

## Our History

Since 1916, Fairmount Presbyterian Church has grown from a charter group of 85 men and women, devoted to the Christian education of their children, to a congregation of persons committed to worship, fellowship, service, and Christian education for all ages and internal and external missions.

Although the original Charter was approved and signed on October 23, 1916, the beginnings are documented as early as 1912. As young married couples with children moved into the newly developed neighborhood along Fairmount Boulevard, the mothers joined together to begin a Sunday School for their children. Sunday morning services were held at the Real Estate office on the corner of Lee Road and Fairmount Boulevard and at a farm on the corner of Wellington Road and Fairmount Boulevard. Adult services were held Sunday evenings in various family homes.

The first Church building, on the corner of Fairmount Boulevard and Scarborough Road, was built in 1915 by the Presbyterian Union and was furnished with \$600 raised by the members of the newly formed Women's Aid Society. The women members organized the new cultural and social programs: Bible study, sewing for the Red Cross, sponsoring lecture programs, raising funds, and planning church gatherings. The first service of FPC, with 45 men and women in attendance, was held in the little white church on November 5, 1916. The Rev. Percy Elwood Erickson, from Newark, NJ, the first permanent Pastor, conducted his first service on June 3, 1917.

On September 5, 1917, lightning struck the church and subsequently the building was destroyed by fire. The damage was severe. With funds received from the fire insurance, from the Presbyterian Union, and a little from the Trustees, a white frame Church was erected and ready for Sunday School and worship just three weeks after the fire. During Pastor Erickson's tenure, the Congregation grew to 400 members. Since 1921, the little Church had been filled to capacity and enough money was pledged to build the Parish House which was to be used for both Sunday School and worship services. The Rev. Joel Babcock Hayden accepted the call to Fairmount in the spring of 1923 and the Parish House was completed and dedicated in 1924.

Dr. Frank Halliday Ferris became the third Pastor in the fall of 1931. During his tenure the congregation continued to grow, the mortgage on the Parish House was paid, and a campaign for the new Sanctuary was launched and completed. The first worship service was held in the Sanctuary on Palm Sunday, March 29, 1942.

Following Dr. Ferris's retirement in 1950, Dr. Richard Pacini became the fourth Pastor. Fairmount joined in establishing the Inner City Protestant Parish and 64 refugee families from Europe were resettled through the Church program. In order to accommodate the growing number of young persons attending Sunday school, the building of the Chapel and classrooms began in 1954 and were completed in October of 1956.

Dr. John Magill was installed as Fairmount's fifth Pastor in 1967. The Fairmount Village housing development was completed and a yoked fellowship with The Greater Avery A.M.E. Church was inaugurated. In 1967 Josephine Morris became the first woman to serve as an ordained Elder on Session.

Dr. Henry W. Andersen was called in February 1974 to serve as Fairmount's sixth Pastor. Under his care and guidance, the membership increased along with the continuing development of activities and programs designed for spiritual growth, Christian education, fellowship, and community and international outreach.

The Rev. Kent M. Organ, Fairmount's seventh Pastor, was installed October 1991. His call to Fairmount offered to members and friends the opportunity for new and renewed Christian challenges and commitments. The new Schantz organ pipe was installed followed by several concerts for members of Fairmount and the community.

Our eighth and first female Pastor, The Rev. Louise Westfall, brought to Fairmount a compassionate, thoughtful, and energetic Presbyterian philosophy that would open new doors of interfaith into the community. Among the many programs and activities created during Pastor Louise's tenure, the Heights Youth Club for school-aged youth was a vital part of FPC.

Pastor Derek Starr Redwine was called to Fairmount Presbyterian Church in July of 2013, as Fairmount's ninth Pastor. Pastoral commitments soon became part of the daily schedule as Pastor Derek met with parishioners and community leaders. Changes were beginning to develop in the active governance and the structure of Sunday Worship. Sunday services welcomed children and youth of all ages.

The Rev. Ryan Wallace was called to Fairmount Presbyterian Church in February 2022, as Fairmount's tenth Senior Pastor. Rev. Wallace brought with him years of experience in community organizing and public policy, working on a wide range of justice issues at city, county, state, and federal levels. Rev. Wallace's experience as a faith leader and a community organizer parallels Fairmount's commitment to be a servant leader in this community.