and will continue to be the unique mission of our church as we seek to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

McFarlin's 75th year celebration in 1999 brought the historic church to the turn of the **millennium shining brightly, a joining of the past and the future**. The following from the 75th Anniversary Book by Mary Joyce Rodgers (1924–2010) is a fitting conclusion to that moment in time:

"As we venture into this new world of AD 2000, these are the resources we can rely on from our recent and not-so-recent past.

We have:

- A continuation of the spirit that brought the Methodist Church to this locale originally;
- A church building provided long ago as a memorial for the further worship of God;
- An exciting and beautiful new addition to the original building has been provided through the dedication of the present membership;
- A congregation whose 'Spirit Is Building' in anticipation of new challenges, with necessary resources to meet them;
- A 'Program that is Building' with clergy, staff, and lay leadership to inspire and facilitate it;
- God's Spirit upon which we depend for continuing guidance and strength."

"To the glory of Almighty God with the prayer that his Spirit may dwell here."

(Quote from Memorial Canopy Dedication in the Sanctuary)

Pastors and Associate Pastors 1974-1999



Dr. Jack Featherstone

Senior Pastor from 1976 to 1979. Rev. Featherstone was engaging and had a keen sense of humor that endeared him to the congregation. His wife, Joyce, was known for her infectious cheerfulness. McFarlin had no significant debt and a budget of \$337,000. However, the physical plant urgently needed repairs, and with Rev. Featherstone's encouragement, plans began for a \$500,000 bond issue to finance these repairs and renovations.



Dr. Phil Fenn

Senior Pastor from 1979 to 2001. Woven throughout the 75th Anniversary booklet, Rev. Fenn's ministry, innovation, missions, and guidance in worshipping God and serving others are evident. Under Rev. Fenn's insight and leadership, The McFarlin Foundation was established, the renovation of McFarlin's physical plant and the building of a \$6,000,000 addition met the growing needs of a vibrant congregation.

The newly built fellowship hall was named Fenn Hall to honor the Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn and his wife, Gloria Jean Fenn, and their 20 years of loving service to McFarlin.

Associate Pastors 1974-1999

Dan Patman, 1978 to 1980

Dick Smith, 1980 to 1990

Mike Nicholson, 1990 to 2000

George Martin, a retired Navy Chaplain, was a volunteer Associate Pastor from 1983 to 2000. George Martin Chapel is in memory of his service to McFarlin.

McFarlin 1999-2024





Milestones 1999-2016

1999—The Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn initiated McFarlin's Contemporary Lifeline (Modern) Worship service.

2001—The Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn concluded his 22 years as McFarlin's Senior Pastor. The Rev. Dr. Richard (Dick) House began his ten-year tenure as McFarlin's Senior Pastor.

2001—The addition to the original building was completed and dedicated, expanding opportunities for ministries both within and outside of the church.

2002—McFarlin's Care Ministries began as an umbrella to engage and facilitate all care ministries within McFarlin, including the 55+ programs.

2004—McFarlin's Hospital Visitation Team began; pastors and the Director of Care Ministries visit hospitalized members and the extended faith family.

2006—The Prayer Shawl Ministry began and donated over 5,000 shawls, scarves, and lap (plus baby) blankets during the first ten years before they stopped counting.





2009—Heritage Hall is on the second floor of McFarlin and contains a restored historical Tree of Methodism, two display cases, and a 25-year-old time capsule. This Tree of Methodism was found under the bed of Rea Mann, a longtime McFarlin member. Brad Koplowitz restored the illustration by piecing together little shreds to complete and preserve the historical graphic. The contents of the two display cases represent McFarlin’s historical “highlights and milestones.”

2011—The Rev. Dick House retired. The Rev. Linda Harker began her nine-year tenure as McFarlin’s first female Senior Pastor.

2011—The Meal Ministry began and offered bereavement meals at McFarlin following a funeral service.

2011—The first Spring Break Mission trip to Mexico began in 1994 and concluded in 2011. In 2012, the mission trip location changed to Rio Grande Valley in South Texas, and 12 years later, the annual Adult and Youth Mission Trips continue going to South Texas.

2012—McFarlin’s Vision Team birthed our new mission statement: *Changing Lives That Change the World.*

2013—Congregational Care Ministers (CCMs) are formed and commissioned.

2016—The Food Pantry expanded through its big box truck Mobile Food Pantry, which delivers food to people in the neighborhoods of McFarlin’s four partner schools.

Milestones 2016-2020

2016—McFarlin began livestreaming the 11am Sanctuary worship service and expanded to the Modern worship service in 2020.

2017—The Rev. Linda Harker's sermon series on "Just Tell Your Story" encouraged the congregation to share their faith walk, inspiring two Celebrate Your Story women's brunches. Over 200 women from McFarlin and the community attended each brunch.

2017—Rev. Harker led the first mission team to Morogoro, Tanzania, establishing a partnership between McFarlin and UMC missionaries Umba and Ngoy Kalangwa. This inspired further mission trips in 2018 and 2023, along with financial support for various needs, including school buses, teacher salaries, student scholarships and lunches, pastor training facilities, a medical clinic expansion, sewing machines for women's programs, and water wells.

2020—Three significant changes and one major challenge in the life of McFarlin.

1. The Rev. Linda Harker retired.
2. The Rev. Dr. Rockford Johnson appointed as Senior Pastor
3. The COVID-19 pandemic caused us to move to online-only services on March 15, 2020.

The Rev. Wendi Neal's, Associate Pastor, and Scott Meier's longtime connection to the congregation and community were essential in navigating the many challenges of the pandemic. McFarlin's love extended through its people of faith, reached out to their two new pastors, the Rev. Dr. Rockford Johnson, Senior Pastor, and the Rev. Trey Witzel, Associate Pastor, and welcomed them however they could.

Innovative planning and collaboration held McFarlin together. Staff checked on every member's well-being, staying connected through email, phone calls, texts, Zoom, and online worship services.

As vaccinations increased and COVID-19 cases decreased, McFarlin reinstated distanced in-person worship on August 16, 2020. However, a subsequent COVID-19 wave forced another closure.



A Reflection—The church was closed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. On a cold winter Sunday morning, people of faith gathered in McFarlin’s parking lot for a first-time-ever drive-in worship service. People turned car radios to FM 89.7 to hear Pastor Rockford’s Sunday morning message. Instead of saying “Amen” or applauding, people honked horns to express joy at being together for worship. Loud, continuous honking announced to the neighborhood that McFarlin was alive and worshipping together. Everyone felt God’s love connecting all worshipers sitting in their cars in McFarlin’s south parking lot.

A Reflection—McFarlin’s Music Ministries’ pioneer spirit and Pastors Rockford, Wendi, and Trey made the commitment and extraordinary effort to deliver a weekly online worship service. Everyone learned to use Zoom. The music department staff scrolled through many previously recorded worship services to find the congregation singing hymns accompanied by the organ and Choir Anthems to coordinate with weekly sermons to enrich the online worship service. On February 28, 2021, the congregation, wearing masks, was seated in every other pew for worship services.

The Music Ministries was thankful for technology. We recorded music via computers and recorded Bell Choir members performing, one person at a time. Choir members sang a hymn, one person at a time. Their voices, via technology, blended to create a full choir effect. Later, we observed social distancing guidelines and recorded the Carillon Bell Choir in McFarlin’s empty Sanctuary. Each Bell Choir member wore a mask, and Bell Choir tables positioned six feet apart complied with COVID-19 guidelines. During the first live Sunday worship service, the organ music and Choir members’ melodious voices filled the Sanctuary with joyous music that brought tears to our eyes and warmed our hearts. At last, the Music Ministries members worshiped with the congregation—a significant milestone and blessing for all.

Milestones 2022-2024

2022—50th Anniversary of Meals on Wheels. McFarlin's Social Concerns Commission started Mobile Meals to feed elderly shut-ins, and in 1972, it became a United Way Agency, Meals on Wheels.

2022—Standing on the Promises—Securing the Next Century. McFarlin's vision and goals opened eyes to the practical building repairs and renovations necessary to preserve and continue operating McFarlin's 100-year-old building and building a new Missions Center.

2023—Food & Shelter, Inc. celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2023. Food for Friends, founded in 1983 by a group of compassionate McFarlin members, honored key founders the Rev. Harriette Leigh and Kathryn Selmon. They first began distributing meals to hungry people in community parks. Soon it was evident the need was more significant than anticipated, and McFarlin brought in a coalition of volunteers to expand services. Food for Friends opened its first location at 104 West Comanche in 1987. In 2017, Food & Shelter, Inc. opened its new location at 201 Reed Ave. in Norman.

2023—Missions Center Groundbreaking Ceremony. Representing the Annual Conference, District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Victor McCullough led the groundbreaking ceremony. McFarlin's new Missions Center is large enough to house ministries beyond the Food Pantry ministries. The second floor of the Missions Center is unfinished until specific future community needs are identified, along with gifts, callings, and volunteers within McFarlin. "A church that is invested heavily in high-impact community missions is a church that catches the next wave of vitality. The Missions Center is such an investment." (Excerpt from "Standing on the Promises" campaign booklet)





2023—**Kid Zone** began at McFarlin, an after-school program for children from kindergarten to fifth grade, focused on STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, Math), social-emotional skills, and homework help—transportation from schools to McFarlin provided.

2023—McFarlin's 100th Anniversary float joined the City of Norman's Christmas parade and won first prize in music.

2024—**McFarlin 100th Anniversary Celebrations**

1. Scavenger Hunt, exploring our 100-year-old building, and Chili supper, January 28, 2024
2. Green Grass Festival for the family with dinner and activities, June 9, 2024
3. McFarlin 100th Celebration Weekend with dinner and a program on August 10, 2024, at Embassy Suites and special worship services on Sunday, August 11, 2024
4. Worship services Sunday, December 8, 2024, 100 years and one day after the opening of McFarlin on December 7, 1924

2024—Four pictorial panels representing McFarlin's history will hang in Heritage Hall to celebrate McFarlin's 100th birthday and special worship service on Sunday, December 8, 2024.

The Last Quarter of McFarlin's First Century *1999-2024*

Arriving at 100 Years:

Loving God, Loving the World, Growing in Faith, Serving Others

"Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."
(The United Methodist Mission Statement)



McFarlin 2023

“The stride of yesterday has set the pace for tomorrow. The future must outshine the past of McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church.”

(Quote from the 50th Anniversary booklet)

This 100th Anniversary celebration could not happen without everyone who lived out their faith at McFarlin and “set the pace” to continue “shining bright” as a missional church. McFarlin’s past and present-day “highlights” and “milestones” portray the hope, love, diversity, and unity of its people of faith through worship, discipleship, care, and missions. Throughout McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church’s history, there has always been an open invitation to come and experience God’s loving presence, Christian love, and renewed hope.



All Saints' Sunday 2022

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15:13 (Rev. Johnson’s benediction and theme verse for 2024)

McFarlin Ministries

Worship—A Love Language

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Psalm 118:24



Easter Sunday 2017

McFarlin faith families—sometimes several generations—come together in fellowship with friends and guests for worship. For 100 years, McFarlin’s clergy and laity have prepared and delivered inspiring worship services and Sunday school lessons based on Scriptures and Jesus’ paraphrased words: **Love God; Love Others.**

Sunday morning Sanctuary worship begins with youth acolytes lighting two candles. During worship, people sing, listen to hymns, Scriptures, and sermons, pray in unison, lift-up silent personal prayers, reflect on blessings, and feel God's loving presence.

Children's messages, begun in the late 1990s by Rev. Fenn and Venita MacGorman, continue each week in both Sanctuary and Modern worship services. Children are welcomed to the front for a brief message written for them to remind them that God loves them and welcomes them.



Children's Moment in the Sanctuary 2016



Acolytes in Sanctuary Worship 2023

At the end of the worship service, acolytes relight their candle lighters, extinguish the candles, and carry the flame out of the Sanctuary. The light from the flame represents Jesus' light going out into the world for all. The congregation follows the light, keeps it in their hearts, and serves others with Christian love.

McFarlin offers three services each Sunday morning: traditional services at 8:30am and 11am in the Sanctuary, and a Modern service at 11am in Fenn Hall.

Worship—A Love Language Continued

Holy Communion is a sacred act of worship, usually served on the first Sunday of the month in the Sanctuary. Modern worship serves communion weekly. Christ, our Lord, invites all who love him to his table. All are welcome to come, kneel at the altar—just as you are—participate in receiving the blessed bread and juice, feel God's love, and silently pray about whatever is on your heart.



World Communion Sunday 2015



World Communion Sunday 2016



World Communion Sunday 2015

McFarlin's faith family includes newly confirmed youth, adults who experience church for the first time, transfers from different denominations, and longtime and generational Methodists. All are welcome to connect with the church and its faith family. Our worship service traditions and symbolism are grounded in God's love for us and our love for God and others. Many of our traditions began years ago and continue to this day.

Modern Worship

The late 1990s marked the beginning of conversations about introducing modern worship at McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church. By the fall of 2000, these discussions materialized into a worshipping community with the introduction of contemporary worship in the Sanctuary. This innovative approach initially set the modern worship at 9:30am, sandwiched between traditional services at 8:30am and 11am in the Sanctuary. However, early in 2002, to accommodate varying Sunday School schedules, McFarlin transitioned to the current schedule with two simultaneous services at 11am.



Easter Sunday in Modern Worship 2024

The impetus for Modern worship stemmed from Rev. Fenn's foresight and recognition of evolving worship preferences within the church community. He understood that without embracing contemporary worship, McFarlin would miss out on the dynamic and transformative movement that was gaining momentum across the country. The inclusion of a modern service was not just about keeping up with trends but about meeting the spiritual needs of the congregation, especially the youth. Many young members were already participating in a praise band on Sunday nights, creating a natural desire to incorporate this vibrant music into Sunday morning worship.

Rob Sher was the obvious choice to lead worship, given his deep connection with the church and his musical talents. Rev. Fenn empowered a group of lay people to take on initial rotating preaching duties. This collective leadership approach not only diversified the voices heard from the pulpit but also fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility within the congregation.

Advent Season & Christmas Worship Services

The Advent season begins the journey to the Nativity by preparing our hearts and minds to welcome the birth of the Christ Child, Jesus. In December 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff created an Advent Devotional booklet, which featured Scripture selections, reflections, prayers, and daily suggestions for acts of kindness and extended hospitality centered on the meaning of Christmas.

McFarlin's Advent Festival (began in 1980) continues to be a longstanding tradition to celebrate the beginning of Advent. The festival's seasonal enchantment fills the air. There are crafts, live music, hot drinks, cookies, a photo booth, smiles and laughter from children of all ages, and volunteers creating and participating in heartwarming joy.



Advent Festival 2022

McFarlin is always beautifully adorned for the Christmas season. In the Sanctuary, an evergreen Christmas tree symbolizing everlasting life, decorated with Chrismon ornaments made from white and gold beads—white representing the liturgical color for joy, purity, and perfection—gold representing the Lord's majesty and glory invites all to learn about Christian symbolism. The Chrismons on this tree were made by a small group of women beginning in 2018 and continuing to this day.

Talented musicians and choirs of all ages bless McFarlin. Over the past 25 years, there have been Handbell Choir Concerts, a worship service with pastoral reflections, our Chancel Choir, and guest musicians from The Norman Philharmonic Candlelight Carol Concerts (continued since its inception in 1965), a Blue Christmas service, a Modern Christmas Eve service, and three Christmas Eve worship services.

In 2022, Modern worship in Fenn Hall offered the first-ever “Christmas Eve Eve” service. The evening worship featured folks wearing festive Christmas sweaters and singing carols with traditional candlelight.

A 4pm family service on Christmas Eve includes worship, an interactive program, and music for young children. The 7pm and 11pm are traditional candlelight and communion services for everyone. Each worship service includes heavenly music from choirs, handbell choirs, and worshipers praising God’s gift of love—the birth of baby Jesus.



Candlelight Carol 2016

McFarlin’s outdoor Nativity scene was a generous gift from Merry Voeller, Chairperson of the Advent Festival Committee for several years. She discovered the Nativity scene at a craft fair in Mississippi and purchased it for McFarlin’s Advent Festival. A member of the United Methodist Men built the stable area, and other Methodist men arranged the Nativity scene.

The Nativity angel’s position on top of the stable casts a huge angel shadow on McFarlin’s south-facing wall. Some say the first shadow was by accident. One member of the United Methodist Men took a photo of the exact position of the floodlights, and an angel shadow appears each year after Methodist Men set it up.

“Silent Night” is the song most associated with McFarlin’s Christmas Eve services. As the services conclude, the light from the Christ candle is shared with each member of the congregation who holds their own candle. The lights are dimmed, and the Sanctuary fills with candlelight as “Silent Night” is sung. We raise our candles as we sing and recall Christmases past with loved ones and celebrate the birth of Christ and God’s love.

Lent & Easter Worship Services

The Lent season lasts 40 days and is a meaningful and spiritual journey where Christians focus on their relational faith and grow closer to God. This spiritual journey focuses on Jesus, “who he is, and what he did for us.”

During Lent, many people give up something like a special treat of chocolate. Some do something special for people, animals, nature, organizations, and beyond. Others give to loved ones, their church, or their favorite charity. These acts of personal sacrifice, service, and gifts express love for all Jesus has done for us.

Ash Wednesday

McFarlin observes Ash Wednesday with a 6:30am breakfast, a noontime service, a children’s service at 4:30pm, and a service at 7pm. During an Ash Wednesday service, pastors place ashes in the shape of a small cross on a person’s forehead or the back of their hand as an expression of sorrow for sin, acknowledgment that “we are dust and to dust we shall return,” and to acknowledge their Christian faith. In recent years, the Ash Wednesday services have attracted a number of students from OU.

Palm Sunday

McFarlin’s Palm Sunday worship begins with music, then children and adults waving palm branches and singing “Hosanna in the Highest;” choirs and instrumentalists contribute to this joyous, celebratory service.



Palm Sunday 2017

Maundy Thursday

McFarlin offers a moving and creative Maundy Thursday evening worship experience in Fenn Hall where we remember the Last Supper, Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, and Jesus' command to "love one another". The washing of feet or hands or other acts of physical care and serving Holy Communion are integral parts our tradition.

Good Friday

McFarlin's Music Ministries presents major choral works at the Good Friday worship service in the Sanctuary, including The Passion According to St. John (Bach), Messiah (Handel), and The Seven Last Words of Christ (DuBois). McFarlin's Good Friday worship services feature our Chancel Choir, instrumentalists from the Norman Philharmonic, vocal soloists, and reflections by our pastors.



Good Friday 2022

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday morning is McFarlin's Annual Easter Egg Hunt. This family-friendly event aims to unite McFarlin and the Norman community in a joyous egg hunt and uplifting community experience. The North parking lot is transformed into an Easter wonderland with exciting activities for all ages.



Easter Egg Hunt 2017

Lent & Easter Worship Services Continued

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our Christian faith, and demonstrates God's love and saving grace.

McFarlin's Easter Sunday worship begins with a 6:30am outdoor Sunrise service in the gazebo, followed by an 8am, 9:30am, and 11am Sanctuary service and an 11am Modern service in Fenn Hall.



On Easter morning, a six-foot-tall cross made of lilies stands on the Sanctuary chancel. Its breathtaking white beauty symbolizes purity, light, hope, and rebirth. The "Call to Worship" begins with an organ prelude and brass. The choir processes into the Sanctuary, singing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today."

After an Easter worship service, it is moving to see families gather in front of McFarlin's Easter Lily Cross for group photos. For some families, this is an annual photo event. One choir member shared that it is inspiring to watch young children grow into young adults as year-after-year families gather for videos and photos with McFarlin's Easter Lily Cross as a spiritual milestone in their family's life.

Easter Sunday 2022



Easter Sunday 2022

A Reflection—Cretha Hickman, a McFarlin Worship Committee member, had an idea for a cross made of white Easter lilies. Bob Warner, a member of the United Methodist Men, transformed her vision into a four-by-six-foot cross covered in floral foam to hold vials of water for Easter lily blooms.

The lilies require careful handling and cutting stems to exact measurements to extend evenly from the vials. Palm branches are inserted at an angle to surround and finish the base of the cross.

In the early 2000s, the Rev. House finished McFarlin's outdoor Sunrise Easter worship service. Then he led the congregation, holding lighted candles, into the unlit Sanctuary. McFarlin's congregation was speechless as they first saw the beautiful white lily cross illuminated by a light on the Chancel. Seeing the lighted cross for the first time and thinking about what it represented was a breathtaking, spiritually moving experience then and now.



Easter Sunday 2024

All Saints' Day Worship Services

McFarlin celebrates All Saints' Day on the first Sunday in November. All Saints' Sunday, a love-filled worship service, honors McFarlin saints who have gone before us. At the beginning of the worship service, choir members, including the youngest, process into the Sanctuary carrying banners of loved ones. A candle represents a loved one, and a bell rings after a pastor says their name.

In 1987, Venita MacGorman, Director of Children's Choirs, conceptualized McFarlin's All Saints' Day Banners. In the first year, 64 banners were made by children in grades 2–5, guided by a team of volunteers led by Kathy Mash. The congregation submitted names in the first year, and Venita remembers Alice Chapman as the name most nominated. While most banners reflect elements of a person's life, the people who nominated Alice remembered her for being kind. For almost 40 years, volunteers and family members have continued creating McFarlin's All Saints' Day banners. Annually, these banners hang in the Sanctuary, Atrium, and Fenn Hall on All Saints' Sunday.



All Saints' Sunday 2017



All Saints' Sunday 2017



All Saints' Sunday 2023

A Reflection—Each year at All Saints' Sunday worship service, I see my parents and my husband's All Saints' Day banners that honor their lives. My mother was an active member of UMW and served as UMW president several times, and she initiated McFarlin's wedding reception group. My dad served on McFarlin's Board of Trustees and SPRC committees and was a long-time usher. The names on the All Saints' Day banners represent "a great cloud of witnesses" who influenced my faith journey, and I am grateful for each of them.

Nancy Burton, McFarlin member

In 2022, a new All Saints' Day banner with a simple white cross on a blue felt background without any name honors all the saints we name in our hearts at McFarlin and worldwide.

Music Ministries

Dr. J. Perry White retired after 23 years as McFarlin's Director of Music Ministries. Dr. Richard (Rick) Zielinski became McFarlin's Director of Music Ministry in 2009. Dr. Zielinski is also the Director of Choral Activities, Head of Graduate Choral Studies at the University of Oklahoma, and directs the Norman Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the Zielinski Singers. People fondly call him Dr. Z. His talent and dedication have blessed many. Dr. Zielinski will retire in August 2024 and become Director Emeritus of McFarlin's Music Ministries.

McFarlin's Music Ministries strives to create, promote, and sustain spiritual growth and connectedness through music for all its listeners in Sanctuary and Modern worship services. McFarlin's Music Ministries open doors throughout the community and invite youth and adults to become part of McFarlin's music ministries and faith family.



Modern Worship 2023

McFarlin's music in Sunday morning worship and concerts opens and touches hearts and minds to God's word and love. McFarlin's Music Ministries are part of a community-wide partnership to be a local hub for musical events. Concerts held in McFarlin's Sanctuary during Advent, Christmas, Easter, and celebratory concerts offer some of the best music in Norman. Hosting these public concerts introduces the community to McFarlin's hospitality and the Sanctuary's holiness.

In McFarlin's Sanctuary, the magnificent Noack organ pipes contribute to a grand cathedral-like image and a musical, spiritual experience that brings joy to all. Choir directors, organists, guest orchestras, instrumentalists, soloists, and handbell choirs represent diverse ages and talents. Directors of Children Choirs (K–5th grades), Youth Choirs (6th–12th grades), Handbell Choirs (6th–9th grades), Adult Choirs, and Adult Handbell Choirs all contribute to McFarlin's faith family's spiritual growth and the church's mission—*Changing Lives That Change the World*.



Easter Sunday 2022

Adult, Children, and Youth Choirs, and Bell Choirs, directed and led by a combination of the following talented, dedicated people have blessed McFarlin with outstanding music ministry over the last 25 years.

*Dr. J. Perry White
Venita MacGorman
Nancy Schaumburg
Audrey Freeman
Ramona Baker
Valerie Young
Christian Morren
Rev. Don McAvoy
Boyd Hamilton
Dr. Richard Zielinski
Teresa Williams
Marcy Corey*

*Daphne Fix
Sarah Stubblefield
Tracey Gregg-Boothby
Ian Gill
Amy Bowden
Antonio Hunt
John Morrow
Libby Waldenville
Joshua Chism
Ruben Alcala
Kayley Williamson
Dr. Stephen Wurst*

The following are the talented organists who led worship in McFarlin's traditional worship services over the last 25 years:

*Dr. Sam Porter
Yeo Jung Kim
Bradley Fitch
Dr. John Schwandt*

*Dr. Olivia Buthod
Dr. Vicki Schaeffer
John Morrow
Dr. Stephen Wurst*

Music Ministries Continued

The adult and youth choirs' national and international travels began in 1990 and included trips to Brazil, England, Jamaica, and all over the United States. In 2010, Dr. Zielinski traveled to the Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria, with McFarlin's adult choir. A Summer Children's Choir Camp started in 1983 and continued through 2019. It started again after the pandemic.

A Reflection—All the international choir trips were heart-touching experiences for Adult and Youth Choir members. We felt welcomed with love and appreciation for our music. In most places, we rang bells, and the audiences had never seen or heard a handbell choir; they were mesmerized. Sharing our faith through music was a blessing and an experience none of us will ever forget.

Libby Waldenville, McFarlin member



McFarlin's Pumpkin Patch 2016

For years, at University Blvd. and Apache St. corner, several generations of families gather to take photos and delight in young children's awe at seeing a collection of orange pumpkins, some for the first time. Children's Storytime, pumpkin selections, and purchases are an annual generational memory-making experience. McFarlin's annual Pumpkin Patch proceeds support the music department.

Care Ministries

McFarlin's Care Ministries began in 2002 as an umbrella to engage and facilitate all care ministries within McFarlin, including the 55+ programs. These ministries represent a collage of listening ears, smiling faces, loving hearts, helping hands, and dancing feet that bring comfort and joy and make a difference in many people's lives.



Prayer Shawls being Delivered to Nurses during COVID-19 in 2020



Blessing Graduating Youth Prayer Shawls 2023

Congregational Care Ministers (CCMs)

Begun in 2013 by Jane Cook, lay volunteers receive training and provide care for McFarlin members during times of crisis due to an injury, illness, or loss of a loved one and during and after a birth or adoption. CCMs use their specialized training skills to set healthy boundaries, listen intentionally, and share selected Scripture and prayers for each person needing a caring human touch and God's love.

McFarlin's Hospital Visitation Team

McFarlin's Hospital Visitation Team includes the Pastors and the Director of Care Ministries who visit members in the Norman hospitals, and other area hospitals, and take a red rose when a member is admitted.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry

Susan Carruth began this ministry in 2006. Members have since created and donated over 5,000 shawls, scarves, lap blankets, and baby blankets. The Prayer Shawl Ministry members pray over each handmade shawl for recipients. Prayer Shawls are stored in the Comfort Closet in McFarlin's second-floor workroom and are gifts of love for those who have a need to feel God's everlasting love covering them during life challenges.

Care Ministries Continued

The Meal Ministry

The Meal Ministry offers bereavement meals at McFarlin. This ministry also includes receptions following funeral services, meals delivered to someone recently injured or ill, and families with newborns.



Dorinda Harvey Preparing a Bereavement Meal 2014

The Prayer Chain

The Prayer Chain is an active email list of people who intercede for those needing prayer.

Alzheimer's Support Group

Alzheimer's Support Group has met at McFarlin for more than 30 years. This group offers a venue for caregivers to meet monthly in a safe and confidential environment, have lunch with other caregivers, share stories about their loved ones, and receive the care and encouragement they need. This gathering is cathartic for attendees who bond with one another through laughter and tears. People continue to gather from surrounding communities, a testament to the value of the Alzheimer's Support Group and McFarlin's faithful, caring commitment to "changing lives."



Alzheimer's Group at OKC Alzheimer's Walk 2019

55+ Ministries (Bonus Years)

Bonus Years offers six programs for diverse ages and interests.

1. **Senior Adult Care Team (SACT)** is a team of volunteers who make monthly contact with faith-family members who reside in senior adult facilities or are homebound. The team's face-to-face visits bring love, comfort, fellowship, and a caring reminder they are members of McFarlin's faith family.
2. **Bonus Years Luncheons** are scheduled on the first Wednesday of each month, and they include special guest speakers, tasty food, and fellowship.
3. **Bible Study** or a selected Christian book study occurs weekly.
4. **Day Trips** include local excursions and getaways scheduled throughout the year, plus Christian fellowship and fun.
5. **Line Dancing Group** was started in 2010 by Carol Dean Schreiner. The group continues to meet weekly for fun and exercise. Several times a month, the group performs at local community locations. They spread infectious joy and laughter wherever they practice and perform.
6. **Staying Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)** is a comprehensive, evidence-based fitness program with a low to moderate impact provided by the UCO Center for Active Living and Learning. Exercises help individuals stay active and independent and prevent falls.



Line Dancers 2016

Senior Adult Directors 1999-2024

*Polly Sandlin
Carol Dean Schreiner
Rev. Rob Harris
Carrie Gardner*

*Missy Louy
Greta Watson-Pigg
Stephanie Miller*

Children & Family Ministries

The mission of Children & Family Ministries and Student Ministries is to ensure the love of God is present in all interactions and activities. McFarlin's children and youth programs focus on learning about God and Jesus and being kind and helpful to others. Children and youth learn to pray to God, give thanks, and trust His guidance. This habit of praying and trusting stays with them throughout their lives during good times and challenging times.



VBS 2017

Team Members 1999–2024

Children & Family Ministries:

*Gwyn Lovell
Susan Carruth
Jeanne Salmon
Kristy Varva
Taylor Concialdi
Kacee Glass
Gwen Gough
Angela Adams
Beth Carter
Sandy Minty
Bonny Coats
Stephanie Miller
Katie Lanier
Zach James*

Student Ministries:

*Scott Meier
JJ Waggoner
Jenny Sawey
Bryan Waldenville
Melissa Burke (Shaw)
Matt Oberdick
Tino Herrera
Austin Leeviraphan
Kloe Young
Rebekah Small*

Sunday morning worship hour provides nursery care and Sunday school classes. The music program offers Children's Choir, Youth Choir, and Bell Choir.

Children & Family Ministries include Family Day Activities, Expedition Bible Class, McFarlin & Friends Day Camp, and service project activities.

- Third-grade students receive their Bibles.
- Fourth and fifth-grade students participate in the Sanctuary Acolyte ministry.
- Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a biblical-themed, educational, and fun-filled week engaging many dedicated adults who plan, prepare, present, interact, and connect with children. VBS attendees are from McFarlin and the community; it is a memorable week in changing children's lives.
- Children have fun, learn about Jesus and helping others, and thrive together.



Zach James During Sunday School 2022



Sandy Minty 3rd Grade Bible Expedition 2022



Back to School Bash 2019

Student Ministries

Student Ministries meets weekly in small groups for Bible discussion. Middle School girls and boys meet separately for breakfast before going to school. High Schoolers meet for lunch off campus before returning to class. Bible discussions, breakfasts, lunches, the Student Leadership Team, the Student Praise Team, and service projects enrich each student's life.

- Eighth-grade students attend Confirmation classes and learn about the Christian faith and Methodist history and tradition. Students grow in their faith as they learn more about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and that their lives have a purpose.
 - On Confirmation Sunday, students publicly profess their faith and intention to live out their Christian vows and become official members of the United Methodist Church. Confirmands learn to trust and follow Jesus and are vital members of McFarlin's faith family.
- Youth Sunday is a forum for students to share their faith stories with the congregation. Their personal faith stories, their vision for the church, and their mission inspire the congregation. Students flourish while learning to be followers of Jesus and servant leaders in the church and community.
- Spring Break and Summer Mission Trips provide an opportunity to travel together, share God's love, and participate in service projects that make a difference in people's lives—*Changing Lives That Change the World*.
- Every January and summer our middle and high school students go to one of the three Oklahoma UMC campgrounds to grow closer to God and each other.



Confirmation Sunday 2022

The Children & Family Ministries and Youth Ministries build a strong foundation for children and youth to experience the love of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, guiding them as they grow into faithful young adults who love God and love and serve others. These children, youth, and young adults are the future of McFarlin.



Canyon Camp 2023



Spring Break Mission Trip 2022

Adult Discipleship

Diverse small group gatherings include adult Sunday school classes, Bible studies, and more that provide spiritual growth, fellowship, and friendship—a community of a caring faith family who help one another grow and reach out in good times and challenging times to comfort and support one another.



Sunday School Class 2017

The Wesley

“The Wesley’ is the official campus ministry of The United Methodist Church. We get our namesake from the founder of United Methodism, John Wesley. Though we function much like a church, we are not our own church; we are a mission of the church.” (The Wesley website)

McFarlin strongly supports and partners with the OU Wesley Foundation. This partnership includes dinners and intimate, thoughtful Bible Studies for college students and young adults.



Students Praying at OU Wesley 2023

McFarlin Day Care & Children's Day Out Ministries



Day Care & CDO Summer Bash 2022

McFarlin’s Day Care opened its doors to the church and community children in 1967. From day one, nurturing children and their families was the mission. At McFarlin Day Care and Children’s Day Out, childcare is not a business but a life-changing ministry.

McFarlin celebrates 57 years of welcoming little ones for learning, friendship, and fun in a Christian setting. Directors and staff guide the Children’s Ministry programs to support families through clear and frequent communications, creative approaches to serving individual needs, and attention to the well-being of the whole child.

Team Members 1999 – 2024

Day Care Directors/Assistant Directors:

*Wanda Clifton
Jane Poore
Nancy Jackson
Crystal Hudson
Carol Allen
Laura Beth Woods
Justine Martin*

CDO Directors:

*Kim Divelbiss
Michelle Barnard
Krysten Erickson
Amy Watson
Michelle Dykes*



Day Care & CDO Summer Bash 2022

Kid Zone—After School Program

In 2023, an innovative after-school child development program led by Madisen Myers began for children enrolled in Norman Public Schools from kindergarten to fifth grade. The program includes transportation from Norman Public Schools to McFarlin.

This program is Monday through Friday after school until 5:30pm and incorporates the following.

- STREAM (Science, Tech, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics)
- Building on Social-Emotional Skills
- Homework help



Kid Zone 2023

Missions

Missions are a natural aspect of any Christian lifestyle and is at the core of McFarlin's mission of *Changing Lives That Change the World*. We believe in putting hands and feet to our faith with hundreds of people giving thousands of hours of service each year here at McFarlin, in the Norman community, and around the world. McFarlin's local, regional, and global mission projects and ministries are to share Jesus Christ's love through service to others.



UMM Service Project 2023



Serve Day at Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma 2016

McFarlin Food Pantry

McFarlin's concern and commitment to helping those in need began with an empty grocery cart placed in a hallway and later in McFarlin's Atrium for its people of faith to donate food items. This grassroots ministry helped and blessed those needing food. During the mid-1990s, this ministry was housed on the third floor of McFarlin and consisted of shelves of donated food bagged on request by those who came for Utilities Assistance. It expanded around 2007 to include two days of food distribution open to the community.

As the need for food increased, the Food Pantry Ministry moved into Aldersgate House (the small brick house was north of the church facing University Blvd). For over a decade, the Food Pantry served the community from that location.



Aldersgate House 2015

A grant was written by the Rev. Shyloe O'Neal in 2016 to purchase a big box truck, making it possible to expand McFarlin's Food Pantry to make food available at various locations around Norman. McFarlin's Mobile Food Pantry truck delivers to four partner schools, Adams, Jackson, Madison Elementary, and Irving Middle School, in the evenings when working parents can come and receive food for their families.



McFarlin's Mobile Food Pantry 2019

Missions Continued

A Reflection—On January 26, 2023, a member of McFarlin observed a Food Pantry volunteer carry groceries from the temporary location in Fenn Hall to a guest's car parked on Apache. Another McFarlin volunteer hand-carried a box containing a store-bought birthday cake to the car, singing, "Happy Birthday to you," and included the woman's name. It was heartwarming to observe McFarlin volunteers going the extra mile and changing a person's life for that day and beyond.



Food Pantry 2019



Food Pantry in Fenn Hall 2022

A Reflection—Another day, a McFarlin Food Pantry guest asked a volunteer to pray for her 3pm job interview. This McFarlin member contacted her text-prayer group and asked them to pray for this woman's job interview—prayerful support to help change her life's circumstances.

During the pandemic, the volunteers and staff leading the Food Pantry made a huge shift in how food insecurity needs were met. Volunteers moved distribution outside to the north alley, hauling bags of groceries out to meet guests waiting in a line in their cars. A tent, assembled by UMM, was placed outside Aldersgate House, allowing volunteers to provide fresh fruit, vegetables, and baked goods to each family while protecting themselves just a little from the weather that day. This innovation allowed the Food Pantry to remain open almost entirely throughout the pandemic.



Drive Thru Food Pantry 2022

In 2022, statistics stated more than 33,000 people, or about 12% of the population in Cleveland County, did not have enough food. McFarlin's Food Pantry, at the time of this publication, is the largest in Cleveland County and annually meets the needs of approximately 11,500 persons or 35% of the 33,000 persons in need of food.

The demolition of the Aldersgate House was necessary for the construction of McFarlin's new Missions Center to provide adequate space for the Food Pantry Ministry and other future mission services. In the interim, the Food Pantry relocated to the partitioned-off south side of Fenn Hall.



Demolition of The Aldersgate House 2023

Missions Continued

McFarlin's new Missions Center was built during the "Standing on the Promises" campaign and completed in 2024. The Missions Center and volunteers provide a practical, inspirational, and missional difference in how people needing food are better served through an interactive shopping environment to choose what they need to supplement their groceries. An efficient packing and drive-thru system allows guests to have groceries loaded into their vehicles.



The Missions Center 2024



Inside Shopping Area in The Missions Center 2024

Utilities Assistance Ministry

This ministry began at McFarlin in 1986. Rev. Fenn recognized a need and asked Vesta Bauman to lead the Utilities Assistance Ministry. Tim Stewart led this ministry for almost 20 years, from 2000 to 2019. For 38 years, McFarlin's people of faith and community continue to support this vital ministry. Offerings left on the Communion rail and Easter offerings continue to support those needing help with electric, gas, and water bills. During the pandemic, the Utilities Assistance Ministry continued over the phone with faithful volunteers calling individuals needing help with their bills. Today, volunteers meet each guest face-to-face and offer financial gifts, a listening ear, and empathy for their struggles.



Utilities Assistance Volunteers 2024

Angel Tree (Christmas gifts for children)

Each December, McFarlin provides Christmas gifts for children of all ages and families who are in need. White paper angels with the children's names include items the children need and hope to get for Christmas. McFarlin members and Sunday school classes select Angel Tree names and purchase gifts. This heartfelt ministry makes a difference in each child's and their family's lives.



Angel Tree 2022

Missions Continued

Tuesdays Together Dinners

This community dinner is on the second Tuesday of each month. Many attend this dinner to receive healthy and nutritious food prepared by McFarlin's chef. Faithful volunteers, many of whom belong to UWF Circle 5, serve and send leftovers home with those who attend.



Tuesdays Together Dinner 2023

Community Partners and Support

Partner Schools (began in 2008): Adams, Jackson, and Madison Elementary Schools, and Irving Middle School.

- School supply drives
- School paper drives
- Mentors 1-2 hours a week
- Teacher appreciation lunches
- Art supplies



UMM Delivering Paper to Jackson Elementary 2018

Food and Shelter for Friends

- Founded in 1983 through McFarlin by Harriette Leigh and Kathryn Selmon, and other faithful volunteers, this became a community-supported ministry in 1987.
- When Food and Shelter expanded to a new facility in 2017, they built small cottages to make it possible for people to transition from an unhoused life to one with a home. McFarlin funded the building of one tiny house and furnished it. When residents move out, they get to take all the furnishings. Again, McFarlin provides furnishings for another family's home, changing lives, making a difference for one person, one family, at a time.



Food & Shelter Cottages 2017

Habitat for Humanity

McFarlin members collaborate with Habitat and work diligently to build homes for those in need. In 2023, McFarlin UMM participated in building two new Habitat homes. One home is gas and electric; the second is electric as part of an energy research project.



Habitat House Groundbreaking 2022

Missions Continued

Mexico and Rio Grande Valley, Texas Spring Break Mission

The first Spring Break Mission trip to Mexico began in 1994 and concluded in 2011. Since then, the location has changed to Rio Grande Valley in South Texas for the annual Adult and Youth Mission Trips.

In 2024, 80 people participated in the Adult and Youth Mission Trip to South Texas. These mission trips are made possible by gifts through McFarlin's "Fund a Project" and all who pray for these Mission Teams.

The following is a list of their accomplishments and an example of annual mission trips to South Texas.



Spring Break 2023

- Completed the buildout of a new home
- Repaired a home
- Constructed ten wheelchair ramps
- Painted a pastor's parsonage
- Painted and spruced up a community center
- Painted ramp at the United Methodist Student Center at the University of Texas—Rio Grande Valley
- Led VBS at a local church
- Repaired a home



Spring Break 2022

Global Missions

McFarlin has been called by God to serve throughout the world, and McFarlin answers that call by engaging indigenous leaders and organizations to partner holistically in specific communities matching their needs with the gifts and graces. In conjunction with the Volunteers in Mission office of the Oklahoma Annual Conference, McFarlin members have traveled to and participated in missions with and for the people of Bolivia, Costa Rica, Puebla, Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti, Cuba, Ukraine, New Zealand, England, Jamaica, the Holy Land, and Tanzania. McFarlin members who are doctors, nurses, dentists, pastors, educators, and lay volunteers connect and serve with people around the world in mutually beneficial ways—building water wells, teaching local pastors and teachers, providing dental and medical care, building schools and homes, providing buses for transportation and school lunches for students, among many other projects—*Changing Lives That Change the World*. McFarlin currently supports United Methodist missionaries Rev. Umba and Ngoy Kalangwa (Tanzania) and Rev. Fuxia Wang and Gloria Ajinomisanghan (OU Wesley International Ministries).



Tanzania Mission Trip 2023



The Kalangwas 1st Time at McFarlin 2009



Wesley Primary School in Tanzania 2017

Standing on the Promises—Securing the Next Century

In 2022, McFarlin’s “Standing on the Promises—Securing the Next Century,” a three-year generosity initiative, led the church to commit to completing much-needed repairs and renovations to the almost 100-year-old church and building a new Missions Center. The Missions Center would replace the Aldersgate House Food Pantry facility, which it had outgrown with community-wide increased food needs.

An anonymous McFarlin member presented an unexpected gift for McFarlin’s new Missions Center.

“There are moments when by the grace of God and the mystery of God’s wisdom, things come together. We are standing at such a moment of convergence and standing on the promises of God that cannot fail, standing in a moment of opportunity to secure McFarlin’s next century.”

(Excerpt from “Standing on the Promises” booklet)



Standing on the Promises Advanced Commitment 2022

“Standing on the Promises—Securing the Next Century” came together with plans for a \$4.25 million church building infrastructure upgrade and a \$2 million construction of a new Missions Center.

“We can make and keep no greater promise than saying “Yes” to continue Changing Lives That Change the World through McFarlin’s dedicated members and their support of life-changing ministries.”

(Excerpt from “Standing on the Promises” booklet)

McFarlin’s congregation supported a three-year financial commitment to securing another century of loving God, growing in faith, and serving others within and beyond its walls.

United Methodist Men

Over 25 years, McFarlin's United Methodist Men have strengthened ties with local organizations, including internal ministries (Outside the Walls and Youth Ministries) and external service groups (Aging Services, Kiwanis Club, Habitat for Humanity, and more), fostering significant community involvement.

A Reflection—Bill Chissoe, a McFarlin United Methodist Men member, was instrumental in connecting Oklahoma farmers with organizations that provide food to communities with families in need. Bill met United Methodist Men's organizations in the Oklahoma City area and with local farmers at the Norman farmer's market to collect and distribute their unsold vegetables to Norman food pantries. Subsequently, Bill learned about a national non-profit, the Society of St. Andrew, and their volunteers who every fall gleaned potatoes and shipped them by truck to areas needing food. With Bill's help, Norman became the distribution point for potatoes for Central Oklahoma food pantries. More than ten years later, the UMM's "potato drop" mission continues, making a significant difference to those needing food by distributing more than 40,000 lbs. of potatoes annually.

In the late 1990s, McFarlin's United Methodist Men became aware of a pressing need to help a disabled man, Buddy, whose trailer was declared a firetrap and was collapsing around him. The UMM built a small house for him.



Building of the Habitat House 2023

A Reflection—In 2005, Cleveland County Aging Services requested help with a client's husband, Tom Blevins, who was battling brain cancer, and for nine years, Tom had worked on building the family's "dream home." The UMM rallied over 300 volunteers to spend over 3,000 hours finishing the Blevins' "dream home." Family and friends surrounded Tom during his baptism in his new home, and he peacefully passed away a few days later. The Blevins family was grateful for UMM's effort and joined McFarlin UMC.

United Methodist Men Continued

McFarlin United Methodist Men hold annual fundraisers to support their projects. For many years, they co-sponsored a pancake breakfast or dinner with Habitat for Humanity held at Norman High School on the "89er Day" parade. Later, the pancake breakfast became a pancake dinner held at McFarlin.

In 2006, UMM began consolidating project planning under an unofficial coordinator, which resulted in building homes in Noble, Norman, and South Texas and working to maintain McFarlin's building infrastructure.

In 2007, McFarlin UMM began grinding and selling sausage to McFarlin members. When a new playground at McFarlin became a trustees' priority without adequate funding, the UMM added another fundraiser: indoor miniature golf tournaments.

- The first midwinter indoor miniature golf tournament provided fun and food for families and friends and raised \$10,000
- The miniature golf tournaments' funds grew to \$150,000, helping to build McFarlin's new playground and supporting other McFarlin UMM projects
- A total of 12 miniature golf tournaments through February 2024 raised over \$250,000 in funding, resulting in 96,000 volunteer hours



UMM Mini Golf Tournament 2020

Notable UMM projects for McFarlin and the community during the last 25 years.

- Since 2006, the UMM has completed 107,200 service hours, 54,200 hours dedicated to McFarlin projects, and 53,000 hours devoted to external projects
- Built the Day Care playground; engaged over 100 volunteers from the church during the four-month build, resulting in 10,000 volunteer hours
- Built the gazebo and the receptionists' desks (southeast entrance and 2nd-floor office area)
- Remodeled a ladies' room, making it family-friendly and handicap-accessible
- Refurbished several classrooms and office areas with new ceilings and lights
- Built the Bethlehem House for the Food Pantry's storage
- Routinely set up and took down the Pumpkin Patch, stage, and Christmas manger scene
- Completed projects for Bridges, Food and Shelter, The Wesley, Mary Abbott Children's House
- UMM's fundraisers completed six "House from the Ground Up" projects, providing McFarlin youth with framed houses to finish during spring break mission trips and three Habitat houses



Building of the Bethlehem House 2022

In 2021, UMM members and their wives helped lead the \$6.25 million capital campaign. The UMM worked on the McFarlin Building Committee, overseeing the \$4.25 million church building upgrade and the \$2 million Missions Center construction. UMM continues to support the church maintenance team by assisting with various tasks, including landscape maintenance and repairs. Depending on the task, UMM members wear many hats: hard hats, ball caps for work, and sometimes funny hats for fundraisers.

The UMM supported McFarlin's 100th Anniversary Celebrations.

- Donated \$10,000 from the 2023 Miniature Golf Tournament and \$9,800 from reclaimed copper
- Designed and built an award-winning float for the Norman Christmas Parade
- Prepared a chili supper for approximately 250 people and created an innovative, fun scavenger hunt to inform members about McFarlin's history
- Provided volunteers, set up and took down tables and chairs, cooked hot dogs and hamburgers, and rented a large outdoor tent for the Green Grass Festival

The UMM is committed to recruiting younger members to sustain their service and accomplishments for McFarlin, community, and regional missions. All are welcome to join the UMM and experience fellowship, friendship, fulfillment while serving others.

United Women in Faith

In 2022, United Methodist Women changed its name to United Women in Faith to attract women of all ages and interests and ensure membership for all Methodist women in the newly renamed organization. The organization's mission remained the same—"Serving God and women, children, and youth locally and globally."

McFarlin's United Women in Faith has seven active circles with 106 members who support the global mission areas of the United Methodist Church, and locally through Bridges, Dimensions, and Food for Finals for The Wesley OU students.



UWF Spiritual Growth Retreat with Dr. Amy Oden 2019

United Women in Faith Circles connect in fellowship, friendship, and Christian love. Circle programs include Bible study, reading, and discussing contemporary books focusing on spiritual growth, mission education, and leadership development. They attend fellowship luncheons and participate in McFarlin and community work projects. Unit meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday morning or evening and include a meal and an engaging, inspiring program. United Women in Faith is committed to the "Go Green" initiative not to use plastic, paper, or Styrofoam products at unit meetings, which began over a decade ago by McFarlin United Methodist Women.

Members participate in giving to mission projects and in the yearly offerings to "A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial" and "World Thank Offering." An annual Spiritual Growth Retreat provides fellowship, fun, food, and group activities facilitated by an accomplished speaker focused on spiritual growth and renewal.

A Reflection—Over the last two decades, several women relocated from other states, and some were without family in the immediate area; McFarlin became their faith family. McFarlin United Methodist Women members embraced these women with welcoming smiles, caring hearts, fellowship, and friendship.

United Women in Faith members welcome all women, celebrate each other's joyous occasions, and offer prayers and personal support during life's most challenging circumstances. The organization's study groups enhance the women's biblical knowledge, and open, non-judging discussions enrich their faith journey and shower them with sisters-in-faith love.



UWF Circle 2018

United Women in Faith stays connected through their faith and commitment to McFarlin. UWF members are Congregational Care Ministers, volunteers for McFarlin's Food Pantry, Tuesdays Together Dinners, and Utilities Assistance Ministry, lead Sunday school classes, sing in choirs, play in bell choirs, and are vital members of the 100th Anniversary Team, to name a few.

The Oklahoma chapter of United Women in Faith holds an annual "Mission U" event, which focuses on education and fellowship to motivate and enrich members' commitment to local and global ministry.

For over 50 years, McFarlin United Methodist Women (now United Women in Faith) have supported national and global missions through donations. Locally, they support organizations such as Cookson Hills Center and Neighborhood Services Organization, enabling members to help those in need. A lifetime Methodist woman notes that for over 150 years, women have been "showing up and getting things done" through their mission work, a tradition that will continue.

Senior Pastors 1999-2024

Senior Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Phil Fenn, retired after 22 years of service (1979–2001). Please refer to page 52 for more details on Rev. Fenn.

The Rev. Dr. Richard (Dick) House, 2001-2011

The following is one of Rev. House's favorite Scriptures that exemplifies his life and ministry.

"Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interest of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus ... "

Philippians 2:4



Dick House 2002

The Rev. Dr. Richard House began his tenure at McFarlin in 2001. Previously, he was Senior Pastor at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Muskogee. Before his St. Paul UMC appointment, he served as Tulsa District Superintendent for the Oklahoma Annual Conference. During his pastoral tenure, Rev. House served in Blanchard, Tulsa Southern Hills, and McAlester First UMC. Rev. House's wife, Nancy, was very active in the church, served as a faithful choir member, and actively participated in the United Methodist Women's organization.

The following is one of Rev. House's favorite quotes that exemplifies his life and ministry.

"Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So, be swift and make haste to be kind."

Henri Amiel

Rev. House preferred to be called "Dick." He truly cared about people and generously shared the love of God with all. During his tenure at McFarlin, Rev. House daily brought a sense of graciousness, kindness, and joy. He demonstrated his unique gift for remembering people's names, where they called home, and other personal details, which built a relational connection with the people of McFarlin. He sought out young families, new members, and students to help them become more involved in McFarlin.

The Rev. Dick House Initiated the following McFarlin enhancements and more.

- Helped establish several new adult Sunday school classes, including starting a discussion class known as the "Finding God Class" which he led on most Sunday mornings
- Hired Dr. Richard Zielinski as Director of Music Ministries and encouraged Dr. Z's vision of OU's Interns becoming part of McFarlin's Music Ministry
- Updated sound and video equipment in the Sanctuary
- Rekindled more involvement in adult mission trips and enjoyed serving on the medical mission trip to Guatemala
- Sought to improve signage all around the church property and was instrumental in getting McFarlin's new stone signage at the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners around the main building
- In 2009, Rev. House with Lee and Mary Joyce Rodgers created the historical archives display located on the second floor, and he asked Beverly and Joe Sanders to become McFarlin's new church archivist



Sanctuary Service 2010



Guatemala Medical Mission Trip 2008

In 2006, Rev. House, a life-long student of Scripture and Christianity, conversed with Herb Hengst and established the Herb and Jane Hengst Annual Lecture program. This program brings highly acclaimed national and international speakers/teachers to McFarlin who clarify the teachings of the historical Jesus and apply them to contemporary interests and concerns. The Hengst Series continues to provide Christian scholars, teachers, and speakers to the church and community.

The above stories are only snippets of Rev. House's commitments and efforts to serve God, people of McFarlin, the Norman community, the United Methodist Church, and its mission: "To make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The Rev. Linda Harker, 2011-2020



Linda Harker 2017

The Rev. Linda Harker served nine years as McFarlin's Senior Pastor—McFarlin's first female senior pastor. Prior to being appointed to McFarlin, Rev. Harker served as District Superintendent of the Muskogee area. Before her appointment as District Superintendent, she served as Senior Pastor at Faith United Methodist Church in Tulsa, and Associate Pastor at New Haven United Methodist Church in Tulsa. She also served as a clergy delegate to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church four times, leading the Oklahoma delegation three of those times while serving at McFarlin.

Rev. Harker's collaborative leadership inspired McFarlin's faith community to envision the church's future. She spearheaded a visioning process with the Vision Team, resulting in McFarlin's new mission statement, *Changing Lives That Change the World*, and the strategic Vision 2020 plan, starting in 2015, which emphasized worship, discipleship, and missions. Under Rev. Harker's leadership, the annual Visioning team birthed McFarlin's online worship in 2016, a mainstay during the 2020–2021 pandemic. Only God could have known the coming need for McFarlin's online worship services due to COVID-19.

Her relatable style of preaching, worship leadership, administrative skills, and pastoral care sustained and expanded McFarlin's open, loving, and welcoming family of faith culture. Persons experiencing homelessness found a safe and welcoming place at McFarlin during Rev. Harker's tenure, and she often worked with people personally to become housed and find hope. Someone once described Rev. Harker as a "multiplying leader." She used her knowledge and skills to include, encourage, and amplify the capacity of those around her.

Rev. Harker, embodying McFarlin's spirit of service, worked with Executive Minister Michael Andres to strengthen the church's partnership with missionaries Rev. Umba and Ngoy Kalangwa in Morogoro, Tanzania. Starting with McFarlin's first mission team in 2017, they initiated projects like water wells, a pastor's training school, sewing machines for women's empowerment, a dental clinic, student transportation, and school lunches, while also supporting Juny Mayanga's seminary education. Rev. Harker reinforced this partnership with a second trip to Tanzania in 2018, and mission trips to Haiti and South Texas.

Rev. Harker was a charismatic worship leader at McFarlin, initiating the tradition of beginning Sanctuary worship with the greeting, “This is the day that the Lord has made,” and the congregation’s response, “Let us rejoice and be glad in it,” which continues today. Her storytelling and vulnerability encouraged spiritual growth and deeper relationships with God and others, urging the congregation to “punch holes in the darkness.” She often concluded her sermons by challenging members with ‘homework’ to inspire them to be a light to others.

Pastor Linda encouraged, influenced, and initiated the following and more.

- Collaborated with the Vision team and created McFarlin’s new mission statement that was easy to remember, recite, and embrace: *Changing Lives That Change the World*
- Influenced McFarlin members to become more involved in local and global missions from Norman to South Texas, to Haiti, and Tanzania
- Started a new Sunday school class for young married couples (Community)
- Oversaw the grant writing process to purchase McFarlin’s Mobile Food Pantry and School Partnerships, expanding McFarlin’s faithful service to the community
- Encouraged McFarlin’s faith family to read the Bible in 90 days
- Initiated McFarlin’s tradition of wearing wooden crosses during the Lenten season and on mission trips
- Inspired McFarlin members to give their wooden crosses to others in need and to pray for others



Messiah Advent Sanctuary Service 2017



Mission Trip to Haiti 2015

For Linda, children represented God among us. Seeing and reaching out to children in all places best illustrated her love for others and God. A ministry friend said the following about Linda: “To be among the children of the world was her passion and calling—to hold the least, carry the last, and lead the lost will always be her life mission and witness.” Watching her baptize a child was often described as a “holy moment.”

A dear friend shared the following at Linda’s retirement: “Linda’s willingness to carry God’s Word, not just in her heart, but in her arms, her backpack, shovels, plates, and chalices, has touched the spirits of many.”

The Rev. Dr. Rockford Johnson, 2020-Present



Rockford Johnson 2023

The Rev. Dr. Rockford Johnson came to McFarlin as Senior Pastor in July 2020, right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. He worked diligently from the beginning of his ministry at McFarlin to get to know the congregation, much of that being over Zoom due to global health concerns. His zeal for people and ministry has been evident throughout his tenure here.

Rev. Johnson previously served in churches in Lone Wolf, Blair, Tulsa, Shawnee, and Chickasha, then served as a District Superintendent in the Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church for seven years before being appointed to McFarlin.

Rev. Johnson loves great literature, poetry, and music of all kinds. He has been a student of the Scriptures since childhood and earned a Ph.D. in New Testament studies. His preaching and teaching employ skills of Biblical interpretation and dedicated application for discipling the congregation and advancing the mission of the church. He is passionate about the strategic leadership of the church in order to make a real difference in the lives of people, the community, and the world.



All Saints' Sunday 2022

During his tenure, Rev. Johnson has brought innovation and vision for the future to the church. His desire to connect with those inside and outside the church has led to further innovation of online worship (including parking lot services during the pandemic), and increased digital presence in ministry through livestreams of worship and other online connection opportunities. He had the courage to lead McFarlin into and through the Standing on the Promises capital campaign for church renovations and construction of the Missions Center and has paved the way for a columbarium to be built at McFarlin later this year. His leadership to assure the unity of the church through current, historic questions before the UMC as a denomination has led to countless conversations and teaching with groups and individuals, as well as the formation of the General Conference Guidance team, which has faithfully led the congregation through this time under his guidance.



Sanctuary Service 2022

Rev. Johnson is committed to the future life of McFarlin and has further increased the focus on children, youth, and young families in all ministries. He has been instrumental in building on the momentum created by the initial endowment of The McFarlin Foundation to ensure the longevity and vitality of the church for future generations.

Rev. Johnson was raised in northwestern Oklahoma and has been happily married to Elizabeth for many years. While at McFarlin, Elizabeth has served in ministry through her gifts of art and compassion, teaching classes and leading prayer journaling and other creative artistic and spiritual groups.

We begin the next 100 years of ministry at McFarlin under Rev. Johnson's guidance and look forward to the work God will accomplish in and through the congregation with his leadership.

Current Associate Pastors 2024

Senior Associate Pastor, Wendi Neal, 2017 - Present



Sanctuary Service 2021

The Rev. Wendi Neal joined McFarlin as Associate Pastor on January 1, 2017. Her dedication and leadership quickly became evident, leading to her promotion to Senior Associate Pastor on January 1, 2021. While Rev. Neal originally oversaw missions, outreach, and evangelism, her role shifted with her new position to focus on supervising children's, students', senior adults', and care ministries, as well as fostering a positive staff culture. She actively serves on various leadership teams, including Lead Team, Senior Leadership, General Conference Guidance Team, Just Action Team, and Vision Next 100.

Wendi led mission trips to Tanzania and to the Holy Land. Her community involvement is extensive, having served on the boards of Food and Shelter and Salvation Army. During the pastoral transition in June 2020, she served as Interim Pastor, guiding the congregation through the challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic. She coordinated the church's pandemic response, initiated the Just Action Team, and led the search for new directors of student and children's ministries.

In 2023-2024, Rev. Neal faced a personal health battle when she was diagnosed with cancer. Demonstrating remarkable strength and resilience, she fought and finished treatments, continuing to serve and inspire the McFarlin community. Wendi's unwavering commitment to McFarlin's mission and vision continues to lead the church forward.



All Saints' Sunday 2022

Associate Pastor, Trey Witzel, 2021-Present



Modern Worship 2023

The Rev. Trey Witzel was appointed to McFarlin as Associate Pastor on January 1, 2021. Initially serving as Pastor of Modern Worship and Discipleship, Trey also took on the role of Executive Director of Communications during a staff reorganization. Rev. Johnson, previously Rev. Witzel's District Superintendent, specifically chose Rev. Witzel to lead and revitalize McFarlin's modern worship service upon his arrival.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and the service initially being online only, Rev. Witzel successfully reignited the Modern worship service, quickly growing it to an average attendance of over 200 worshipers every Sunday.

He also fostered a thriving culture of church camp participation. Beginning with just four students, Rev. Witzel's enthusiasm and leadership have resulted in over 140 people attending camp within four years. His energy, optimism, and commitment to engaging with next-generation ministries have greatly enriched the McFarlin community.



Spring Break Mission 2022

Former Associate Pastors

Mike Nicholson, 1990–2000

Cal Brannon, 2000–2016

Scott Sharp, 2001–2003

George Shepherd, 2003-2010

Trevor Smith, 2003–2005

Randy Wade, 2005–2014

Harriette Leigh, 2010–2017

Matt Franks, 2013–2014

Shyloe O'Neal, 2014–2016

Tino Herrera, 2014–2017

Devon Krause, 2017–2020

Beverly & Joe Sanders, McFarlin UMC Archivist

McFarlin is grateful for Beverly and Joe Sanders' many hours of dedicated, organized effort in preserving and storing McFarlin's documents and artifacts.

In 2010, Rev. Dick House asked Beverly and Joe Sanders to be McFarlin's official church archivists. They helped preserve McFarlin's 100-year "history and heart" of its faithful people's service within and beyond the walls.



Beverly & Joe Sanders Presenting at the Bonus Years Luncheon 2023

Beverly's family were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South congregation in Norman dating back to the early 1900s. She taught school and authored several historical fiction books about Norman and McFarlin's early years. Joe proudly served our country in the military for 20 years before returning to Norman to teach. Through the years, Joe and Beverly have participated in McFarlin's everyday life and served others. Beverly is a member of United Women in Faith; Joe is a member of United Methodist Men. Together, they actively served on the 75th Anniversary and the 100th Anniversary Committees and continue serving McFarlin and the community.

Beverly Sanders is a member of the generational families Ezzell, Mattox, Wheeler, and Sanders, whose lives intertwined in Norman Methodism since the beginning of the 1900s and McFarlin. She wrote and published a Journey in Faith Series, Book One: "Into the Unknown" and Book Two: "Quest for Unity" about Norman families and McFarlin. These historical books were gifts to McFarlin members to celebrate McFarlin's 100th Anniversary.

100th Anniversary Team

"McFarlin's 100th Anniversary Team is a group of dedicated volunteers who have met monthly since 2021 in preparation for 2024. We serve together because of our enduring love for God, our love for the church building called McFarlin, and our love for one another. We have dreamed about this celebration, had sleepless nights and busy days, and have given our best. We thank you for celebrating this year with us and pray there are many more years to come."

— Carol Warner, Chairperson, McFarlin's 100th Anniversary Team



(Left to Right) Reese Allen, Trudy Sickles, Chris Bishop, Nancy Burton, Breck Turkington, Carol Warner, Frankie Walters, Beverly Sanders, John DuFran, Joe Sanders, Libby Waldenville
—In memoriam, Pam Randorff

100th Anniversary Book Team

Through writing, designing, editing, and delving into the archives, this faithful team came together, committed to telling McFarlin's story of "heart and history," which resulted in the creation of McFarlin's 100th Anniversary Book.

Frankie Walters
Carol Warner
Daphne Fix
Scott Meier

Wendi Neal
Trey Witzel
Meagan Barr
Kristen Howard

2024 McFarlin Staff

Discipleship & Connections



Katie Lanier
Director of Children & Family Ministries



Zach James
Assoc. Director of Children & Family Ministries



Austin Leeviraphan
Director of Student Ministries



Kloe Young
Director of High School and College Ministries



Rebekah Small
Director of Middle School Ministries

Missions, Care, Nursery, & Communications



Scott Meier
Director of Missions & Invitation



Stephanie Miller
Director of Care Ministries & 55+ Ministries



Gwen Gough
Nursery Coordinator



Kristen Howard
Lead Multimedia Storyteller



Meagan Barr
Lead Graphic & Web Designer

Operations



Stephen Mitchell
Business Administrator



Kelly Poteet
Accounting & Payroll Coordinator



Anna Steele
Office Manager



Carol Barnes
Hospitality & Operations Assistant



Aaron Pilkington
Executive Chef/ Director of Food Services

Childcare & Facilities



Justine Martin
Director of Day Care



Michelle Dykes
Director of Children's Day Out



Madisen Myers
Director of McFarlin Kid Zone



Jon Georgiadis
Facility Manager



Robert Snell
Facility Team

Worship & Music



Dr. Rick Zielinski
*Director of Music
Ministries*



Dr. Stephen Wurst
*Assoc. Director of
Music Ministries &
Principal Organist*



Kayley Williamson
*Director of Children's
Choirs & Modern
Worship*



Amy Bowden
*Financial Asst./ Music
Admin. Asst.*



Daphne Fix
*Pastoral Asst./
Sanctuary Worship
Coordinator*

Commissioned Music for the 100th Celebration

To commemorate our centennial year, McFarlin commissioned a new anthem from composer Craig Phillips. The new piece, titled “A Hymn of Praise,” was arranged in two versions—one to be used for our centennial celebration in August using choir, organ, brass, and handbells, as well as another version for choir and orchestra that will be premiered in December. This anthem was generously sponsored by Dr. Tommy Karns and Carol St. John and their families.

“A Hymn of Praise” uses two great hymns of faith that are loved by our congregation: “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” and “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.” Both of these hymn texts were written by Charles Wesley. In addition, the anthem includes text written by the Rev. Dr. Rockford Johnson, which is found here:

“Ever confident in the faithfulness of God, we are companions of the one who abounds with hope, who soars with love across all boundaries. Filled with all joy and peace and overflowing with thanks for God’s good work in God’s good church, we sing in praise of what God has begun. We pray for what God is completing. With tender affection we hold in our hearts each other and all who have come before. Empower us, O pure, unbounded Love, in the way of Jesus Christ.”

*For the 100th Year Anniversary of McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church,
Norman, Oklahoma. (1924-2024)*

A Hymn of Praise

SATB Festival Anthem with organ

Charles Wesley
Rockford Johnson

Craig Phillips
and based on *Azmon*, Carl G. Glässer
Beecher, John Zundel

100th Anniversary Commissioned Music Piece by Craig Phillips



McFarlin's Heart & History

100 Years of Loving God—Growing in Faith—Serving Others

Heartfelt gratitude for all who worshiped and served from 1924 to 2024

In 1924, "Love" built McFarlin Memorial Episcopal Methodist Church.

McFarlin Robert and Ida McFarlin's "**Love for God**" formed the foundation of McFarlin Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South—our church.

Memorial Robert and Ida McFarlin's "**Love for their son,**" who died at 19 months old, built a sacred monument that became our church.

Methodist Robert and Ida McFarlin's "**Love for the Methodist people,**" who comforted them during their devastating loss, helped build our church.

Church Robert and Ida McFarlin's "**Love for the Methodist Episcopal Church**" endowed our church.

In 2024, "Love" is in the DNA of McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church people of faith.

McFarlin people of faith—the McFarlin church building can't do anything without its faithful people worshiping, praying, caring, communicating, collaborating, taking action, and serving others in love—**Changing Lives That Change the World.**

Please pray about how together we will embrace McFarlin's next 25 years and participate in the life of "our church" to inspire and ensure the next century within and beyond the walls.

"We love because he first loved us."

1 John 4:19



McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church
Norman, Oklahoma

