

Ridge Road Baptist Church



The History

November 7, 1952 – January 2021

The following is the history of Ridge Road Baptist Church. The 1st 50 years I copied from the booklets that were printed over the years. The last 17 years or so was composed by looking back at Deacon Meeting minutes, church meetings minutes, and memories of members. Thanks to Ellis and Teresa Wheeler, Phil Kirk, Ashlee Kirk, Evelyn Alexander, Dr. Steve Jolly, and Dr. Steve Sumerel for their invaluable help. I appreciate it more than you know. Any errors or misspellings are mine and mine alone. I have enjoyed doing this: learned a lot, remembered a lot. I hope you will enjoy looking back and know how much Ridge Road has given to so many generations, and so many generations have given back to Ridge Road to make it what it has been and is today.

Linda Broughman

In 1952 the Raleigh Baptist Association Missions Committee felt there was a need for a new church in this area. Frances Lacy School had been built, and many residential areas were being developed. The Reverend Lee Pridgen, Executive Secretary of the Raleigh Baptist Association, and Dr. John Kincheloe, Pastor of Hayes Barton Baptist Church, and other members of the Missions Committee selected the site.

The first meeting of the proposed Ridge Road Baptist Church was held September 11, 1954 with 26 people gathering on the lot for the new church. The Rev. James W. Ray, former B.S.U. Secretary for the Baptist State Convention, was suggested to be employed to secure members from surrounding areas. Dr. John Kincheloe, Pastor of Hayes Barton Baptist Church, and Dr. Broadus Jones, Pastor for First Baptist Church, both pledged full support to the new church.

The first prayer meeting, conducted by Rev. James W. Ray, who was employed as temporary pastor for a 2-month period, was held on Wednesday September 22, 1954 at the house on the property (now known as the Hut). This house was used for all services except Sunday school and Morning Worship until completion of the first new building in 1960.

On October 3, 1954, the first regular Sunday school and Worship Service were held at Meredith College. Attendance totaled 57 for Sunday school and 74 for the Worship Service. Following this memorable day, plans were made for the formal organization of the church on November 7, 1954, at 2 p. m. at Meredith College, which was the meeting place for Sunday school and Sunday worship services.

For the permanent Church name, about 20 suggestion were submitted. Ridge Road received more votes than any other, and it was declared the official name by unanimous consent.

On November 7, 1954, the organizational service was held at Meredith College with 62 members with church letter in hand to formally constitute the Ridge Road Baptist Church.

Dr. S. L. Stealey, President of the Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, preached the organizational sermon, and the Rev. James W. Ray accepted the call to become the first Pastor. The Charter member period was extended to the 1st Sunday in January, 1955, and 97 persons had united with the Church by the end of this period. A special gift of \$1,000 was received on organizational Sunday from Hayes Barton Baptist Church

The Ridge Road Baptist Church came into being as a result of the growth of Raleigh and the Raleigh Baptist Association. Dr. John Kincheloe, Chairman of the Missions Committee of the Association, and the Rev. Lee Pridgen, Associational Missionary, led the Association in securing three acres, with a small house, garage and storage shed on the property, for \$15,000 for a church site.

The men of the church remodeled the small house and it became our new church home, with offices, kitchen, room for Sunday evening services and Wednesday prayer meeting. The ground was cleared of many trees and small shrubs, and parking areas were laid out.

Following the formal organization of the Church on November 7, 1954, at Meredith College, the men of the church would meet Saturday afternoons and evenings during the week and rework the garage and storage shed, making rooms for the Training Union meetings and other services. It was inspiring to see doctors, engineers, salesmen, teachers, and others working together in overalls, laying brick, placing cement blocks, building walls, and painting to have a house where we could study together, pray together and together better serve God.

A special meeting was called at 5 p.m. on February 10, 1957, at the church house to view films from the Sunday School Board, showing types of architecture in many recently constructed church buildings. Several architects were present and explained various types of architecture to the group.

At a special business meeting March 24, 1957, Mr. Leif Valand, A.I.A., was unanimously selected to proceed with the preparation of schematic drawings of the entire plant and detailed drawings of the first unit to be constructed. These were approved by the Church on April 10, 1957.

Rev. James W. Ray resigned on June 15, 1958 to return to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky for further study. Church membership at the time of his departure was 288. Dr. J. Clyde Turner was called as interim pastor on June 29.

By October, 1958, four additional lots had been purchased, expanding the Church property to about six acres. Ridge Road extended a call to Rev. Robert Dorr on November 9, 1958 to become its second pastor. Rev. Dorr left his pastorate at Lowes Grove Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, and began his work at Ridge Road on January 4, 1959.

On Sunday, January 4, 1959, before a capacity congregation, Mr. D. E. Schreffler, Chairman of the Building Committee, presented the architect's colored perspective of the complete layout along with drawing of the various elevations of the first new building. A loan of \$125,000 had been obtained from State Capital Life Insurance Company, Raleigh, with more than 50 of the church members endorsing the note. Bids were taken. Low bidders were William C. Vick on the general contract, at \$152,640, and Stahl-Rider on the heating and duct contract.

The formal ground-breaking ceremony was held at the Church site, Sunday, July 19, 1959, at 5 p.m. Dr. John Kinchelov, Pastor of Hayes Barton Baptist Church, was the principal speaker. Others on the program were Rev. James W. Ray, Rev. Lee Pridgen, Dr. J. Clyde Turner, and Rev. Walser Allen.

During the winter and early spring of 1960 while the building was being constructed, the men of the church worked at night, in a local woodworking plant, building tables, blackboards, lecterns, kitchen cabinet tops and other equipment needed for the new building. Ladies of the church made draperies and numerous items of furnishings. These were exciting days as the members worked and planned for the day when the move could be made into the new Church home. Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Crabtree gave the church a new Hammond organ and the first services

in the chapel were held in it April 10, 1960 followed by a dedication service on May 15, with Dr. Stealy preaching the sermon. Arthur Penland, Jr. joined the church staff as part-time music director on November 1, 1960, and Betsy Lake became the church organist a month later on December 1. Rev. Dorr resigned on February 19, 1961 for a position in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Ralph McClain, head of the Department of Religion at Meredith College, was called as interim.

Dr. Harvey T. Whaley was called to become Ridge Road's third pastor on July 16, 1961. He accepted and left his pastorate of Calder Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas to begin duties on September 10, 1961.

The Chapel furnishing was completed in the spring of 1962, with wall-to-wall carpet, pews, and air conditioning. The parking lots were paved.

Dr. Whaley resigned March 31, 1965 to become assistant pastor at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. Dr. M. Ray McKay, a retired professor from Southeastern Seminary, was called as interim pastor. On August 22, 1965, Dr. Stanley Nelson was called as pastor. He came from serving as pastor of the University Baptist Church in Wichita, Kansas. His duties began on September 19, 1965.

At a special business conference January 23, 1966, the Church authorized the preparation of plans, estimates, construction and the negotiation of the financing of the Children's Building Unit No. 2 of the overall plan. Leif Valand again was employed as architect. On June 19, 1966, in a special business conference, a report was made to the Church that plans for the proposed building were complete and ready for letting of contract. Also, a letter was read from Davidson & Jones Company that they would construct the proposed building for cost plus five percent. This would save time and money, and with the financing already arranged the contract was rewarded to Davidson & Jones. The building was completed and occupied the first week of December, 1967. The mortgage on the buildings was paid off on March 5, 1976, leaving the Church debt free at that time.

On March 12, the church began having two Sunday morning worship services, at 8:45 and 11:00 am, due to growth in attendance. Rev. Jack Lemons accepted the call as Minister of Education and Youth on April 1, 1967, replacing Henry Coffey, who resigned to work with The Chicago Institute of Pastoral Care and to complete his doctorate at the University of Chicago. Milton Bliss, music professor at North Carolina State University, joined the church staff as Minister of Music on May 1.

The year 1968 was an active year at Ridge Road. A kindergarten for five-years-olds, under the direction of Mrs. Earl Franklin, began in September with an enrollment of 27. The church desired that some underprivileged children attend free and set aside funds for this purpose.

Ridge Road also provided financial support to missionaries Rev. and Mrs. Charles Wilson and family in Guadalajara, Mexico, and later to missionaries Dr. and Mrs. Alton Hood and family in Thailand. An individual church member provided support to the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas O. Barron in Indonesia. J. Collin Harris, a student at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., became Ridge Road's first member ordained to the ministry on November 17. By December 1968, church membership was 586.

On February 9, 1969, Dr. Nelson resigned to take the position of Associate Secretary for Missionary Personnel of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. John I. Durham of Southeastern Seminary was called as interim pastor. Rev. Lemons was called as full-time associate pastor and served until September 1st when he left to study at the University of Exeter in England. In April following the church's policy of devoting its buildings to ministry, the Budleigh Chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous began meeting in the fellowship on Mondays and Thursdays each week.

Rev. William Rogers was called as Pastor on September 7, 1969, leaving his pastorate at Bullock Baptist Church, in Bullock, North Carolina. He began his service on October 5, 1969.

In 1970, many programs increased or were started. The kindergarten ministry increased to include three- and four-year-old children, had scholarships for some children, and included children from other countries. Total enrollment in 1970-1971 was 48. Ridge Road partnered with Highland Methodist Church and Raleigh Moravian Church in sponsoring a Golden Years Club to meet senior adult needs that was hosted by Ridge Road. Rev. Michael C. Blackwell began serving as Minister of Education and Youth on August 1. Under Rev. Blackwell's leadership an exciting and dynamic program was initiated for college students, and the ministry to youth was strengthened. Thirty-five N. C. State and Meredith students became associated with Ridge Road under the new Watch Care program instituted on September 30, 1970. The college program continued to grow in numbers.

In March 1972, a new and innovative ministry aimed at non-church young people began with the opening of the Coffee House. The new coffee house was named "Tranquility Base" after the moon landing. College student, Steve Sumerel, came up with the name. College and senior high students staffed the Coffee House, and it filled the gap in Christian outreach as it sought to promote the message "God cared" to Raleigh's youth and young adults.

On November 19, 1972, four college students were licensed to the Christian Ministry: Mary Alice (Williamson) Formo, Steve Jolly, Lindsey Miller, and Steve Sumerel. Jackie McDuffie became the first woman elected to the Diaconate and was ordained on October 28, 1973. Membership during the fall quarter was 653.

Rev. Blackwell resigned on February 1, 1974 to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Carthage, North Carolina. Rev. Bryant Kendrick who began his duties on April 1, 1974.

A major event happened in 1976. The mortgage on the buildings was paid off in March, leaving the church debt-free. Rev. Rogers resigned in May to become pastor of First Baptist Church, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. Dr. Edward H. Pruden, a minister with considerable experience in Washington, D. C., served as interim beginning June 1.

In July 1976, Rev. Ted Janes was called as pastor. He was formerly the pastor of Youngsville Baptist Church, Youngsville, North Carolina and began his duties on September 23, 1976. He was instrumental in encouraging committees to meet at fixed dates and strengthened long-term planning. Rev. James resigned on March 30, 1979 and again Dr. John I. Durham served as interim pastor. Rev. Kendrick resigned in May to attend the School of Pastoral Care, at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. C. Michael Leach filled his position in May.

Dr. Carl Johnson, a professor at Meredith College, was called as pastor on September 30, 1979 and began his duties on January 1, 1980. Dr. Johnson came to Ridge Road with a wealth of experience, having served several churches in various ministerial capacities as well as holding many teaching positions, including positions at Southeastern Seminary and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In July 1980, the church called Rev. Debra Griffis (later Griffis-Woodberry) as Minister of Education and Youth. She emphasized ministry with families and developed the Family Cluster ministry that focused on the seasons of the Church Year. She also coordinated a worship service for first through sixth grade students on the second and fourth Sundays. This included converting a classroom into a small chapel. Ridge Road continued to support women in ministry as Mary Agner served as intern while she was a student at Southeast Seminary and was ordained to the ministry on September 23, 1984 by Ridge Road.

A part of the original dream of the congregation was a sanctuary, and this became reality when on October 2, 1983, the congregation worshipped for the first time in the newly constructed sanctuary. The building is of traditional Georgian architecture with a seating capacity of 412 on the main level and 126 in the balcony, a total of 538. Also included are a suite of offices and meeting rooms. The building was designed by Envirotek with chief architect Ben Taylor and junior associate Phil Safriet. The building contractor was Davidson & Jones, with Seby Jones as board chairman. The church had \$200,000 in its building fund and raised approximately \$550,000 through donations and pledges. The remainder of the needed funds came from selling church bonds. The total cost of the building and furnishings totaled around \$1 million. The dedicatory service for the sanctuary was held November 13, 1984, with Dr. Randall W. Lolley, president of Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest, delivering the dedication sermon.

Rev. Griffis-Woodberry resigned in December 1984 to become the pastor of a newly developing Baptist church in Arnold, Maryland. Rev. Terry Reeves was called as her replacement on June, 1985. Church membership was 516.

Long time music director Milton Bliss resigned in 1986. Betsy Lake served as interim Music Director and Alice Goode served as assistant interim. Dr. Cynthia Brown was called on June 1, 1986 as Minister of Music and organist. Church membership was 512.

Dr. Johnson resigned on February 1, 1988, effective February 29th. Dr. Malcom Tolbert of Southeastern Seminary was called as interim pastor, and his relationship with the church was very pleasant and rewarding. During this interim time, Dave Wooten began to serve as part-time interim Minister of Youth in March of 1988, and Dr. Brown resigned as Minister of Music, effective August 31, to accept a position at Campbell University. In September Church membership was 485.

On August 14, 1988 a motion was approved to call Dr. Mack Thompson to serve as pastor. Dr. Thompson accepted, effective October 1, 1988. Dr. Thompson came from First Baptist Church in Laurinburg, North Carolina. Dr. Thompson attended Chowan College and earned advanced degrees at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. With the coming of a new pastor, church programs and activities seemed to take on a new life as numbers increased in Sunday school, Sunday morning worship, mid-week family night supper and Bible study, and other events.

In the fall of 1988, Ridge Road began a review of the Church Constitution and By-laws for the purpose of updating, if needed. A committee consisting of George Newsome, Bill Humphries, and Mary Donavant was appointed to undertake the task. In April 1988, the committee submitted a detailed report recommending extensive revisions, and the report was adopted in May. Amid other things, the composition and duties of 27 standing committees were spelled out specifically. The Church established a Church Council consisting of general officers, program directors, and committee chairpersons.

As the feeling was the church was definitely growing, members thought that special efforts should be made to attract more youth. In January 1989 the church called James (Jim) Scarborough as Minister of Education and Youth, a position he had been filling on a temporary basis. Jim was ordained by the church on February 12.

David Johnson was also called as Minister of Music in January 1989, with the appointment to extend from February 1 – May 31, 1989, after which the situation would be considered further. David completed his doctoral studies at North Carolina State University, and moved to a position with the Virginia community college system. Those familiar with the music program were sorry to see him leave. Julie Jones substituted as church organist from September 1, 1988 – May 31, 1989 until the church called Tim Johnson as organist, beginning June 1, 1989.

In the early months of 1989, the church took part in the denominational program Project Assistance for Churches in Transition (P.A.C.T.) as a way to evaluate its effectiveness and health. A result of the study was to strengthen its programming and attract new members.

In October 1989, Ann Bartholomew was elected as the first woman in the church to be elected as chair of the Diaconate, formerly known as the Board of Deacons before the review process of the Church Constitution and By-laws.

Also in January of 1990, Jennifer Hayes began serving in the intern position of Minister to Children. A student from Southeastern seminary, her internship ended in August 1990, and Sandra Cline, another Southeastern student, filled the position from September through December. Tim Johnson resigned as organist on November 25th to join the staff of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Cary, North Carolina. Jerry Jones filled in as organist while he continued to conduct the choir, and it was eventually decided that Jerry would serve in both capacities.

Several events happened in the life of Ridge Road in 1991. In January Sara Lynn Johnson, a senior at Campbell University was called to serve as the Minister of Children intern. The church decided to turn this internship into a new part-time position, and on June 9, Sara Lynn became Minister of Children. Rev. Scarborough resigned effective June 19, 1991 to work for the public relations firm, Randolph Cloud and Associates. On December 1, the Rev. Tom Allen was called as Minister of Education. A native of Bunn Level, North Carolina, Rev. Allen, a recent Southern Seminary graduate living in Louisville, was serving as pastor of Westin Baptist Church in Indiana before accepting the call to Ridge Road. He began his service at Ridge Road on January 15, 1992.

In 1991, Ridge Road also won the East U.S.A. P. A.C.T. Church of the Year Award. It was selected from among several hundred churches participating in the program. Dr. Thompson and his wife Carol accepted the award on Ridge Road's behalf in Atlanta, and a formal presentation of the award was made at Ridge Road on June 30, 1991.

Sara Lynn Johnson resigned on May 31, 1992 as the first permanent Minister to Children. That position was upgraded to a half-time position and was eventually filled when the church called Deborah Haynes on October 6, 1993 as Minister to Children.

In the summer of 1993, Ridge Road began to serve as host to Belarusian children affected by radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Being away from their homes for even a short amount of time allowed for a temporary halt from the intake of contaminants brought on by the radiation. On June 29, three families from Ridge Road hosted several children from Mogiliv, Belarus for six weeks. This project was through the Raleigh Baptist Association and continued for several years allowing even more families to participate. Some church members traveled to Belarus as well to visit the children at their homes.

Membership in April 1995 was 465. In 1995 the Music Committee had been discussing the possibilities of getting a new pipe organ. Ahlborn-Galanti gave a bid of \$114,580.00 for the organ that would be especially constructed in Germany with new technology that would be similar to that of a pipe organ with "real" pipes visible to the congregation.

In the 1990's Ridge Road became decreasingly involved with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as it saw itself not identifying with the changes occurring in the SBC. The church became aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), an organization created in the wake of the conservative resurgence in the SBC. Ridge Road no longer sent messengers to the annual SBC and the church began sending representatives to CBF state and national meetings. This distancing from the SBC also brought changes in where Ridge Road looked for its ministry interns. While Ridge Road used to look toward the Southeastern Seminary. The church now looked elsewhere. The Baptist House of Duke Divinity School became a wellspring for Ridge Road. The first intern from Duke, Christopher Ingram, was called as the Minister to Children in September 1997.

Also in 1997, Ridge Road began its Building Improvement Campaign. The kickoff began August 17 with a goal of raising \$150,000 to improve its three buildings. This included adding space in the music room and the chancel area of the sanctuary. By September 24, pledges and receipts totaled \$203,725. On October 15, 1997, Ridge Road became the first church in the country to enter into a new mission partnership with the CBF called Adopt-A-People. Ridge Road adopted the Pattani Malay people. Tom and Beth Ogburn, missionaries to the Pattani Malay, and Philip and Shantal Vestal, Adopt-A-People coordinators, served as guest speakers at this event.

In 1998, the Building Improvement Campaign continued. Tom Allen resigned effective August 2 to join the staff of First Baptist Church in Southern Pines, North Carolina. On November 4, the last of the building improvement project was completed when the music suite was dedicated that evening. The new renovations in the music suite and the chancel loft greatly enhanced Ridge Road's music and arts programming. In particular, there was greater flexibility in the sanctuary to offer a wide variety of dramatic and musical productions.

In March 1999, Ridge Road supported substance abuse mission's effort in South Africa by sending one of its members, Chris Austin, to aid Dr. Steve Sumerel of the Baptist State Convention's staff. After completing his seminary studies, Christopher Ingram completed his internship in May. That summer, he was ordained by his home church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Ridge Road called him to be Minister of Education, and he began in this capacity on August 1, 1999. Heather West, a Baptist House student of Duke Divinity School, began serving as the Minister to Children intern in September. In July 1999 a carillon was given for the church steeple. In the wake of Hurricane Floyd's devastation, Ridge Road entered into partnership with Center Baptist Church in Sampson County to help rebuilding efforts on October 6.

Heather West completed her internship in April 2000. Also that year, the Denominational Relations Committee seriously studied the relationship between Ridge Road and the SBC and eventually decided that it was basically at odds in its interpretation of Baptist Tenants of the Faith. And Message. In response to this conclusion, the church voted to disassociate from the

SBC on October 29, 2000. The vote was 98% affirmative. Dan Rhodes, another Duke Baptist House student, began to serve as the Minister of Children in September 2000 and continued to April 2001. Rachel Olsen began her service as Minister of Children in September of 2001.

On February 23, 2003 the church voted to fund and support Pursuing Vita Ministry (PVM), a particularly meaningful process. PVM is a tool designed to assist churches in writing their future story, then designing an approach for living out that story to fulfill God's purpose for the church. The initial step in the process of PVM was an 18-month journey in which 7% of the congregation was selected by their fellow church members for training in congregational development theories, then send them out to search for God's vision for Ridge Road. As part of the process, "the 7%" expanded so that two additional church members joined each member of the 7% to form trios, or prayers triplets. Over a period of 100 days, this larger group "the 21%", called on other members to pray and discuss the future to discern God's will for the church. As a result of this intense period of prayer, and introspection, an intergenerational model was chosen. The 21% explored new ways to bring the generations together in ministry to and with each other.

As the PVC process began to unfold, Ridge Road experienced new challenges as two members of the ministerial staff were diagnosed with cancer. The initial assumption that Rev. Jerry Jones' diagnosis of pancreatic cancer would devastate the music program was profoundly lacking in faith. An extremely private man, Jerry continued to minister to the congregation by sharing his journey openly with the church for the next twenty-one months. Dr. Thompson's subsequent cancer diagnosis seemed unbelievable. However he, too, used his illness as a life lesson for the Ridge Road congregation. Both ministers modeled the faith professed by their lives' work in powerful ways as they dealt with their illnesses. They encouraged members of the congregation to call upon their own gifts to fill the gaps created by their conditions and the resulting treatments, and affirmed the efforts of those who came forward. Rev. Christopher Ingram stepped in and provided outstanding leadership and direction, demonstrating wisdom, maturity, and grace during these difficult days. Dr. Marion Lark of Henderson, N. C. blessed the congregation with his powerful preaching while Dr. Thompson recovered from surgery.

Two summer School sessions were held June 9-20 and July 7-18. October 2013 enrollment in the preschool was 96 students.

In 2004, Ridge Road saw many changes. Rachel Olsen completed her internship in May and Jennifer Ingold, a senior at Meredith College, began service as a minister intern to children in September. In April a new church in Ahoskie, N. C., The Open Arms Chapel, bought the pews in the Chapel for \$2,000. In May church member Maxine Senter stated that she was interested in presenting the church with "a van", and her offer was graciously accepted. A committee was formed to pursue this.

In the early months of summer, as Dr. Thompson's condition required surgery and Jerry Jones' condition worsened, the choir began to plan a choir reunion in honor of Ridge Roads' 50th

Anniversary. On August 22, they presented a program of familiar anthems under the direction of Dr. Sally Porter Thomas, professor of voice at Meredith College. Rev. Jerry Jones died on July 7, 2004, at 8:00 p.m., a time when the Chancel Choir customarily met for weekly rehearsal. His dedication to Ridge Road, his commitment to music as a component of worship, and his mentoring of young musicians will continue to bless this congregation for years. Dr. Thompson is now cancer free.

Ridge Road's 50th Anniversary was on November 7, 2004. The celebration, in addition to Dr. Mack Thompson, included former staff members, Rev. Tom Allen, Dr. Mickey Blackwell, Dr. Stan Nelson, and Rev. Bill Rodgers who all spoke. A special updated 50th Anniversary edition of the history of Ridge Road was given out and a luncheon followed. The membership of the church was over 450 and had seen increases in the past few months. The kindergarten program now has over 100 children and again as a college ministry.

In January 2005 Ridge Road acquired a 15-passenger bus. Dr. Thompson thanked all those that had filled the gap in the music department since the death of Jerry Jones. He recognized Alice Goode, Julie Jones, and Dan and Janet Harder for their talents and willingness to step up. The first week of March Ridge Road hosted students from Boston College that were in Raleigh working on a Habitat for Humanity project. They were provided with evening meals and space for sleeping arrangements. On April 27, 2005, Rev. Patti Lingafelt became our new Minister of Music and Organist. On May 15, a commissioning service was held for Laura Wheeler and Anna Kate Ellerman who will serve as Passport counselors. The church membership in July 2005 was 430. Some of the Missions groups helped this year were Baptist Children's Home, Urban Ministries, Passport, World Servants, Four Corners mission trips, and contributions for a special "Katrina fund" which raised \$4,731. On July 23, a team of Ridge Road youth, college students, and adults began a weeklong mission trip to Gallop, New Mexico, to help build recreational facilities for youth and to learn, serve, and share stories of faith throughout the Navajo Nation, sponsored by World Servants. Ridge Road adopted a Burmese-Karen family. Over the next year along with helping this family, it grew into helping many of families settle, get jobs, tutor their children, and do everyday things that needed to be done. Many from the congregation helped with these things and more.

Ridge Road hosted the Thanksgiving service this year for the annual service with the Raleigh Moravian Church and Highland Methodist Church and Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church. On December 18, 2005 the first Christmas cantata with Minister of Music and Organist, Rev. Patti Lingafelt, presented with the Chancel Choir, a string quartet as well as other instruments. On Christmas Eve the annual candlelight service was held.

The college student ministry grew in 2006. They helped with the youth, sang in the choir, played hand bells, and are involved with the youth ministry. Several members left for long term missionary journeys. Liz Harder traveled to South Korea to serve two years in a mission school. Laura Wheeler departed to work for Passport in Birmingham, Alabama for a next year. Kat Spangler, a Duke Divinity student and regular attender, traveled to South Africa to work in a church that works extensively in HIV/AIDS ministries. Also the youth group and children traveled to Passport and Passport - kids.

In May of 2006 the Spiritual Direction study sponsored by the Baptist State Convention began. It was a process to help churches review themselves when disagreements occur. One of the key elements of this approach is to encourage members of the congregation to express themselves without impinging on the local church autonomy. A facilitator is appointed who is unknown to the congregation or its members. Dr. Dennis Burton was appointed.

In the fall of 2006, our long-time administrative assistant left. In October at the Deacons meeting, Dr. Thompson reported that the Burmese-Karen people requested permission to use the Chapel at 2 P.M. on Sunday afternoons for their worship service. A motion was made and approved.

In November 2006, Peter Griffiths, Treasurer, found a \$29,000 discrepancy in how much money the church had. An audit was ordered and it was done after the 2006 books were closed. A core group of 5 church members worked long and hard to find the evidence of the embezzlement. In December 2006, an anonymous family gave the church \$10,000 for the general fund and \$90,000 for a columbarium.

Events regarding our former administrative assistant had a huge impact on our church family. On Sunday, January 28, 2007, a meeting was called to report to the congregation what was happening. On January 30, Peter Griffiths received a letter from the CPA who audited the accounts, stating that the total money found from credit cards, forged checks, etc. totaled \$252,000 which had begun in early 1998. A business meeting was called for Wednesday, January 31, 2007 to inform the congregation of the full details of the misuse of church funds and to give the opportunity to ask any questions that they had. It was a very emotional meeting but everyone agreed to do whatever was necessary and to move forward. The response to this crisis was very positive and encouraging for the most part.

In March 2007, the Wake County Assistant Attorney, Susan Spurling, met with the Diaconate to review the case against our former administrative assistant. The administrative assistant confessed, stated she didn't mean it to happen, didn't realize how much she had taken, and was sorry. If she is convicted, the crime carries a mandatory prison sentence in excess of 53 months, a Class A Felony. If a substantial restitution was presented, Ms. Spurling stated, she would consider a guilty plea to a lesser sentence. Ms. Spurling has stated that the agreement would have to be for a majority or all of the amount stolen. The case came before the District Court April 4. All payments for missions are on hold until we are in a better financial position. The trial was held and an agreement was reached and \$267,221 was repaid to the church.

A financial study report was given to the Deacons on its findings of needs for changes in the administration of finance at RR BCH and what changes have already been made. One of the main changes was a split between administration and accounting. Spiritual Direction continued to move forward. \$100,000 was received from the estate of a former member.

On April 11, 2008, Ridge Road received the N. C. Baptist Women in Ministry for Church of the year Award. On April 13 an ordination service was held for Jennifer Asbill. In July 2008 a joint service with the Burmese-Karen Fellowship was held. The day included joint prayers, hymns, special music in Karen and English. The service concluded with the baptism of six persons followed by a reception. In August a statewide event was held at Ridge Road and was partnered with Greystone Baptist Church. This was a day of fun for 60-70 Burmese Children who enjoyed a day of games and refreshments. Rev. Christopher Ingram resigned and on October 15 a "Going Away" celebration and reception was held for Christopher. Jennifer Asbill Ingold resigned to join the staff of Zebulon Baptist Church. In December, Dr. Mack

Thompson preached his last sermon and a reception was held to thank him for his many years as our pastor.

On January 2008, Dr. Emanuel Pegram began as Interim pastor. Dr. Pegram was here until December. In 2009, Rev. Zack Roberts began as Minister of Youth and Education. Dr. J. Randall Sherron became our Interim pastor in January 2010. He came to us from Greenwood Forest Baptist Church in Cary, North Carolina. On August 15, 2010, Dr. Randy Sherron was voted on to become our new pastor. His first Sunday as our regular pastor was September 1, 2010. Jeanne Cross, a Duke Divinity student, began her internship with us. In March 2011, a part-time position for Minister of Children and Missions was approved. This person will be considered a member of the ministerial team at Ridge Road and Jeanne Cross accepted that position.

In February 2010, members of Ridge Road volunteered to help tutor children of the Burmese (Karen) congregation on Wednesday nights. The Karen congregation who worship in the Chapel at 2 p.m. on Sundays, requested that their children be invited to participate in our Sunday school and Worship on Sundays. Jeanne Cross asked for volunteers to sit with them in worship.

2011 was a busy year for Ridge Road. In July of 2011, something new was added to Vacation Bible School. An Adult Vacation Bible School was led by Dr. Sherron. Only 25% was given to Missions for the year because of a deficit in the budget. In September 2011, the church called Rebecca Bentley Hall to be to the first Minister of Children and Missions. On October 1, 2011, Rebecca became Ridge Road's first Minister of Children and Missions. Rebecca has a Master of Divinity from Campbell University and has 32 years of experience in music ministry and church volunteerism. On October 9, Andrew Barnhill, Duke Divinity and law school student and former student of Dr. Sherron, became the Minister of Youth and Education intern.

2012 was another busy year for Ridge Road. From October 2011 until March 2012 Rebecca Hall listed the following Missions/outreach events that have occurred: Truck or Treat, Operation Christmas Child, Offering for Baptist Children's Home, Offering for Global Missions (CBF), Bibles & Blankets (Church in the Woods), and the Heart & Soul Chili Bowl. Rebecca also organized the Easter Egg Hunt and light breakfast, and the Family Game Night and Pot Luck Dinner on April 28^h. Penny Atwood announced that the pre-school had 87 students and Summer School dates are June 4-15 and July 9-12. The Columbarium was completed in April. It was completed and paid for with donations.

Rebecca Hall organized a Love Ridge Road on May 5, 2012 to clean the rooms in the Education Building. On May 1st, the church voted to incorporate and an official was sent to the Secretary of State. On May 19, Ridge Fest Homecoming was held. On May 20, Patti Lingafelt and the Chancel Choir presented Festival of Hymns and members shared the why their favorite hymns meant so much to them. Dr. Sherron was teaching two classes at Duke Divinity School. In mid-September, Capital Community Church began to use our facility for a community Bible study called Morning Glory.

In September 2012 at a called business meeting, the church voted on having an intern from the Duke Divinity School for the 2012 -2013 year. The Personnel Advisory Committee Chair Ellis Wheeler, recommended Allan Smith for the position, with Duke University paying \$3700 and Ridge Road paying \$3700 plus approximately \$1600 for travel. In October Dr. Sherron gave a presentation of where the church is financially and what reductions or eliminations the church may need to make next year. Rebecca Hall, Minister of Children and Missions, stated that there are fewer children in attendance in Sunday school. Some of the decline is because many of the Karen families have moved out of the area, and even out of the state. Allen Smith took a group of older students to Adventure Landing and the State Fair in order to foster community and build relationships. Dr. Sherron began two Wednesday Bible studies, one beginning at noon, averaging 15-17 attendees and one at night, averaging 23 – 26. Between the two groups roughly 70 – 75% are new to Wednesday participation. Dr. Sherron met weekly with our intern, Allan Smith. Randy hoped that Allen's major focus would be on youth, but he will need some time to spend with the College/Career group since they have no one to lead them at the moment. Rev. Patti Lingafelt resigned and left in December.

In January 2013, Rev. Rebecca Hall became the interim Music Director along with her other duties. In April James Austin, a member of the choir, was hired as an independent contractor to conduct the choir in rehearsal and services in an interim basis. Rebecca Hall will continue as overall interim music minister. In May, approval was given to support Laura and Carson Foushee as CBF missionaries.

2013 saw Allen Smith leave his position as our intern. August 1, 2013 saw Mr. Kerry Johnson become the part-time Minister of Music. Mr. Johnson has an undergraduate degree in piano performance from Furman University and a Master's degree in piano performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N. Y. In September 2013 Laura and Carson Foushee, began their CBF missionary journey in Japan.

We skyped with the Foushee's from Japan May 4, 2014. A book drive was initiated for the purpose of getting books to be sent to Japan to help the Foushee's teach English to students. On October 12, 2014, the church celebrated its 60th Anniversary. Dr. Michael Blackwell preached and former staff, spoke about their time at Ridge Road. Roger Nix of the Raleigh Baptist Association and all of our guests were invited to attend a luncheon that followed.

Our facilities use was expanded to include more groups from Capital City Church and a new congregation, the Abba Nissi Church. A boundary survey of the church property was completed August 19, 2015. Several activities were held through the year: the Chili Bowl in February, an Ice Cream Social in August, and Movie Night in October. Twelve outside groups used our facilities to meet on a weekly or monthly basis. Other groups have used our facilities for single events.

Michael Arnold was hired as custodian and proved so helpful and skilled, his title was changed to Facilities Manager. In December the Chancel Choir joined the choir of Highland Methodist Church to perform a cantata written conducted by Pepper Choplin at both churches.

2016 saw an offer from Capital City Church to buy our property which was rejected. Several fellowship events were held throughout the year. We held missions collections for Baptist Children's Home, Washington Elementary School, and Urban Ministries. We eliminated three committees: Bookkeeper (outsourced), Purchasing Agent, and Financial Secretary and combined the Stewardship and Finance committees. Capital City Church decided to end its use of our facilities.

In June of 2017, Midtown Community Church entered into a two-month trial period with Ridge Road on a proposed partnership. In August the partnership was approved and Midtown entered into a three year contract with us. Rev. Rebecca Hall resigned from the church near the end of 2017. In December 2017, Ridge Road went caroling to our homebound, combined with the Choir from Crabtree Valley Baptist Church to perform the cantata, and worshipped with Midtown at the Christmas Eve candlelight service.

On April 4, 2018 our former Minister of Children and Education, Rev. Rebecca Hall died. In the spring of 2018, renovation on the kitchen and fellowship hall began. The kitchen was renovated with new cabinets, a longer island, new countertops, appliances, and paint. The Fellowship Hall was painted, new carpet installed, and window shutters added. All of the improvements were paid for from donations. Also LED lights replaced the lights in all the buildings. The Chancel choir was invited to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York in December of 2019 with other choirs performing a cantata by Pepper Choplin. We again had a joint candlelight Christmas Eve service with Midtown.

2018 saw Dr. Sherron holding several book studies on Sunday mornings. Several mission projects were undertaken for the Lion's Club, Washington Elementary Schools, Urban ministries, etc. Also, a love offering was taken for the Foushee's. Long Time Pre-School Director, Penny Atwood resigned in May and left in May 2020. In August a fence was placed around the columbarium. Dr. Sherron resigned in June 2019 and his last Sunday was August 25. An Interim Pastor Search Committee was formed and Dr. Steve Jolly was approached and accepted the position. A Pastor Search Committee was formed. Dr. Sherron made a list of things that he had been doing that needed to have people take responsibility for after he leaves. A catered luncheon was given for Dr. Sherron and his wife Susan, following the worship service on August 25.

The lease was renewed with Midtown for three more years. Dr. Steve Jolly began as our Interim Pastor in September. Dr. Jolly is known to Ridge Road as he was a college student here from 1970-1972. He was one of four students that were licensed to the Christian Ministry here at Ridge Road. The Pastor Search Committee, with the input from congregations meetings and comments, continues to try to discern the best direction for the church to follow in the future.

Our preschool director, Penny Atwood, brought up several challenges to the Diaconate as the Preschool committee began looking for a new director. Most of the challenges dealt with inadequate funds to keep it going, along with hiring of qualified staff and the shrinking number of students in the past few years. In November, members of the Chancel Choir went to New York for several days to sing with other choirs at Carnegie Hall. In December 2019, Robin Barnes was hired as director of the pre-school for the 2020 fall school year. In April 2020, Robin resigned as pre-school director for personal reasons. The Diaconate decided to close the pre-school because of many factors and hope to open it again within the next few years.

In January 2020, Covid-19 hit the United States and started ravaging the states and the world. The church closed its doors to physical meetings in February as the shut-down was ordered by the governor. Ashlee Kirk got us up and running with online Sunday services. The first online service was on March 22, 2020 with Dr. Jolly and Kerry Johnson. In the following weeks, they were joined by others of the congregation that shared their talents from their homes and other locations. Ashlee also set up Zoom so that the Diaconate and Pastor Search Committee could meet continue and keep the business of the church proceeding. Penny Atwood retired in April.

On August 26, 2020. Dr. Jolly sent a letter to the congregation stating that he is resigning as of December 27. He began teaching at Elon University part time in September and is going full time in January 2021. He has been a dedicated Pastor to us and has given us good thoughts on the path that Ridge Road might take in the future. He cares and wants only the best for Ridge Road and its future. Dr. Steve Sumerel became our Interim Pastor in January 2021. He is also known to Ridge Road as he was a college student here and was one of the four, along with Dr. Jolly that were licensed to Christian Ministry here at Ridge Road. He has also preached here, filling in for Dr. Jolly. Dr. Sumerel is now leading a book study on Sunday mornings, as well as leading worship. He is also attending meetings with the Deacons, Pastor Search Committee, and others. He continues to check on members of the congregation by phone. As well as numerous other things.

At this time, the office has reopened part time 4 days a week. We continue to have online Worship every Sunday morning. The Pastor Search Committee, the Deacons, and the book study, continue to meet on Zoom. The Deacons continue to call their families to check in with them.

The Pastor Search Committee continues to work on the future of Ridge Road. They are feeling very good about the direction that is being taken and hope to have concrete information to pass on to the congregation in the near future.

The Pastors

In its 66 years, nine pastors have served Ridge Road.

Rev. James W. Ray	November 7, 1954 – June 5, 1958
Rev. Robert W. Dorr	January 4, 1959 – February 19, 1961
Dr. Harvey T. Whaley	September 10, 1961 – March 31, 1965
Dr. Stanley A. Nelson	September 19, 1965 – February 9, 1969
Rev. William B. Rogers	October 5, 1969 – May 31, 1976
Rev. Ted James	September 23, 1976 – March 31, 1978
Dr. Carl E. Johnson	January 1, 1980 – February 29, 1988
Dr. L. Mack Thompson	October 1, 1988 – December 31, 2008
Dr. J. Randall Sherron	August 15, 2010 - September 1, 2019

Interim Pastors

Ridge Road has been well served by interim pastors of tremendous ability as preachers, pastors, and spiritual guides during periods of transitions.

Dr. Clyde Turner	1958
Dr. Ralph McClain	1961
Dr. M. Ray Mckay	1965
Dr. John I. Durham	1969
Dr. Edwin H. Pruden	1976
Dr. Malcom Tolbert	1988
Dr. Emmanuel Pegram	2009
Dr. J. Randall Sherron	2010
Dr. Steve Jolly	2019
Dr. Steve Sumerel	

Ministers of Education, Youth, and Children

While a number of experienced ministers have filled the positions, Ridge Road has also provided learning opportunities to numerous divinity students through intern and student appointments.

J. Henry Coffey, Jr.	February 1963 – March 1967
Rev. Jack Lemmons	April 1967 – September 1969
Rev. Michael C. Blackwell	August 1970 – February 1974
Rev. Bryant Kendrick	April 1974 - March 1978
C. Michael Leach	May 1978 – June 1980
Rev. Debra Griffis-Woodberry	July 1980 – December 1984
Terry L. Reeves	July 1985 – 1987
Dave Wooten	March 1988 – December 1988
Rev. James Scarborough	January 1989 – 1991
Jennifer Hayes	January 1980 – August 1990
Sandra Cline	September 1990 – December 1990
Sarah Lynn Johnson	January 1991 – May 1992
Rev. Tom Allen	January 1992 – August 1998
Deborah Hayes	October 1993 – December 1995
Rev. Christopher Ingram	September 1997 – 1998
Heather West	August 1998 – April 2000
Rev. Christopher Ingram	August 1, 1999 – October 15, 2008
Daniel Rhodes	September 2000 – April 2001
Rachel Olsen	September 2001 – June 2004
Jennifer Asbill Ingold	September 2004 – 2008
Jeanne Cross	October 2010 – May 1, 2011
Rev. Rebecca Bentley Hall	October 2011 - 2017
Andrew Barnhill	October 2011 – 2012
Allan Smith	September 2012- 2013

Ministers of Music

The Ridge Road music program has a rich history of enriching worship experiences for all. The music ministers have had extended tenures and provided spiritual guidance as well as musical direction.

Arthur Penland Jr.	November 1960 -
Milton Bliss	May 1967 - 1986
Dr. Cynthia Brown	June 1986 - August 1988
David Johnson	January 1989 - May 1989
Rev. Jerry Jones	January 1990 - July 2004
Rev. Patti Lingafelt	April 2005 - December 2012
Kerry Johnson	August 2013 - Present

Interim Ministers of Music and Organist

We have been extremely blessed by the talented congregation members who have served in interim capacities.

Betsy Lake

Alice Goode

Julie Jones

Ordained to Gospel Ministry by Ridge Road

Rev. J Collin Harris

Rev. Mary Agner

Rev. James Scarboro

Charter Members of Ridge Road Baptist Church

Mr. & Mrs. N. C. Alford
Mr. & Mrs. Wallace C. Alford
Mr. & Mrs. R. C. Barrett
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bench
Mr. George Bench
Mr. Bruce Bench
Carolyn Rawls Booth
Mr. & Mrs. R. Howard Britton
Mary Britton Carter
Mr. Bunn R. Crabtree
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Crabtree
Mrs. B. R. Crabtree, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. F. W. Eatman
Mr. Woody Eatman
Mr. & Mrs. F. W. Eatman, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. W. T. Emory
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Fletcher
Kay Fletcher
Mr. Fred Fletcher, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Goodman
Jimmy Goodman
Jack Greene
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph B. Greene
Jill Greene
Miriam Crabtree Hall
Arthur C. Hayes
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph L Rawls
Carolyn Rawls
Elna Rawls
Mr. & Mrs. James W. Ray
Sammy Ray
Mr. & Mrs. H. R. Rickman
David Rickman
David E. Schreffler, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. D. E. Schreffler
Donnie Hicks Helms
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Hicks
Nancy Hicks
Mr. Edwin K. Hines
Mr. Robert N. Hines
Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Hines, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. H. H. Honeycutt, Jr.
Betty Hines Huffman
Mr. & Mrs. Ira L. Jones
Jerry Jones
Mrs. J. Harold Kelly
Margaret Alice Kelly
Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Kirchheimer
Martha Kirchheimer
Mr. & Mrs. Homer Lassiter
Robert Lassiter
Tommy Lassiter
Mr. & Mrs. R. W. McGowan
Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Medlin
Mr. & Mrs. R. S. Moore
Beverly Nielson
Mr. & Mrs. H. L. Nobles
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Olive
Edith Olive
Marianne Phillips
Mr. & Mrs. M. E. Phillips
Dr. & Mrs. Gordon Sinclair
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Stout
Mr. & Ben Terrell, Jr.
Rev. & Mrs. Paul West
Mary Evelyn West
Mr. & Mrs. E. T. Williams, Jr.