



Bonclarken Music Conference

1962 – 2021

60th Anniversary

July 11 – 16, 2021

As you read this booklet, we hope you enjoy hearing about all of the memories and heritage that is a part of this unique and special conference. What a treasure the ARP Synod has in the Bonclarken Music Conference. We hope you have enjoyed the 60th Anniversary Celebration that we have experienced this summer. Lynn Grimsley, Norma Jean Huffstetler and I have truly enjoyed looking at all of the pictures, displays, old recordings and memories that we have come across in our preparation for this week. In the near future, we hope to put together a DVD/CD of pictures from previous years, and to possibly get all of our recordings from past years transferred to Compact disc for the preservation of the history of this incredible week. Thank you for your kind words and your wonderful participation in the 60th Anniversary. To God be all of the glory in all of our worship, activities and singing. We look forward to seeing how God continues to bless the Bonclarken Music Conference for many years and generations to come!



Bonclarken Music Conference Celebrates 60th Anniversary

BY TRIP MCGILL

The Bonclarken Music Conference is a conference and ministry planned and sponsored by the Worship Committee of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP). Our conference began in 1962, when only a few ARP churches had choir directors with any training in choral music. The conference began as "Synod's Choir Workshop" which was held during the same week as the General Synod meeting was being held. The workshop was first held in the music room of the old hotel on the grounds of Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, North Carolina.

The first workshop was for adult choral singers and was conducted by Dr. Marion Magill, who at the time was the Director of Music Education in Greenville, South Carolina. For the next several years, Dr. Magill directed the workshop with 50 to 70 participants. Not long after the workshop was established, the ARP Synod appointed a Music and Worship Committee. This committee wanted to enlarge the program by adding a children's choir.

After a few years of planning, in 1970, the first Music Conference was held. Dr. Magill directed the Adult Choir and Mabel Stewart Boyter of Atlanta, directed the Children's Choir of about 30 to 40 boys and girls. Anne Alexander of Gastonia, N.C., was in charge of this newly formed conference. When Mrs. Alexander gave Mrs. Boyter her check for her honorarium, Mrs. Boyter took out her checkbook and wrote a check for the tithe of her fee back into the conference fund, because she "wanted to see this conference succeed and grow."

In subsequent years, because Dr. Magill had moved to New York City as professor of Music at Columbia University, several different directors came to conduct the Adult Choir. Mabel Boyter directed what was now known as the Junior Choir for several years. Haskell Boyter also came and conducted the Adult Choir for a couple of years.



Mabel and Haskell Boyter

By then, the conference was known as the Bonclarken Music Conference. In 1975, because so many of our youth were experiencing changing voices and wanted to continue coming to Music Conference, a Youth Choir was born out of the Junior Choir. In 1979, we added a Primary Choir, followed by the addition of an Intermediate Choir (now the Middle School Choir) in 1982. In 1993, at the age of 88, Mabel Boyter returned to Bonclarken to start the Cherub Choir.

As the years have moved on, Choristers Guild has played an important role in the expansion of our conference. Many of our clinicians over the past years have been associated with Choristers Guild as clinicians, board members, and the like.

Helen Kemp was instrumental in continuing the development of our children's choir program. As a clinician, Helen was with us in 1981, 1989 (along with Michael, Janice, and her husband John, as clinicians as well as 15 family members who spent the week at Bonclarken), 2000, 2004 and at our 50th Anniversary in 2011, where she gave a stunning workshop/reading session and served as the reader at our celebration of worship at the end of the week.



Helen Kemp

Some of the many other clinicians we have had over the years include Terry Kirkland, G. Stanley Powell, Allen and Susan Pote, Ronald A. Nelson, Jane Marshall, John Yarrington, Steven Ortlip, Linda Leslie Bradberry, Walter Ehert, Ellen Brown, Reta R. Phifer, Hal and Martha Hopson, John Horman, Janeal Krehbiel, Bing Vick, William Thomas, Michael Jochen, Larry and Susan Wyatt, Milburn Price, Jeanie Reed, Eileen Straw, André Thomas, Anton Armstrong, Craig Denison, Sandy Holland, Paula Wilson, Jeff Johnson, Craig Courtney, Hilary Apfelstadt, Lucy Ding, Judy Bowers, Karol Kimmell, Kenney and Heather



Lynn Grimsley, Victor Johnson, Tripp McGill - 2018

Potter, John Warren, Elizabeth Shepley, Jeffrey Redding, Robert and Cora Scholz, Kevin Fenton, Shannon Jeffreys, Amanda Smith, Carol Krueger, Eric Nelson, Rollo Dilworth, Christopher Aspaas, David Mandt, Troy Robertson, Mark Stover, John Ferguson, Susan Eernisse, Todd Arandt, Terry Taylor, Dan Forrest, and Victor C. Johnson.

How blessed we have been to have learned from such fine choral masters over the years. This summer, as we celebrate our 60th Anniversary, we will celebrate the theme: Great is Thy Faithfulness: Bright Hope for Tomorrow. Our faculty for this summer of 2021 will include Anton Armstrong, Adult Choir, John Ferguson, Conference Organist, Troy Robertson, Youth Choir, David Mandt, Middle School Choir, Amanda Smith, Junior Choir, and Elizabeth Shepley, Primary and Cherub Choirs. Our conference is July 11-16, 2021 at Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC.



Anton Armstrong and Tripp McGill

Our plan is to move forward and pray that we can meet together (in-person) this summer for a wonderful anniversary week of worship, music and fellowship, celebrating the past, enjoying the week and looking to the future. God has been so good to our conference. How blessed we have been to have had so many wonderful clinicians over the years. We are thankful for each person. We are thankful for the support we have had over the years from Choristers Guild and for the important role Choristers Guild has played in the growth and success of our conference.

It is indeed a blessing for Lynn Grimsley,

Norma Jean Huffstetler, and myself to be Co-Directors of this conference. We join a whole host of other folks who have led this conference in leadership over the years, namely, Anne Alexander, Harriett Leslie, Barbara Lauderdale, Reta Phifer, Betty Hunt, Terry Mann, Rachel Spencer, Corky Koonts, Patsy Surratt, and Linda Miller.

It has been such a blessing for me to attend and be a part of this conference for the past 50 years of the 60-year history. I can speak for many of us who grew up at this conference. This conference has taught us all to be better teachers, church music ministry personnel, organists, choir directors. Because this conference is rooted in Christ, it has provided us all an opportunity to grow in Christ and to teach us about God's faithfulness and his abundant goodness and his gift of music and worship.



Bonclarken Music Conference Concert

Trip McGill lives in Kings Mountain, North Carolina is a graduate of Erskine College, Due West, SC, was the former choral teacher at Ashbrook High School, Gastonia, NC, is Director of Music and Organist at First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, NC, serves as Camp Director for the Bonclarken Music Drama Camp, is Co-Camp Director of Camp Bonclarken, and is Co-Conference Director of the Bonclarken Music Conference. (www.bonclarken.org)



**2021 Bonclarken Music Conference Clinicians and Accompanists
60th Anniversary**

Clinicians

Anton Armstrong – St. Olaf College – Adult Choir Clinician
Troy Robertson – Tarleton State University – Youth Choir Clinician
David Mandt – Birmingham Boy Choir – Middle School Choir Clinician
Amanda Smith – New York, NY – Junior Choir
Elizabeth Shepley – Northfield, Minnesota – Cherub and Primary Choirs

Accompanists

Andy Jacob – Middle School Choir and Conference Organist
Phil Biedenbender – Adult Choir
Ginger Smith – Youth Choir
Patsy Surratt – Junior Choir
Carol Godfrey – Cherub and Primary Choirs

Clint Davis – Conference Minister

A History of the Bonclarken Music Conference

By: Anne Alexander

In 1962, Dr. Charles Younts of Atlanta was Moderator of Synod. At that time only a few ARP Churches had choir directors with any training in Choral Music. Dr. Younts asked Dr. Marion Magill, Director of Music Education for the Greenville, SC schools, to direct a choir workshop during the meeting of Synod in order to improve the music in ARP Churches. For the next several years, Dr. Magill directed such a workshop with 50 to 70 participants. The musicians rehearsed a couple of hours every morning, afternoon and night, and presented a concert on Thursday evening. A great deal of very good music was learned, which was a great help to local directors. Men, especially tenors, were scarce. College students with good tenor voices were invited to participate and were given room and board and were called “Workshop Assistants.” They ran errands, arranged chairs, etc.

Not long after the choir workshop was established, Synod appointed a “Music and Worship Committee.” This committee wanted to enlarge the program by adding a children’s choir, but this was impossible because Bonclarken was already overflowing during the meeting of Synod. There was neither housing nor rehearsal space. In 1969, Rev. Jim McQuinton and I were co-chairmen of the committee, and we (the committee) decided to ask Bonclarken for a week in July for a Music Conference. The calendar for Bonclarken events was handled by a committee of the Bonclarken Board. Dr. L. M. Allison was chairman of this conference committee, so I asked for an audience in order to present our request. I remember sitting outside the room, waiting until I was called in to speak. We were given a week, early in July of 1970. I then had to go to a meeting of Synod’s Finance committee and present a budget for their approval. Mr. Guy Castles of Columbia was chairman. I presented our budget with fear and trembling, but it was accepted.

Thus, the first Music and Worship Conference was held in 1970. Dr. Magill directed the Adult Choir and Mrs. Mabel Boyter of Atlanta directed the Junior Choir of about 30 to 40 boys and girls. When I gave Mrs. Boyter her check for her honorarium, she took out her checkbook and wrote a check for the tithe of her fee to back into the conference fund, because she said she “wanted to see this conference succeed and grow.”

The next year, Dr. Magill had moved and could not come to the conference, so I went to Davidson and talked to Professor Donald Plott, who was also directing the Charlotte Oratorio Singers. Mr. Bill Rennekar, a personal friend who had a very fine music program in First Presbyterian Church of Flint, Michigan, directed the Junior Choir. Donald Plott directed the Adult Choir for several years. Rev. Don Elliott directed recreation activities for the juniors when they were not rehearsing. He did this for several years, and I remember him telling me that the Music Committee was the only group that paid him for doing it. Others expected him to do it free. After these first years, I rotated off the committee.

The oldest Minutes of Synod that I have been able to find was for 1978. By that time a Youth Choir had been added to the Conference. The total of participants for the 1977 conference was 218, from 25 churches. The budget was \$9,050. Directors for the next two years were announced.

In 1982, the Youth Choir had 135 participants, so it was divided into Junior Highs and Senior Highs in 1983. The budget for 1984 was \$14,375.



Bonclarken Music Conference

Clinicians/Conference Directors/Ministers/Themes

1962 – 2021(present)

Began planning for the Synod's Workshop in 1960!

1962 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir * FIRST YEAR OF ADULT

1963 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1964 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1965 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1966 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1967 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1968 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1969 – Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

1970 – Anne Alexander, Conference Director

Dr. J. Marian Magill, Adult Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Junior Choir * FIRST YEAR OF JUNIOR

1971 – Anne Alexander, Conference Director

Donald Plott, Adult Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Junior Choir

1972 – Donald Plott, Adult Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Junior Choir

1973 – James Boles, Junior Choir

Haskell Boyter, Adult Choir

1974 – Harriett Leslie, Conference Director

Haskell Boyter, Adult Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Junior Choir

1975 – Corky Koonts, Conference Director

Dr. Roger Michael, Adult Choir

Ann Arrington, Youth Choir *FIRST YEAR OF YOUTH

Ann Arrington, Junior Choir

1976 – Barbara Lauderdale, Conference Director

Richard H. Brewer, Adult Choir

Ann Arrington, Youth Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Junior Choir

1977 – Barbara Lauderdale, Conference Director

Reta Phifer, Assistant Conference Director

William Dailey, Adult Choir

G. Stanley Powell, Youth Choir

Terry Kirkland, Junior Choir

1978 – Reta Phifer, Conference Director

Gary Shive, Adult Choir

Allen Pote, Youth Choir

Ronald A. Nelson, Junior Choir

1979 – Betty Hunt, Conference Director

Jane Marshall, Adult Choir

Bob Ellis, Youth Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Junior Choir

Mabel Stewart Boyter, Primary Choir *FIRST YEAR OF PRIMARY

1980 – Betty Hunt, Conference Director

Reta Phifer, Assistant Conference Director

Gary Shive, Adult Choir

Tom Roberts, Youth Choir

Betty Ann Ramseth, Junior Choir

Betty Ann Ramseth, Primary Choir

1981 – Terry Mann, Conference Director

Robert Edgerton, Adult Choir

John Yarrington, Youth Choir

Helen Kemp, Junior Choir

Helen Kemp, Primary Choir

1982 – Terry Mann, Conference Director

Rev. Lee P. Kennerly

Walter Ehret, Adult Choir

Peggy Barbour, Youth Choir

Peggy Barbour, Intermediate Choir *FIRST YEAR OF INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE SCHOOL

Stephen Ortlip, Junior Choir

Stephen Ortlip, Primary Choir

1983 – Rachel Spencer, Conference Director

Dr. Arpad Darazs, Adult Choir

Linda Leslie Bradberry, Youth Choir

Jennifer Davidson, Intermediate Choir

Reta R. Phifer, Junior Choir

Reta R. Phifer, Primary Choir

1984 – Rachel Spencer, Conference Director

Robert Edgerton, Adult Choir

Gary Shive, Youth Choir

Susie Ford, Intermediate Choir

Marvin Burke, Junior Choir

Marvin Burke, Primary Choir

1985 – Cortlandt M. Koonts, Conference Director

James A. Long, Adult Choir
 Richard Keasler, Youth Choir
 Ellen Nicholson, Intermediate Choir
 Betty Peek, Junior Choir
 Betty Peek, Primary Choir

1986 – Cortlandt M. Koonts, Conference Director

Rev. John Kimmons, Greensboro, NC, Minister
 Hal Hopson, Adult Choir
 Debbie Lutz, Youth Choir
 Richard Scott, Intermediate Choir
 Martha Hopson, Junior Choir
 Martha Hopson, Primary Choir

1987 – Linda Miller, Conference Director

Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director
 Adult Choir, Hal Hopson
 Youth Choir,
 Intermediate Choir,
 Rhoda Paschal, Junior Choir
 Rhoda Paschal, Primary Choir

1988 – Linda Miller, Conference Director

Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director
 Rev. Dwight Pearson, Chester ARP Church, Minister
 Dr. Mary Nell Saunders, Adult Choir
 Linda Leslie Bradberry, Youth Choir
 Ann Barton Fuhr, Intermediate Choir
 John Horman, Junior Choir
 John Horman, Primary Choir

1989 – Trip McGill, Conference Director

Lynn Grimsley, Assistant Conference Director
 Rev. Bob Wallace, Idlewild ARP Church, Minister
 John Kemp, Adult Choir
 Michael Kemp, Youth Choir
 Helen Kemp, Junior Choir
 Janice Kemp, Primary Choir

1990 – Trip McGill, Conference Director

Lynn Grimsley, Assistant Conference Director
 Rev. Barry Eller, Doraville ARP Church, Minister
 William Thomas, Adult Choir
 Eugene Bumgardner, Youth Choir
 Mary Anne Carpenter, Intermediate Choir
 Ann Barton Fuhr, Junior Choir
 Ann Barton Fuhr, Primary Choir

- 1991 – Lynn Grimsley, Conference Director
 Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director
 Rev. Billy Barron, Boyce Memorial ARP Church, Minister
 Rebecca Hulsey, Adult Choir
 Michael Jothen, Youth Choir
 Janeal Krehbiel, Intermediate Choir
 John Horman, Junior Choir
 John Horman, Primary Choir
 Larry Cartner, Handbell Choir *FIRST YEAR OF HANDBELLS
- 1992 – Lynn Grimsley Conference Director
 Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director
 Rev. Neely Gaston, Pisgah ARP Church, Minister
 Larry Wyatt, Adult Choir
 Trip McGill, Youth Choir
 Jane Morlan, Intermediate Choir
 Susan Wyatt, Junior Choir
 Susan Wyatt, Primary Choir
- 1993 – Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Conference Directors
 Rev. David Setzer, Centennial ARP Church, Minister
 Porter Stokes, Adult Choir
 Trip McGill, Youth Choir
 Richard Keasler, Intermediate Choir
 Paula Wilson, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Mabel Stewart Boyter, Cherub Choir *FIRST YEAR OF CHERUB
 Sheldon Timmerman, Handbell Choir
- 1994 – Patsy Black, Conference Director
 Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Assistant Conference Directors
 Rev. Jamie Hunt, Coddle Creek ARP Church, Minister
 Milburn Price, Adult Choir
 Michael Nuss, Youth Choir
 Michael Patch, Intermediate Choir
 Jeanie Reed, Junior Choir
 Jane Nevitt, Primary Choir
 Jane Nevitt, Cherub Choir
 Sheldon Timmerman, Handbell Choir

1995 – Patsy Black, Conference Director

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley Assistant Conference Directors

Rev. Bob Robinson, First ARP Rock Hill, Minister

Robert Edgerton, Adult Choir

Allen Pote, Youth Choir

Susan Pote, Intermediate Choir

Stephen Ortlip, Junior Choir

Eileen Straw, Primary Choir

Eileen Straw, Cherub Choir

Sheldon Timmerman, Handbell Choir

1996 – *God's Faithfulness Endures – Psalm 100: 5*

Linda Miller, Conference Director

Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director

Rev. Jay West, Crowders Creek ARP Church, Minister

Andre Thomas, Youth and Adult Choirs

Anton Armstrong, Youth and Adult Choirs

Craig Denison, Intermediate Choir

Sandy Holland, Junior Choir

Pula Wilson, Primary Choir

Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

1997- *Walking in the Light – I John 1:7*

Linda Miller, Conference Director

Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director

Rev. Neely Gaston, Pisgah ARP Church, Minister

Milburn Price, Adult Choir

Jeff Johnson, Youth Choir

Lynne Gackle, Intermediate Choir

Michael Nuss, Junior Choir

Jeanie Reed, Primary Choir

Jeanie Reed, Cherub Choir

1998 – *Joyfully Sing – Psalm 145: 4, 7*

Linda Miller, Conference Director

Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director

Rev. John Dorr, Sebring ARP Church, Minister

Craig Courtney, Adult Choir

Granville Oldham, Youth Choir

Janeal Krehbiel, Middle School Choir

Hilary Apfelstadt, Junior Choir

Kathy Dorr, Primary Choir

Kathy Dorr, Cherub Choir

1999 – A Celebration of Psalms – 95:1

Linda Miller, Conference Director
 Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director
 Rev. Dwight Pearson, Chester ARP Church, Minister
 Hal Hopson, Adult Choir
 Craig Denison, Youth Choir
 Vincent Metallo, Middle School Choir
 John Simons, Junior Choir
 Ellen Simons, Primary Choir
 Ellen Simons, Cherub Choir

2000 – Through the Ages – Psalm 90: 1

Linda Miller, Conference Director
 Trip McGill, Assistant Conference Director
 Dr. John Carson, Erskine College President
 Anton Armstrong, Adult Choir
 Lucy Ding, Youth Choir
 Judy Bowers, Middle School Choir
 Helen Kemp, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

2001 – Arise, Shine! – Matthew 5:16

Trip McGill and Linda Miller, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Bob Wallace, Idelwild ARP Church, Minister
 Bingham Vick, Adult Choir
 John Warren, Youth Choir
 Kenney Potter, Middle School Choir
 Eileen Straw, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

2002 – O Worship the Lord! – Psalm 95:6

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Bob Elliott, Minister
 Andre Thomas, Adult Choir
 Craig Denison, Youth Choir
 Charlotte Adams, Middle School Choir
 Jeanie Reed, Junior Choir
 Heather Potter, Primary Choir
 Heather Potter, Cherub Choir

2003 – *Sing to the Lord with Thanksgiving! – Psalm 147: 1, 7*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Barry Dagenhart, First ARP Church Rock Hill, Minister
 Milburn Price, Adult Choir
 Granville Oldham, Youth Choir
 Judy Bowers, Middle School
 Janeal Krehbiel, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

2004 – *He Comes to Us – John 1:14*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Neely Gaston, Greenville ARP Church, Minister
 Anton Armstrong, Adult Choir
 Karrie Brown Rushing, Youth Choir
 Mark Johnson, Middle School Choir
 Helen Kemp, Junior Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Primary Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Cherub Choir

2005 – *Speak to One Another! – Ephesians 5:19 - 20*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Eddie Spencer, First ARP Church, Gastonia, Minister
 Andre Thomas, Adult Choir
 Jeffrey Redding, Youth Choir
 Ellen Brown, Middle School Choir
 Martha Shaw, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

2006 – *Sing of His Love: His Love Endures Forever – Psalm 89:1*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. David Setzer, Centennial ARP Church, Minister
 Robert Scholz, Adult Choir
 Kevin Fenton, Youth Choir
 Cora Scholz, Middle School Choir
 Susan Wyatt, Junior Choir
 Jane Nevitt, Primary Choir
 Jane Nevitt, Cherub Choir

2007 – *Go into All the World I Will Praise You O Lord Among the Nations – Mark 16:15 and Psalm 108:3*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Clint Davis, Chester ARP Church, Minister
 Lucy Ding, Adult Choir
 Shannon Jeffreys, Youth Choir
 Judy Bowers, Middle School Choir
 Janeal Krehbiel, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

2008 – *That My Heart May Sing to You – Psalm 30:12 and I Corinthians 15:57*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Bob Elliott, Minister
 William Thomas, Adult Choir
 Kenney Potter, Youth Choir
 Carol Krueger, Middle School Choir
 Heather Potter, Junior Choir
 Kathy Dorr, Primary Choir
 Kathy Dorr, Cherub Choir

2009 – *When in Our Music God Is Glorified – Psalm 108: 1, 5*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Dr. Randy Ruble, Erskine College President, Minister
 Eric Nelson, Adult Choir
 Rollo Dilworth, Youth Choir
 Robert Waller, Middle School Choir
 Jeanie Reed, Junior Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Primary Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Cherub Choir

2010 – *A Time to Praise – Ecclesiastes 3:1 and Psalm 146:2*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Matthew Miller, Greenville ARP Church, Minister
 Bingham Vick, Adult Choir
 Ken Brooks, Youth Choir
 Judy Bowers, Middle School Choir
 Janeal Krehbiel, Junior Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Primary Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Cherub Choir

2011 - *Serve the Lord with Gladness and Singing – Psalm 100: 2 – 50th Anniversary*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Barry Dagenhart, First ARP Church, Rock Hill SC, Minister
 Lucy Ding, Adult Choir
 Christopher Aspaas, Youth Choir
 Rollo Dilworth, Middle School Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Junior Choir
 Paula Wilson, Primary Choir
 Paula Wilson, Cherub Choir

2012 – *The Heavens Declare the Glory of God – Psalm 108:5*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Clint Davis, Chester ARP Church, Chester, SC – Minister
 Kenney Potter, Adult Choir
 J. Marty Cope, Youth Choir
 Victor C. Johnson, Middle School Choir
 Heather Potter, Junior Choir
 Amanda Smith, Primary Choir
 Amanda Smith, Cherub Choir

2013 – *Sing Joyfully, Play Skillfully, Shout for Joy - Psalm 33:1,3*

Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley, Co-Conference Directors
 Rev. Matt Kuiken, First ARP Church, Gastonia, NC – Minister
 Judy Bowers, Adult Choir
 Jeffrey Redding, Youth Choir
 Ellen Brown, Middle School Choir
 Janeal Crabb Krehbiel, Junior Choir
 Karol Kimmell, Primary Choir
 Karol Kimmell, Cherub Choir

2014 – *And Heav'n and Nature Sing! – Psalm 98:4 and Isaiah 9:6*

Rev. Andrew Shoger, Bartow ARP Church, Bartow, Florida – Minister
 Eric Nelson, Adult Choir
 Will Young, Youth Choir
 Christopher Aspaas, Middle School Choir
 Liz Shepley, Junior Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Primary Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Cherub Choir

2015 – *Lift High the Cross! – Psalm 34:1 and Galatians 6:14*

Rev. Garison Taylor, Tirzah ARP Church, Rock Hill, SC – Minister
 Anton Armstrong, Adult Choir
 Shannon Jeffreys, Youth Choir
 Victor C. Johnson, Middle School Choir
 Jeanie Reed, Junior Choir
 Karol Kimmell, Primary Choir
 Karol Kimmell, Cherub Choir

2016 – *Enter His Sanctuary Singing – Psalm 95:6-7 and Hebrews 13:15*

Rev. Matthew Miller, Greenville ARP Church, Greenville, SC – Minister
 Andre J. Thomas, Adult Choir
 Kenney Potter, Youth Choir
 Rollo Dilworth, Middle School Choir
 Heather Potter, Junior Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Primary Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Cherub Choir

2017 – Our Sure Foundation – Psalm 18:2 and Matthew 16:18

Rev. Matt Carr, Back Creek ARP Church, Charlotte, NC – Minister
 Michael Kemp, Adult Choir
 Mark Stover, Youth Choir
 Nana Wolfe-Hill, Middle School Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Junior Choir
 Mari Espeland, Primary Choir
 Mari Espeland, Cherub Choir

2018 – Go into All the World – Psalm 18:49 and Mark 16:15

Alex Pettett, World Witness Office – Worship Speaker
 Rollo Dilworth, Adult Choir
 Shannon Jeffreys, Youth Choir
 Victor C. Johnson, Middle School Choir
 Heather Potter, Junior Choir
 Terry Taylor, Primary Choir
 Terry Taylor, Cherub Choir

2019 – Give Thanks: A Grateful Heart – Psalm 95:1-2 and Colossians 3:15-16

Rev. Andrew Shoger, Coddle Creek ARP Church, Mooresville, NC – Minister
 Eric Nelson, Adult Choir
 Troy Robertson, Youth Choir
 David Mandt, Middle School Choir
 Amy Joye, Junior Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Primary Choir
 Cheri Owensby, Cherub Choir

**2020 – Sing A New Song to the Lord – Psalm 98:1, Psalm 96:1-3 and Psalm 149:1
 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE – Covid Edition**

Rev. Clint Davis, Chester ARP Church, Chester, SC – Minister
 Shannon Jeffreys, Todd Arant, Victor C. Johnson, Elizabeth Shepley and
 Susan Eernise – Online Workshop Leaders.

**2021 – Great is Thy Faithfulness: Bright Hope for Tomorrow – Psalm 89:1-2,
 Lamentations 3:22-23 and Hebrews 10:23**

60th Anniversary Year

Rev. Clint Davis, Chester ARP Church, Chester, SC – Minister
 Anton Armstrong, Adult Choir
 Troy Robertson, Youth Choir
 David Mandt, Middle School Choir
 Amanda Smith, Junior Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Primary Choir
 Elizabeth Shepley, Cherub Choir

Boyce Memorial ARP Church, Kings Mountain, N.C.

Boyce Memorial has a long connection with the Music Conference. Mrs. N. F. McGill, Sr., organist and choir director at Boyce Memorial for many years, attended the Synod's Music Workshop which met during General Synod. Boyce Memorial has been blessed to have a church house at Bonclarken and when the Junior Choir was started our house was filled with our children. In 1972 there were 18 children in the Junior Choir, 3 adults in the Adult Choir and two chaperones---a total of 23. This was a great time of bonding of our children as well as making many new friends and enjoying singing. Mrs. Mabel Boyter, the director of the Junior Choir was asked by our young choir members to eat breakfast with them at the Kings Mountain house before we returned to Kings Mountain. Mrs. Boyter was delighted to hear and to see the young singers standing on the porch singing one of the songs that she had taught them as she came for breakfast. For many years our young people returned to the Bonclarken Music Conference. Our Music Director has always attended the Music Conference. Now we again have the Kings Mountain House filled with young people singing in various choirs, bonding together as a group, making new friends and loving Bonclarken. One of those children attending the Bonclarken Music Conference in 1972 from Boyce Memorial is Trip McGill. He has been Music Conference Director for a number of years. Reta Phifer, a former Director of Music Conference, also grew up in the Boyce Memorial Church. Thank you to those in 1960 whose vision included the Music Workshop and thank you to those who continue to work diligently to provide this wonderful opportunity for Praise, Singing, Worship and Fellowship at the Bonclarken Music Conference.

Trip McGill, for Boyce Memorial ARP
2011

Boyce Memorial ARP Church – 60th Anniversary Update

There have not been many (if any) years that our church did not have anyone attend. Many years we had singers in all choirs. We have had years when we needed to rent a room at the motel to accommodate all our children and adults. We even had some adults who camped out one summer. In recent years our church has sponsored a pumpkin patch in the fall to earn money to help offset the cost of music conference for our families who have multiple singers. If you ask past singers what they remember most they will quickly say...Nibble Nook, the carnival, my friends, meals on the porch, and the fun. That is not to say that the music was not important, but that it is about more than the music!

Jane Talbert, 2021

History of Music Conference and the First ARP Church's Involvement, Gastonia, NC

About fifty years ago at Bonclarken an Adult Choir Workshop was held during the week of the General Synod meeting under the direction of Marion McGill, from New York City. This was so adult choir members going to the Adult Choir Workshop at Bonclarken could ride with members of the General Synod. These lasted about ten years.

About 1969 to 1970 Anne Alexander had a desire to separate the Adult Choir Workshop from the General Synod meeting and also to add a Junior Choir with Mabel Stewart Boyter, from Dallas, Texas, as director. Anne worked hard to secure a week in July for the week-long conference from the Bonclarken Conference Center since that month was traditionally rented out to others for money-making purposes to keep Bonclarken afloat. She was finally successful, and the Music Conference has been in July ever since. Dr. McGill was at Columbia University in NYC, and he was unable to come for an entire week. So, Anne Alexander secured the services of Donald Plott, from David College, and he was the first Adult Clinician for the Music Conference.

Anne Alexander is a life-long member of First ARP Church and has always been a faithful worker and supporter of First ARP, Bonclarken, and Music Conference. Her influence has also sparked interest at the church, so First Gastonia has always been actively engaged in Music Conference. Many of our members have served Music Conference as conference directors (Anne Alexander, Trip McGill), clinicians (Kenney Potter, Heather Potter, Trip McGill), accompanists (Heather Potter, Norma Jean Huffstetler), staff members (David Hooks, Justin Bumgardner), ministers (John Carson, Eddie Spencer), registrar (Norma Jean Huffstetler), counselors (too numerous to mention). Our church usually has 45-50 members actively involved in Music Conference each year. Some years the active participants are mostly youth, some years mostly adults, and another year might bring mostly children.

One of the main reasons for First Gastonia's high participation rate is ownership of the church house, Carroll Cottage. Members can stay there at no cost during the conference, and the meals are home cooked by faithful church members (Beth Craig, Peggy Smith, Dot Schutte). A typical Monday night meal is baked chicken or barbecued chicken, creamed potatoes, green beans, squash casserole, fresh fruits and salads, and homemade desserts from home. Spaghetti and barbecue are also favorite night meals. At lunch time sandwiches, salads, chips, and desserts are on the menu. Friday night supper is always pizza. Meals usually attract visitors to Carroll Cottage, including regular Trip McGill and his assistants.

On the free Wednesday afternoon activities have varied from tubing down the river, to sliding down Slippery Rock, to a movie on a rainy day, to shopping in downtown Hendersonville (especially at the Salvation Army and Goodwill stores), to visiting the bakery and the ice cream shop. One year a couple of guys preferred to stay at the Cottage and go fishing in the lake and creek.

Chores are shared, and rooms are shared. Many friendships are made and last through the years. In recent years we have had to ask the adults to find housing in Bonclarken housing because there are not enough beds at Carroll Cottage. The adults love to stay in the beautiful new Lodge, Faith Apartments, and the motel at Bonclarken, so that frees up the Cottage for the Youth and children. Chaperones are never a problem, for people love the atmosphere at Bonclarken and Music Conference.

After rehearsals and Nibble Nook activities are over each night, the kitchen is open for snacks from freshly baked brownies to ice cream with toppings to popcorn. It is about this time that the adults gather for board games, conversation, Scrabble, cards, and other good times. Sometimes the noise rises to a level that the adults must be reminded that the youth and children are trying to sleep. Usually, a golf cart will drive up to the Cottage in the wee hours so that old friends can visit with college friends from long ago.

Music Conference is a family conference, and one year an adult choir member had the Cottage on edge due to the date of a baby's expected arrival. But thankfully the baby waited until the next week! Some years there have been those youth who sneaked out after hours or tried to have water gun fights, but these incidents are a part of our lively history. During afternoon free time the students gather in the front yard to play bad mitten, dodge ball, or just to talk with friends from other churches.

Many of our members have presented music for the worship services during the worship time at Music Conference. Quite often some the counselors from Trip's Chorus at Ashbrook High School in Gastonia have presented solos and piano selections. This year our Adult Choirs, under the direction of Kenney Potter, will present the music for the Opening Worship service at 7:00 PM Sunday evening. The choir is looking forward to sharing their music.

Bonclarken has always been a week of worship, fun, fellowship, and music. Much of the music experience from Bonclarken has made it home for use in our church as anthems and special music. The members always learn vocal and choral techniques which improve their singing ability. In the early days of the Adult Choir Workshops, the experience led to an area Gaston County church choral workshop on a weekend with Marion McGill directing, followed by a concert. It was a wonderful choir experience and a time for getting to know fellow ARP's better.

First Gastonia members are so happy to have been a part of the first fifty years of the Bonclarken Music Conference. May the tradition and wonderful musical experiences continue for years to come.

Norma Jean Huffstetler
First ARP Church, Gastonia, NC
May 24, 2011

During the past ten years, we have added so many faithful members to First ARP Gastonia's list of wonderful cooks in Carroll Cottage for the week. We have enjoyed leadership from Libby Riley in planning and organizing the meals. Many other folks have helped during the week with meals. Eric Riley, Dana Friday, Shanon Widener, Barbie Harwell and a whole host of others have helped along the way.

During the past ten years, we saw leadership of the Music Ministry change. Heather and Kenney Potter served as Choir Director and Director of Music until May, 2018. Trip McGill became Director of Music and Phil Biedenbender became Adult and Youth Choir Director. Milette Oden serves as our children's choir director.

Many of First Gastonia's folks have served on the Music Conference Staff over the years. Trip McGill, is Co-Conference Director, Norma Jean Huffstetler is the Registrar, David Hooks leads Nibble Nook and Children's Choir music and our pastor, Matt Kuiken has served as the Minister for the week

Music Conference continues to be an integral part of the Music Ministry program at First ARP Gastonia and we are thankful to God for this amazing conference and all it has mean to the worship and music of our church over the years.

Trip McGill
First ARP Church, Gastonia, NC
June 29, 2021

Doraville/Peachtree Corners ARP

Doraville/Peachtree Corners ARP

Our church has been blessed to participate in the Music Conference since its earliest days. Through the years we have had scores of chaperones, cooks, helpers and hundreds of Music Conference participants. Many of the children that were conferees years ago are now serving as chaperones, helpers, and conference staff.

Most years we have been able to accommodate everyone in the church cottage, but some years we have needed to rent additional space from Bonclarken and from other churches. The logistics of our wonderful church family living together for a week have sometimes been challenging, especially feeding all the conferees staying in the cottage and the other church members staying elsewhere on the grounds.

The menu for the week has not changed very much over the years. We have always posted the weekly menu and the house chores for all to see. Everyone has willingly done their fair share to keep the cottage running smoothly. Our kids take turns asking God's blessing before each of our meals and then line up to inhale the buffet set out across the long back porch. We enjoy inviting the conference clinicians and staff to join us on Thursday night for a steak dinner. Friday lunch, known as the "leftover buffet", offers an opportunity to enjoy a vast array of "cuisines" as long as they last.

Upon arrival at Bonclarken on Sunday afternoon, conferees race to claim their bunk, find friends from other churches, and get to know the rules of the conference and the cottage. Singers become familiar with their music and the week's busy schedule.

Each evening we all enjoy a snack while sharing events of the day. Family time offers a Bible lesson with props, prayer requests, and a bedtime prayer. As the week progresses, we grow closer as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Friday night concert is a special time of worship which we look forward to from one year to the next. After the concert we invite friends and family to an Ice Cream Social in our cottage.

For 25 plus years, Linda Vick and Barbara Jumper had the privilege and honor of serving as chaperones for the hundreds of conferees that have enjoyed this special conference. Over the last 10 years, Kathryn Pendergrass, Jeanne Fanning, Andy Kinnard & Jenn Locke have been added to the chaperoning team. Sadly, Linda Vick's faithful and loving service of 35 plus years of chaperoning came to an end in the beginning of 2020 with her passing. However, the chaperoning team carries on her loving tradition of selfless service in her honor!

There are many wonderful blessings that have come with attending the Music Conference including great fellowship with believers of all ages. We are all thankful that the focus of the conference has always been spiritual and that many lives have been changed in profound ways through the Holy Spirit's work.

We are thankful for the farsighted leaders who began this good work 50 years ago, and for those who have faithfully continued it to this day. We pray that the conference continues to glorify God for years to come.

Peachtree Corners ARP Church, Chaperone Team

A Music Conference Story: By Mrs. Jenn Vick Locke

For over 40 years my family has attended the Music Conference. My parents, Rod and Linda Vick, were members of Doraville ARP Church. For over 25 years my mom and aunt, Barbara Jumper, have chaperoned hundreds of youths along with the ministers in the Doraville ARP Church Cottage.

Then I married a minister in the ARP! Tony Locke became our Associate Pastor and six months after his installation we started dating. A chief joy of our marriage has been singing together at Bonclarken. We have four children together who have loved learning the Music Conference tradition over the years!

In 2004 we moved to a new pastorate in Newberry, South Carolina. Since my mom was still chaperoning, we would take the kids to eat with their Gamma at the Doraville cottage.

Our Bonclarken Music Conference traditions were enriched while at Newberry. Each year we had the privilege to attend with the Senn and Bunn families who were also Music Conference "lifers". At Newberry the majority of the choir attends Music Conference each year. That benefits the choir and overall church ministry more than we could ever have imagined.

During my husband's pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church of Tucker, we joined our Music Conference commitments with the Auman family in that congregation. Both families have continued to keep long held traditions that we learned while growing up in the Doraville ARP Church.

The Peachtree Corners Music Conference family is tight knit and welcoming. Many folks get packed into that little cottage, but it's administered with a family love. Everyone participates in the success of the group. Every person finds their place doing chores and food cleanup. The chaperones are tireless and fearless guides. We are all so blessed.

Part of the joy within the Doraville/Peachtree Corners Cottage is the tradition of certain meals. French toast Monday, bacon biscuit Wednesday and steak night Thursday. Steak night gives the Peachtree Corners Church an opportunity to show hospitality to the staff and clinicians participating in the Music conference each year. With usually over a hundred people, it is quite the production. The week comes to an end with the left-over buffet; offering everyone's favorites from the week.

The sixty years of Music Conference have built a loving community for everyone who attends. The Conference leadership have created a culture of excellence in music which builds the skills necessary for excellent music within the churches. Every year we experience wonderful clinicians, accompanists, teachers, children's church workers, and staff. What a blessing to have those traditions now come full circle with our own children attending the annual Bonclarken Music Conference.

Over the past 10 years, I have helped out faithfully with the children and whatever was needed in the cottage and have been officially added to the chaperoning team the past couple years. Sadly, Linda Vick's faithful and loving service of 35 plus years of chaperoning came to an end in the beginning of 2020 with her passing. However, the revised chaperoning team continues to carry on her loving tradition of service in her honor!

Jenn Locke

Young Memorial ARP Church Music Conference History

In June of 1976 my family moved to Anderson, SC and joined the Young Memorial ARP Church. In September of that year, I started a Children's Choir and thus began many years of promoting the Bonclarken Music Conference to the children and youth of the church. Dr. Joe Beard was the Adult Choir Director at that time, and I've no doubt some of the adults had participated in the adult choir in the beginning years of the conference. From July 1976 until spring of 2008 when I retired from leading the music for our children and youth, we had a number of our youth regularly attend the Music Conference. Members of the adult choir have been slow to attend due to work issues.

Since Young Memorial has a church house, it is very easy to take a group to Bonclarken for conferences. My guideline was always that one must be singing in the choir in order to attend the conference. In the beginning I chaperoned (along with another adult or two) as well as sang in the Adult Choir. Eventually we had two long term chaperones – Beth Cruce and Cinda Woodard – who were wonderful with our children

and youth. At some point in time, we began bringing only rising fourth graders and above so that the kids could take care of themselves more readily. The mid eighties were probably the peak of our attendance when we had 15 – 20 youth and children attending. In the later years of my work as choir director, the numbers dropped for various reasons until we just had a few youths attending. My first grandchild attended when he was old enough to be in the Cherub Choir (2004) and this year I have three grandsons participating – all from Young Memorial ARP Church but staying in the Hunt house on Kinross. Unfortunately, there is presently no regular (only occasional) program of music for the younger generations at Young Memorial.

The hope of any choir director is that members of the youth choir will ultimately become members of an adult choir. I found this to be true when I had two former choristers come back to Anderson to work and both joined the adult choir. What a joy! Also, a college student, once an active member of the youth choir and a lover of the Music Conference, sings with the adult choir in the summers and on holidays. One young man who went on to become a minister has even directed his own church choir for a short time. As a choir director I always look forward to checking out the music at the Brodt store; in fact, much of what I select for my adult choir is found there.

For a number of years in the late seventies I was integrally involved in the planning and carrying out of the Bonclarken Music Conference. What a blessing to be part of such a fine endeavor, working with such a dedicated group of people. We should all rejoice that we have benefited from the diligent work of numbers of people who have given their time and expertise to planning such a fine conference.

Betty Hunt, Director of Music
Young Memorial ARP Church



Providence Youth and the Bonclarken Music Conference

In 1979 Eugenia Carter, organist at Providence ARP Church in Clinton, South Carolina, brought the first group of six children to the Bonclarken Music Conference. Mrs. Carter, along with a grandmother, Mrs. Gussie Todd, and parents Gwen Cook and Joanne Stewart chaperoned the group at the Todd Cottage on Kinross Drive. This began a tradition of Providence children attending this wonderful conference. Several of these six

children now have their own children coming along with many others. Joanne and Thornton Stewart began bringing their grandchildren and have organized the group for many years. Kim Pitts has also been a regular advisor for the group.

One tradition began with taking a picnic to Mount Pisgah on Wednesday afternoons. The group enjoyed Frisbees, looking for bears, and good food! As schedules changed and some needed to get back earlier for practice, the picnic site changed to a closer area on Mills River, where wading in the cold stream was a treat.

In 2010 Providence sent eleven singers. It is a much-anticipated time of meeting new friends, finding old ones, worshiping, and singing His praises in an inspiring place.

Joanne Stewart

Providence ARP – 60th Anniversary Update

In the last ten years, Providence has continued to have participants in the annual music conference, including last summer – the summer of Covid! The group has enjoyed the many planned activities, along with much free time to wander around the grounds and explore. So many wonderful lifelong friends have been made over the years!

Although our group has changed in members, we still have many regulars who join us each year. The real excitement comes when the younger ones are old enough to go to the Nibble Nook at night for devotionals, which never really ends as our folks come back to our house, sit on the front porch and visit way into the night. What wonderful memories these folks are making with each other in this protected little part of the world!

Two of our youngest members of the conference have been attending even before they were old enough to sing! This year we have six members who are singing and two members who are in charge of meals, running errands, and keeping up with where everyone is at all times.

The excitement for our group begins even before we arrive on the grounds. As we prepare and plan for our trip, we are blessed to have a church family who continues to support this event and the many traditions our young people have come to enjoy.

We look forward to many more years of attending the conference, enjoying the beauty of the grounds, and especially the magnificent concert that culminates each year.

Kim C. Pitts

Tribble Family – “Tribble Memorial”

Music Conference is one of the most important weeks on my calendar and has been for many years!

I wish I knew the exact date of my first Music Conference, but I don't. It had to be back in the sixties. Marion McGill was director, and we practiced in the Music Room of the hotel. With all those wonderful doors open that made a delightful place to practice. In those early days things were not as organized as they are at present with all the different choirs that we have now. I was not able to get our sons interested in singing in the choirs when they did become available.

About 1977 our family bought a house on the grounds. At that time, we did not have any grandchildren old enough to come. I invited my sister, Mary Ripley, and her grandchildren to come with me to enjoy the Music Conference. They loved it and came for many years. In fact, a couple of years ago some of the Ripley clan joined us with four of their next generation.

I had better luck with the grandchildren than I did with our own boys. I think the secret was starting early. Choirs were not available when our boys were little. Most of our grandchildren have started at age 5, some even at 4. This has been such a wonderful way for my grandchildren to get to know each other. It is difficult for grandchildren to become friends when they get together only at holidays, etc. Spending a week together at beautiful, relaxed Bonclarken each summer has been a great way for the cousins to bond. We have 17 grandchildren, and each one has come for at least a few years. Some never missed a year. When we had too many to fit into our house, our sister-in-law, Betty Wills, would lend us her apartment for the overflow. A daughter-in-law would come to stay with the boys over there. We would eat lunch and supper together at our house.

Through the years I tell my grandchildren that I have 3 aims in mind for these yearly visits during Music Conference. First, I want them to grow closer to the Lord and to learn to enjoy singing His praises. Second, I want them to get to know and love each other and to bond as an extended family. Third, I want them to learn to love this wonderful place called Bonclarken. I feel that we have had at least some success with each of these aims.

One bit of family trivia---granddaughter, Kelley, met her husband, Brad Anderson, at Bonclarken. He often worked with recreation during Music Conference week. Brad went on to become a Youth Pastor and is now at our church, First Presbyterian in Columbia. Kelley is a big help to him in his work with the young people and with conferences.

So many of our grandchildren have aged out of Music Conference. This summer it looks like we'll have only 2. I keep praying that the Lord will give me strength to do this as long as I have grandchildren who want to come. But then!!! How about all these great grands we are already collecting!!!! Got 5, going on 6. Who will bring them to Music Conference?

Dot Tribble

Bonclarken Music Conference Memories - Dr. Reta R. Phifer

June 1962 – First Bonclarken Music Conference

I had just completed the 9th grade – turned 15 at the end of the month.

In 1962, my dad, Marriott D. Phifer, was a delegate to Synod from Boyce Memorial ARP Church in Kings Mountain, North Carolina. While at Bonclarken for Synod, Dad found a horse which he purchased. Dad came home to get a truck to transport the horse and our entire family went back to Bonclarken with Dad to pick up the horse.

Our family arrived at Bonclarken in time to attend the first Bonclarken Music Conference Concert, conducted by Dr. J. Marion Magill, and held in the Bonclarken Chapel. We had to stand in the foyer, since the chapel was full when we arrived. I can remember peaking through the door and hearing “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” The lights behind the cross and the singing of this anthem deeply moved me.

June 1963 – Second Bonclarken Music Conference

Somehow, I convinced my parents that I should attend. My Dad was a delegate to Synod again.

Although the Bonclarken Music Conference was intended for adult choir members from across the ARP Synod, I convinced my parents that I should participate. Not usually aggressive about such matters, I got my cousin, Paulette Phifer, now Paulette Kaylor, to attend the music conference with me. Although she was not “into choir” and music making as much as I, she agreed to go. Since our congregation had a house on the

grounds, we had a place to stay. Since Dad was in Synod meetings, our care was loosely supervised by such adult choir members as Anne Alexander, our neighbor at the First Gastonia house, and others.

Our family always vacationed at Bonclarken and all the kids in my family felt comfortable roaming the grounds independently. We always felt safe and knew many of the Bonclarken residents. Yes, Paulette and I were the youngest participants, but we were made to feel welcome. I really enjoyed singing in a choir that performed on a much higher level than I had ever experienced. So, by the end of the conference, I was hooked. I continued to participate on an annual basis through high school, college and beyond, missing only a few years through 1983.

In 1969, I graduated from Erskine with a BA in Music.

My first job was teaching Elementary General Music in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

June 1970 – Bonclarken Music Conference - First Junior Choir - Mabel Stewart Boyter, Conductor

While participating in the 1970 Bonclarken Music Conference, I observed Mable Stewart Boyter's Junior Choir rehearsals with children from my children's choir from First ARP in Rock Hill. I was captivated by her every action, especially with the charts and teaching tools she had created. I ended up being her gofer, getting materials for her and learning from her how the teaching learning process really worked for and with young children. When I returned to Rock Hill, I copied what I had learned from Mrs. Boyter, both at the First ARP and then at Eden Terrace ARP – both in Bible School and Children's Choirs. Later, I molded what I had learned into my own unique teaching style.

In Summary

Through the years, I learned from many of our conductors at all levels. I rarely missed any rehearsal, running from one rehearsal to another. My encounters with numerous conductors led to life-long friends and colleagues. After teaching three years in Rock Hill, I moved to New York City to study with Dr. J. Marion Magill at Teachers College, Columbia University. In 1975, after finishing my course work at TC, I moved to Charlotte where I taught elementary general music and chorus. From 1978-1984, I attended Idlewild ARP Church and conducted the children choir there.

By 1976, I was serving on Synod's Worship Committee (1976-1980), serving as Committee Chair 1976-1978; Conference Chair for the Bonclarken Music Conference in 1978, working with Barbara Lauderdale, Betty Hunt and others; Assistant Conference Chair in 1979; Assistant to the Conference Director during 1980-1982; and in 1983, it was my privilege to serve as the clinician for the Primary and Junior Choir.

In 1984, I started working at and singing in the choir at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlotte and I started attending the Montreat Music Conference. However, my experiences at the Bonclarken Music Conference provided the training ground for further service in various capacities. I remember fondly my many years of attending this conference and the friendship I made over the years.

My encounters with numerous conductors led to life-long friends and colleagues. I continue to see and catch up with choral conductors at ACDA Conferences and other music camps – such friends as Helen Kemp, Allen Pote, John Yarrington, Jane Marshall, Robert Edgerton, Linda Bradberry, and Walter Ehret.

One of my unusual memories is going to pick up Allen Pote at the Asheville airport, locking my keys in the car, and Allen's using a hanger to open the car door. What a way to start a friendship. My sister, Connie Phifer, now Connie Savell, assisted me at the conference and she continues to help me run the annual North Carolina Music Educators Association conference, where I currently serve as Executive Director.

Significance and Impact of the Bonclarken Music Conference

The Bonclarken Music Conference has been significant in many ways, among the significance are:

Experience Worship through Music – Both congregational singing and choral anthems are used to enhance and encourage worship.

Learn Repertoire and Performance Practices and Choral Techniques – Choristers at all levels learn both well-established choral literature within the ARP tradition and standard choral literature and each singer expands his/her own personal repertoire. Authentic performance practices and choral techniques are utilized which can be utilized at the local congregation.

Develop and Elevate Musicianship – Choir directors and choristers have the opportunity to sing and perform literature that may be beyond the scope and skills of their local choirs. In addition, working under the direction of outstanding clinicians, musical knowledge and skills are developed which enable choristers to better serve in their local congregations and beyond.

Develop Long-Term Relationships, both within and across choirs and with clinicians and composers - This small conference engenders a family-like, close-knit family atmosphere where honest, authentic experiences create life-long friendships.

Support Bonclarken Assembly Grounds – By bringing attendees, in large numbers, to Bonclarken, the conference helps assure the long-term financial stability of the facility and brings church members on campus who might never come to Bonclarken otherwise.

The Music Conference has provided an opportunity for me to sing a variety of music under different director. I believe I attended at least the first Two years when it was held during Synod and many, many more through the years. As I recall, Dr. Marion, Magill brought much of the music from the Greenville church and perhaps the school system. The music was really challenging for me to read. He certainly demanded our best, and I was hoarse at the end of the day. We sang “Were You There” at one of the concerts. I understood it was somewhat questionable whether we should sing a spiritual in the concert! I’ve enjoyed many conferences and thank you for all you and your co-workers do and for all those that have developed this conference for all ages.

Sara Boyce

Tabernacle Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Merged with Craig Avenue A.R.P Church in 1998 to become Craig Avenue Tabernacle Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The Bonclarken Music Conference has been special to so many of our adults and children through the years. Our church realized the importance of training adults and children in church music and placed this conference in the church budget (paying registration fees and housing – individuals paid for food costs) each year. Workshops were available for choir directors and organists, as well as rehearsals throughout the day. Each day began with a worship service. Our A.R.P young people have received excellent training. It is special to see someone like Trip McGill advance through the years of training to become a nationally recognized school choral director and now to be the Director of the Bonclarken Music Conference.

Tabernacle has been fortunate to have organists who served faithfully for many years – Lydia Reid, 35 years and Marge Wiley, 28 years. They both participated at the Music Conference. Marge Wiley served as accompanist for the children’s choir one year. Our present organist and choir director is Nancy Felker, who has been serving since 1999.

The Tabernacle choir directors who participated at Bonclarken were: Charlie White, Barbara Lauderdale, Annie Luarie Lesslie, Betty Hunt, Linda Miller, June Abernathy, Alfred Estep, Bill Sherril, and Pat Parker. Barbara Lauderdale and Betty Hunt served as Music Conference Directors. Many times, at Tabernacle,

Lessie Smith served as our interim choir director. She was also involved in getting our young people to the conference and was their chaperone. Barbara Lauderdale's son, Jim, is singing in Nashville, and many other places in the United States and in other countries. He is also a composer. Annie Laurie Lesslie's children, Laurie, Beth, and Lee participated in choirs. Linda Miller's children, Scott and Drew participated in the choir. We have fond memories of staying during the conference at the Jeff Whitesides home, Jamie Hunt's home, Martha Byrd's home, New Perth House, Virginia Cottage and for the last sixteen years at the Wilkerson (now Shepard) home. We enjoyed eating together as a group in the home or sometimes eating at local restaurants. Bill Caton, Jim Hancock and Ace McCall began singing in the tabernacle choir as teenagers. When they died, they had each been singing in the church choir for over fifty years! In 1992, Jim Hancock brought his grandsons, Tim and Steven Snyder to the conference. Ace and Jimmie McCall have a son, Rodney, who participated. New Rodney's daughters, Julia and Ella have attended for nine years and five years respectively. They often sing the songs that they have learned for our Sunday School Assembly. Rachel Yandell brought her daughter, Linda Yandell Smith and granddaughters, Rachel and Rainey for several years. So, this has become a generational music conference. Laura Collins Hunter also participated in the youth choir.

Barbara Lauderdale, Betty Hunt and Aleene Deaton served on the Worship Committee of Synod. The Music Conference is one of the responsibilities of this committee. One year, Aleene Deaton's assignment was to bring all the music to Bonclarken Brodt's music company Charlotte, NC.

Some of the choir participants for many years were: June and Fred Abernathy and family, Becky Adcock, Margaret Boyce, Pat Brazzel, Bess Burns, Martha Byrd, Aleene Deaton, Thelma Hall, Jim Hancock, W.C. Hancock, Bob Hutchison, Ace McCall and family, Pat Parker, "B", and Jessy Smith, Lessie Smith, Lucias Stanley, Sissy Walts, Izzy and Charlie White.

Aleene Deaton began her adult choir experience singing at First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC as a college student. After her marriage, she joined the Tabernacle choir, so she has 50 years of experience singing in church choir. Her sons, Alex and John Deaton, were at Bonclarken for the children's choir a few years.

We have all been blessed to have outstanding clinicians—some of these were composers. We especially remember Hal Hopson and Jane Marshall. The music that we learned was then performed at concerts each year and then was used in our local churches. We are still singing many anthems that we first learned to sing at Bonclarken. We are grateful to all those who work so diligently to make this music conference possible. We are thankful that we can serve the Lord with singing at each worship service.

Aleene C. Deaton

First Presbyterian Church (ARP) of Lake Placid

First Presbyterian Church of Lake Placid came into being in large part through the generosity and vision of E. C. Stuart, a visionary denominational leader and financier who provided tremendous support for a wide range of projects from church planting to Psalmody and Psalter revision and the purchase of the Bonclarken Assembly Grounds. In many ways, he may be regarded as the father of both institutions. At Lake Placid, he organized the first meetings for worship and donated a completed church building and manse to the newly organized congregation. In association with Bonclarken, he participated in arranging the purchase of the Heidelberg Gardens and its transformation into the Bonclarken we know and love today, serving as president of the Bonclarken Board of Directors from its creation in 1921 until his death in February of 1942. Along with fellow Floridian E. D. Ellis of the Lake Wales congregation, who financed the construction of Memorial Hall,

Stuart was one of several citizens of the Sunshine State who took a special interest in the development of the Conference Center from its inception. As a witness to love that both of these men had for the priority of singing Psalms in worship, they were the only congregational songs allowed in public worship at the Assembly Ground until the fall of 1963, a full decade after Ellis's death in September of 1953.

Another Lake Placid connection to Bonclarken was formed by ruling elder John Smoak following his marriage to his wife Susan in 1945. Together, they built a cottage on Hopewell Lane that came to be christened *SuSu's Cabin* in her honor. This cabin served as a retreat for family and friends for many years before it was donated to the Lake Placid congregation following Susan's death in 2001. Since that time, Lake Placid choir members Don and Linda Childress have taken a special interest in the cabin, spending countless hours over the years on its repair, improvement, and maintenance in order to make it a home-away-from-home for groups from the church at Synod, workdays, youth camps, and, of course, the annual Bonclarken Music Conference.

In 1960, the first Church Music Workshop was planned to preserve, promote, and improve the musical tradition of the ARP Church. As detailed elsewhere in this booklet, it was held during the week of Synod for much of the next 15 years before becoming a separate event with the name of the *Bonclarken Music Conference* in 1975. The exact involvement of members of the Lake Placid congregation during this time and the period that followed is a bit sketchy—the Rev. Bob DeWitt, who served the Lake Placid congregation from 1969-1986 and the First Statesville church from 1986-1994, was certainly present at the concerts which were held during the week of Synod. Beginning in the 1990s, then-music director Alene Yoder attended several conferences along with a few members of the choir with an eye toward continuing education and picking new music. Even so, the Lake Placid congregation's strongest connection with Bonclarken was probably the annual Bon senior Conference, at which they frequently joked that they brought "the most the farthest." While not technically a music conference, Bon senior had a strong musical element, especially with its informal Psalm-sings led by Earl Linderman, and participants included members of the Lake Placid choir such as Doris Burdick, Earl Peters, and Joan Powers.

In 2013, the Lake Placid church selected Joshua Klatt, who had grown up in that congregation, to be its director of music and organist. Having a strong commitment to music and traditions of the ARP Church, and hearing from Arlene Batten, Mary Karlson, and Lois King about the wonderful experiences they had at Bonclarken at the 50th Anniversary Conference under the direction of Lucy Ding, he determined to make a special effort to bring a group from Lake Placid every year. This determination first came to fruition in 2014, and has been maintained every year since then. During this time, the Lake Placid group has remained fairly small, but has formed a number of close friendships with members of groups from various other churches, including the Chester, Ebenezer, and Edgemoor congregations. In fact, it was at the Music Conference that Alice Addison, a member of Chester choir who was planning to move to Florida, first met the members of the Lake Placid choir which she joined and served with so cheerfully after her departure from South Carolina. Of members of the Lake Placid choir who have taken an active part in the Music Conference over the years include Barbara Moore, Judy Dyer, and Judy Miskanic, with the end result that almost half of 20-25 people who regularly make up the Lake Placid choir have had the privilege of singing with some of the best directors in the United States, sharing in the fellowship at the Dining Hall, worshipping other ARP's in the Chapel, and

enjoying the beauties of places like Jump Off Rock and the High Falls at Dupont State Forest. Doubtless all of these things would have brought a smile to E. C. Stuart and E. D. Ellis's faces had they been able to see members of a congregation they helped to start benefitting so much from the Conference Center which was another of their projects. In all likelihood, they would have been especially pleased to see members of the Lake Placid congregation gathered on the porch of the Heidelberg Hotel singing *Bible Songs* before breakfast in the Dining Hall. As we look forward to being back at Bonclarken following the COVID pandemic, we are glad for so many years of happy memories and look forward to making many, many more!

Joshua Klatt 2021

Susan White Jones

God has been blessing our family's Bonclarken connections for the past one hundred years. In 1921 while the ARPs were purchasing the property my grandfather, Archibald Selden Kennedy, was on the Board of Directors. My father Rev. Francis T. White attended the first Bible Conference in 1922 (although he wasn't my father at the time), and continued every summer. My father and mother (Kate Kennedy) brought me along in 1933 when I was 10 months old, and every year after. Fast forward---to 1974. I am now married (to Reuben Jones, Jr.), with twins and a younger one, and living in Wellesley, MA. We drove down to Bonclarken every summer. When we arrived in 1974, my mother told us that the Music Conference would be happening while we were here and our twins (Reuben, III and Kate Kennedy) would be the right age to sing in the Junior Choir with Mrs. Mabel Boyter. A couple of summers later our son Lewis was old enough for Junior Choir, and our family's participation in the Music Conference was launched.

Fast forward---to 1993. Our oldest grandson Tyler (parents Reuben, III and Marion) launched the next generation, at the tender age of four. In that year, 1993, the Conference was allowing four-year-olds to join the Cherub Choir. Tyler set the stage for his brothers and sister-Andrew, Micah, Philip, and Rachael.

The tradition continues with daughter Kennedy and Ed Rizzuto's children, Brendan, Benjamin, and Annabelle. And now, we are counting down to 2023 when great-granddaughter Galina (Andrew and Meghan) will "lift up her voice and sing" in the cherub Choir.

In 2018 we had a special treat--our son Lewis, his wife Jenny, and their children Nathan, Heidi, and Macauley who live in Australia came up for a visit-during July-and joined us in singing!

Funny thing, only once in this past 60 years have, I actually sung in a choir during a Music Conference. Every summer I have been busy providing meals and whatever the singers need to get them to the right place at the right time. Then, in 2011, no family member could come, so I sang in the adult choir-with Lucy Ding as director--a special time for me.

Some flash-backs.

- 1) Our son Reuben, III was just telling me that he remembers, while in the Junior Choir, being quite impressed with watching all the machinations involved with recording the choir so that an LP record could be made!!
- 2) In 2001 when grandson Tyler was in the Middle School Choir, they sang the anthem director Kenny Potter had been commissioned to write, "Where Shall I Go from Your Spirit?" from Psalm 139. And now this anthem has a special place in the hearts of our family.
- 3) We are thankful for the deep friendships which were made between our family and Chorister families over the years.
- 4) In 2004 my husband Reuben died. During the funeral service we played the part of the DVD with the Middle School (with Tyler) singing "Where Shall I Go from Your Spirit?"

So many special moments and memories from God's blessings through the Bonclarken Music Conference. Thank you to God and to all of His servants who make these blessings possible.

For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations. Psalm 100:5.

Susan White Jones
36 Covenant Lane
Bonclarken

Centennial ARP Church, Columbia, SC

(Reflections from Lynn Grimsley) 50th and updated for the 60th

In 1980, Centennial organist Kristin Johnson came to Bonclarken to serve as accompanist for the Adult Choir and brought her girls along to sing. I joined her as a singer in the Adult Choir, little realizing the impact that the week would have on my life and on the choir program at Centennial.

During the following years, I moved into the position as director of children's choirs at Centennial. The Music Conference became an annual event for our young people. Since Centennial didn't own a house on the grounds, we had to find housing within the Bonclarken facilities. I assumed the choir position shortly before the conference began, and not knowing deadlines, missed the housing deadline. Barbara Sherrill kindly worked with Mrs. Maloney who allowed us to rent her big house on the back side of the grounds. We got to know Barbara and husband Dale well. (He was always kind enough to work on ailing church vans that needed a hand to get home!) Mrs. Emma "Granny" Clark started her term as cook and chaperone of our crew. (That first free Wednesday afternoon, she was sport enough to hike up to Pearson's Falls with big picnic coolers for our lunch!) Free time also meant a trip downtown and éclairs at MacFarlane's Bakery.

As the group grew, we took over most of Garrison Hall. The Music Conference became a special time of blending generations, sharing music and fellowship, and awesome meals. After Garrison was torn down, the Lord provided housing with cooking facilities once again. Faith Apartments were up and running right before Music Conference. As we assumed new housing, our numbers grew to over 40. Many old, young, and in-between shared in Christian fellowship, made and renewed old friendships, and grew to love Bonclarken. Some of those growing up at Music Conference stretched their weeks at Bonclarken to become Camp Joy and Camp Bonclarken counselors and staff members.

In 1989, I started serving on the conference staff. A wonderful array of parents and church members took over cooking and chaperoning jobs. (I also remember a few who "sang" with Mabel Boyter in the first Cherub rehearsals!) Vivian Stevenson served for many years, claiming that it was the best opportunity that she had to get to know the younger generation of church members. She is fondly remembered for her "ARP" chicken and for making homemade communion bread for the conference. In more recent years, Betty and Buck Amick have assumed the preparation of wonderful home-style meals sprinkled with doses of humor, encouragement, and wisdom. Jee Jee Richardson, Sally Wallace, Carol and Billy Finethy, Lissa Shine, and Delaine Bradley have assumed these positions in recent years. We also have the addition of the "Howard House" group. Peggy and Wyndal Howard graciously opened their Bonclarken house to their Centennial relatives for the conference. Peggy treats our whole group to Sunday night supper for a time of fellowship and explanation of rules for the week. The two groups otherwise eat separately but have a Wednesday afternoon tradition of joining for lunch at "Harry's and Piggy's" followed by an afternoon of climbing tower and ropes course activities. Trips to Mast General Store, Kilwin's, and The Wrinkled Egg are always included.

Although our housing has moved all over the grounds and cooks and chaperones have changed throughout the years, some things have not changed. Centennial Church and the Centennial Women's Ministries and a special parent have remained strong financial and spiritual supporters of those attending. They have always come forward to make certain that any child who wants to attend has a place to stay, meals to eat, and help with registration. Centennial members have served on Music Conference staff- Lissa Shine (nurse), Rachel Hanes (nurse), David Setzer (minister), Renae Casterline (Children's Church/First Responder), Brady (BJ) Hanes (Recreation), Rebecca Nesbit (Lead Cherub Counselor/Staff Assistant), Amy Whitfield (childcare), Judy Doudoukjian (special workshop presenter on the new blue Psalter) in addition to Kristin Johnson and myself. Many of our singers continued to come to BMC at counselors. We have had many enjoy participating in the annual conference talent show-singing, dancing, playing instruments or presenting songs in sign language.

The Bonclarken Music Conference offers an unparalleled opportunity to "grow" and support the local church music programs. The outstanding clinicians, the exceptional opportunities for music training, and the relaxing, inspiring environment have fostered special friendships while training generations of singers. It has been both a privilege and honor to have been a part of the Bonclarken Music Conference. I have had the opportunity to personally meet and learn from world class clinicians in a Christian setting-a rare opportunity. The Lord has truly used every facet of the conference to teach, to encourage, and to build up and bind together our Centennial family and those of numerous churches in our denomination. In fact, the music conference itself has a unique family atmosphere and those attending become part of that special Music Conference family. May we all realize what a gift from the Lord the conference has been and may we all continue to support it for the uplifting of future generations.



Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.



Bonclarken Music Conference
1962 – 2021
60th Anniversary