

KIRK FIRSTS

A. Organization

1. **First to Inspire Organization:** God
2. **First to Discuss New Church in Cary:** Leon Gabriel and Fred Manley in Spring 1977
3. **First Minister to Inspire/Advise New Church:** Rev. Dr. Bill McCorkle, interim pastor at West Raleigh and former associate pastor at Raleigh First in mid- July 1977
4. **First Exploratory Meeting:** Leon Gabriel, Fred Manley, Bill McCorkle, and Orange Executive Presbyter John Danhof on July 26, 1977, at West Raleigh
5. **First Exploratory Meeting with Orange Presbytery Church Development Committee (OPCDC) and Presbyterian Urban Council of Raleigh (PUCR):** Leon Gabriel, Fred Manley, Orange Associate Executive Presbyter Bill Stewart, OPCDC & PUCR Member Dot Bass of Hudson Memorial, and Hudson Memorial Associate Pastor Herb Underwood on September 1, 1977
6. **First Small Meeting After Notice in The Cary News:** Eight people, including Janet Holcombe, at the Gabriel house on October 13, 1977
7. **First Large Meeting After Notice in The Cary News:** Thirty people, including six who represented either Orange Presbytery or PUCR, at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church on November 15, 1977
8. **First Steering Committee:** Leon Gabriel (meeting location and preacher selection leader), Fred Manley (treasurer), Janet Holcombe (music leader), Rev. James McGinnis (retired Presbyterian minister living in Cary), Dick Griffin of Cary, and Dot Bass (PUCR Representative) appointed on November 15, 1977
9. **First Devotional Service and Business Meeting:** On December 4, 1977, at MacGregor Downs Youth Center
10. **First Presbytery Task Force Meeting:** On January 6, 1978, Orange Presbytery's Division of Education and Missions resolved to proceed officially toward establishing the church and appointed the Task Force consisting of Leon Gabriel, Fred Manley, Louise Crawford, Ernest Myatt Pastor Neil Bain, PUCR Representative Dot Bass, UNC-CH Campus Minister Milton Carothers, West Raleigh Member Dot Temple, and Rev. Doug Vaughn as chair (St. Giles and Pastor of the Manleys).
11. **First Meeting of Organizing Pastor Search Committee:** On May 18, 1978, consisting of Chair (and Task Force Chair) Rev. Doug Vaughn, Leon Gabriel, Fred Manley, Louise Crawford, White Memorial's Christian Education Director Dottie DuBose, and Milton Carothers
12. **First (Organizing) Pastor:** Rev. Dr. Eugene Witherspoon, Jr., was employed by Orange Presbytery on June 20, 1979. His first worship service was held on June 24, 1979.

- 13. Meeting to Purchase Present Site:** April 8, 1979. On December 28, 1979, and on January 2, 1980, 5.7 acres was purchased from Kildaire Farms Development Corporation for \$219,130.
- 14. Meeting to Select Church Name:** August 1979. The Kirk of Kildaire, Presbyterian - - the chosen name - - was suggested by Janet Holcombe.
- 15. Service of Organization:** Reformation Sunday, October 28, 1979, at 7:00 p.m. at Kildaire Farms Visitors Center. It consisted of three parts: (1) the Worship Service led by Rev. Dr. Bill McCorkle, (2) the Organization Service led by Rev. Herb Underwood in which 92 charter members were received, and (3) the Congregation Meeting led by Rev. Dr. Gene Witherspoon that consisted of confirming the election of the ruling elders and the selection of the church name.
- 16. First 92 (Charter) Members:** 15 charter members were received by profession and reaffirmation of faith. They were: Jocelyn Carter, Duane Dawes, Susan Day, Claire Dixon, Lisa Fries, Andy Greene, Laura Manley, Robin Montgomery, Tom Montgomery, Carl Osman, Carol Osman, Joe Osman, Louis Parker, Robert Phillips, and Julia Sanderford. The Sacrament of Baptism was administered to Andy Greene and to Joe Osman.
- (The first communicants class consisted of Andy Greene, Laura Manley, Lisa Fries, Susan Day, Jocelyn Carter, and Duane Dawes. They were led by Pastor Gene Witherspoon and were examined and approved by the Provisional Session on October 21 and 22, 1979.)
- 77 charter members were received by transfer of church letter. They were (**names in bold indicate active members today**): Bill and Joan Abernethy, Shirley Blackman, Lynn Blackman, Tom and Vivian Carter, Jennifer Carter, Gil and Brenda Carol Chenery, Bob and Mary Jane Cleveland, Frank and Louise Crawford, Terri Crawford, Jim and Barbara Crissman, John and Connie Crook, Bill and Fran Dawes, Kim Dawes, Bob and Sharon Day, Martha and **Roy Dixon**, Linda Dixon, Bert Drake, Frank and Joan DuBose, Larry and Roberta Foster, Roxanne Foster, Wade Foster, John and Sue Fricks, Tim and Sissy Fries, Leon and Joye Gabriel, Dee Ann Gabriel, Dick Griffin, Claude and Dorothy Greene, David Greene, Mike and Cynthia Harris, J and **Bob Hatley, Scooter and Janet Holcombe, Cader and Noel Howard**, Steve and Pat Lee, **Fred and Celeste Manley**, Betty Parker, Bobby and Jackie Ransdell, Jack and Barbara Sanderford, **Wendy Segreti**, Steve Shearer, Vivian Ullrich, Dale and Sallie Van Horn, **Keith and Pat Vaughan**, Keith and Cathy Williams, Jesse and Pam Williford, Ed Wilson, Anne Wilson, Peggy Witherspoon, Kay Witherspoon, and Dan Witherspoon. (**Of the 92 charter members, 11 are still active today at The Kirk.**)
- 17. First Session (Unicameral):** October 28, 1979. In addition to Pastor Gene Witherspoon, ruling elders ordained and installed were: Louise Crawford, Frank DuBose, Janet Holcombe, Carl Osman, and Keith Williams. Ruling elders installed were: Bill Abernethy, Leon Gabriel, Claude Greene, Fred Manley, and Ed Wilson. (The Kirk started with unicameral government; however, it later added a deaconate and trustees. It returned to unicameral government in 1994.)
- 18. First Clerk of Session:** Frank DuBose
- 19. First Treasurer:** Fred Manley

20. **First Congregational Meeting:** July 29, 1979. (Nomination of elders to Provisional Session)
21. **First Commissioner to Orange Presbytery:** Ed Wilson (1979)
22. **First Commissioner to General Assembly:** Fred Manley (1983 – Last meeting of PCUS and first meeting of PCUSA)
23. **First Diaconate:** January 17, 1981. Sue Fricks (Chair), Bob Cleveland (Clerk), Cader Howard, Bob Phillips, Bobby Ransdell, Carol Gable (Bennett), Larry Foster, Bob Day, Wendy Segreti, Cynthia Harris, Pastor Gene Witherspoon (advisor)
24. **First Trustees:** December 16, 1979. Fred Manley, Bobby Ransdell, Larry Foster
25. **First (and only) Elder Emeritus:** Ed Wilson (1981)
26. **First Associate Pastor:** Rev. Deborah Taylor (1989)
27. **First Field Education Intern (Duke U. Divinity School):** Lynn Farnum (1985)
28. **First Assistant to Pastor:** Bob Cleveland (1986)
29. **First Parish Associate:** Rev. Ann Jones (1987)
30. **First Interim Associate Pastor:** Rev. Ann Jones (1989)
31. **First Interim Pastor:** Rev. Michael Laidlaw (1982)
32. **First Minister Ordained at the Kirk:** Rev. Sarah Diehl (2000)
33. **First Secretary/Office Administrator:** Ernestine Winget
34. **First Photographers:** Frank and Louise Crawford
35. **First Historian:** John Crook
36. **First Housekeeper:** Juanita Hunter (1986)
37. **First Computer Consultant:** Roy Dixon
38. **First Parish Counselor:** Joanna Hobler
39. **First Office Assistant:** Bonnie Pendleton (1996)

B. Worship

1. **First Worship Service:** Afternoon of January 22, 1978, at Cary's Jordan Hall on N. Harrison Street. Hudson Memorial Associate Pastor Herb Underwood led the service and his wife, Frances Underwood, was pianist.
2. **First Sunday Morning Worship Service:** On January 29, 1978, at Brown-Wynne Funeral Home
3. **First Worship Service at Present Site:** On February 5, 1978, at Kildaire Farms Visitors Center (at request of Janet Holcombe who lived in Kildaire Farms). This was also the date of the first church school classes.
4. **First Worship Service of Newly Organized Church:** October 28, 1979, at Kildaire Farms Visitor Center

5. **First Sacrament of Communion:** March 26, 1978 (Easter Sunday)
6. **First Sacrament of Communion After Organization:** Christmas Eve, 1979
7. **First Child Born:** April 1, 1978, to Tom and Robin Montgomery
8. **First Maundy Thursday Service:** April 2, 1978
9. **First Sunrise Easter Service After Organization:** April 6, 1980
10. **First Acolyte:** Judd Manley
11. **First Baptism After Organization:** Cader Howard, Jr. (There was one infant baptism of Holly Fries before the group became a church.)
12. **First Seminary Student:** Sue Fricks (1981)
13. **First Worship Service in First New Building (Current Classroom Building):** 1986
14. **First Worship Service in Latest New Building:** Palm Sunday, 1998. The Ground Breaking Service was held on Palm Sunday, 1997.
15. **First Wedding:** Ceremony was performed by Rev. Dr. Roger Jackle on November 23, 1983, for John Herbert Lehman and Verina Skrlik Wilkinson.
16. **First Funeral:** June 9, 1982, for the death of Margaret Robinson Foster
17. **First Started Two Worship Services:** September 9, 1984

C. Music

1. **First Music Leader:** Janet Holcombe
2. **First Adult Choir Director:** Dorothy Greene
3. **First Children's Choir Director:** Mike Harris
4. **First Pianist:** Mike Harris
5. **First Employed Organist/Director of Children's Choir:** Nancy Stephenson (1983)
6. **First Organ:** Donated in 1983 by Nancy and William Stephenson
7. **First Employed Choir Director:** Don Focht (1984)
8. **First Employed Director of Music:** Susan Parker (1992)
9. **First Adult Handbell Choir:** 1991
10. **First Adult Handbell Choir Director:** Emmett Windham
11. **First Youth Handbell Choir:** 1992
12. **First Youth Handbell Choir Director:** Pattie Stephenson

D. Church School

- 1. Date of First Church School:** February 5, 1978
- 2. First Teachers of Children's Class:** Joye Gabriel, Janet Holcombe
- 3. First Teachers of Adult Class:** Fred Manley, Carl Osman, Bill Abernathy, Bob Phillips
- 4. First Vacation Bible School:** 1980
- 5. First Interim Director of Christian Education:** Marcia Hale (2001)

E. Youth Program

- 1. First Kirk Youth Group Organized:** 1980 (soon known as "KYG'ers")
- 2. First Youth Group Leaders:** Jim and Barbara Crissman
- 3. First Crop Walk:** 1980
- 4. First Employed Youth Minister:** Helen Buntin (1984)
- 5. First Youth Elder:** Claire Nygard (1995-96)

F. Presbyterian Women

- 1. First Organized (as Women of the Church):** December 8, 1979
- 2. First Leader:** Dorothy Greene
- 3. First Honorary Life Membership Recipient:** Claire Dixon

G. Men of the Church

- 1. First Organized:** 1980
- 2. First Leader:** Bob Cleveland

H. Church Signs

- 1. First Erected:** 1980
- 2. Designed by:** Jerry Miller
- 3. Crafted and Donated by:** Fred and Celeste Manley

I. Family Night Suppers

- 1. First Started:** 1980
- 2. First Leader:** Shirley Ogle

J. Pennies for Hunger

- 1. First Started:** 1980
- 2. First Leader:** Bill Abernathy

K. Cary Parks and Recreation Softball League

- 1. First Kirk Team:** 1980
- 2. First Leaders:** Doug Lewis, Frank Rogers, Frank Gandy

L. Pictorial Directory

- 1. First Started:** 1981
- 2. First Photographer:** Olan Mills

M. Church Library

- 1. First Started:** 1983
- 2. First Librarians:** Betty Parker, Dale Steudel

N. First Church Banner

- 1. First Displayed:** 1983 General Assembly in Atlanta by Elder/Commissioner Fred Manley and Elder Peggy Witherspoon
- 2. Designed and Crafted by:** Rev. Michael Laidlaw, Sue Fricks, Jane Long, John Fricks
- 3. Now Refurbished and Displayed:** Stair landing wall

O. Meals on Wheels (Presbyterian Women)

- 1. First Cary and Kirk Participation:** March 4, 1985
- 2. First Leader:** Linda Humphreys (PW President)

P. ARK (Shelter for Homeless)

- 1. First Kirk Participation:** 1985
- 2. First Leader:** Tom Bennett

Q. Refugee Resettlement

- 1. First Kirk Participation:** 1988
- 2. First Leaders:** Wendy and Tony Segreti
- 3. First Refugee:** Lucjan Michniewski from Poland (November 1988)

R. Total Life Center (Adult Day Care)

- 1. First Organized:** October 13, 1986
- 2. First Director:** Catherine Beasley, R.N.
- 3. First Program Assistant:** Ruth Weaver
- 4. First Board of Director Member from Kirk:** Rev. Dr. Roger Jackle

S. Children's Center

- 1. First Organized:** 1988
- 2. First Center Director:** Gail Halada
- 3. First Board of Directors:** Janet Holcombe, Nancy Stallings, Dale Oakley

T. Scouts

1. **First Organization of Boy Scouts (Troop 213):** September 13, 1986
2. **First Kirk Leaders of Boy Scouts:** John Ogle, Frank DuBose, Ralph Smith, Doug Lewis, Ed Wilson, John Harrison, Robert Babb, Milt Douglass, Nancy Stallings
3. **First Scoutmaster:** Jerry Vance
4. **First Assistant Scoutmaster:** John Harrison
5. **First Eagle Scout:** Matt Lewis
6. **First Organization of Cub Scouts (Troop 213):** August 1989
7. **First Kirk Leaders of Cub Scouts:** Doug Lewis, Nancy Stallings

U. Older, Wiser, Loving Seniors (OWLS)

1. **First Organized:** 1989
2. **First Leaders:** Elaine Stoops, Rev. Dr. Roger Jackle

V. Scotch Bonnet (Luncheon Group)

1. **First Organized:** 1989
2. **First Leader:** Genevieve Jackle

W. Habitat for Humanity

1. **First Kirk Participation:** 1989
2. **First Leaders:** Milt Douglass, Barney Hale

X. Kirk Vans

1. **First Van Purchased:** 1990
2. **First Leaders of Purchase:** Ben and Joy Hatch, Jim Everest

Y. 50+ Group

1. **First Organized:** February 19, 1997
2. **First Leaders:** Joan DuBose, Pat Thomasson, Rev. Thomas Spence

Z. Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network (WIHN)

1. **Date of First Participation:** January 3, 1999
2. **First Kirk Leader of WIHN:** Brenda Armstrong

a. Stephen Ministry

1. **First Organized:** October 2000
2. **First Leader:** Melanie Rankin
3. **No. Ministers:** 25 (12 currently active)
4. **Care Receivers:** 39 (9 from community)

b. Kirk Outreach After School Learning Academy (KOALA)

5. **First Organized:** October 2001
6. **First Director:** Laura Anne Welch
7. **Organizers:** Robin Morris, Joanna Hobler, Kathy Wells, Luan Harmeson,
Rev. Joan McCarthy

(Note: This record of "Firsts" was compiled by Fred Manley after reviewing all Sessional minutes since 1979 as well as consulting numerous members. Fred apologizes for any errors of commission and omission due to inaccurate or incomplete information and/or to his "fading" memory and requests that anyone not hesitate to contact him to correct this document.)

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There have been many "saints" along the 25-year journey of The Kirk of Kildaire, Presbyterian, and there was not space enough to list them all. Each one provided these gifts upon God's people. This congregation has been blessed in so many ways, and today, with the membership around 1000, it continues to grow with glorious memories of the past and thoughts of a challenging future- -a future as bright as the promises of God.

No one can say what lies ahead for The Kirk of Kildaire, Presbyterian. We do know that God will continue to be a "lamp unto our feet and a light upon our way." We journey on, trusting in these promises. Twenty-five years from 2004, we can again look back at the accomplishments that God has made in us and through us to the glory of His own Kingdom and say...

Well done, good and faithful servant.