

STILL GOING AND GROWING

Historic church raising funds for renovations

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

After a century of standing in the heart of downtown and being on the forefront of social justice, Lloyd Presbyterian Church could use a little facelift.

A Preservation Committee has been started to seek help from the community to renovate the little white church, which sits near the intersection of Patterson Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

Just before Christmas, the committee held a standing room-only gospel concert that raised \$1,000 for the effort. The concert featured a diverse group of youth choruses, including the Grace Presbyterian Church Youth Choir, the Central Carolina Children's Chorus and the Downtown School Children's Chorus. Another fundraising concert will be held on Jan. 19 at 5 p.m. featuring the Salem Presbytery Black Caucus Mass Choir. Though the concerts are free, a love offering is taken to help raise the nearly \$200,000 needed to restore the aging church to its former glory.

The Lloyd Preservation Committee

is made up of members of various local Presbyterian churches like Beth Barksdale, who says that Lloyd has value not just in its history but in its current good works.

"It provides a real benefit to the community in terms of the outreach community project and is really a tribute to what the church really stands for," said Barksdale.

Lloyd, one of the oldest African-American churches in the city, is located at 748 N. Chestnut St. The church was founded in 1870 by white Presbyterian missionaries who created it for African-Americans after the Civil War. The church building itself was constructed

later in the first decade of the twentieth century. The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, perhaps the most unique thing about Lloyd is that it's an interracial church (although most members are black) with a white pastor, the Rev. Laura Spangler. She says there's a nice racial mix in her small congregation and that the church is a very accepting and open one. She said it's been a perfect fit for her.

"The hospitality there is just amazing. They have welcomed me and



Rev. Spangler

Lloyd

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never made me feel odd as a white woman," said Spangler

Spangler said the church's storied past started in its early days when it was in the middle of the thriving heart of the black community. Formerly known as the Depot community, the area was once home to a historic African-American school and black businesses. The mighty church boasted more than 200 members in its glory days. Eventually, the area changed and people moved away but the church still stood.

It went on to become a meeting place for activists during the Civil Rights Era. In the 1980s, it became a rallying spot for the supporters of Darryl Hunt, a local black man who was wrongfully arrested, tried and convicted of killing a white woman.

Today, the congregation is only a fraction of what it once was, but it's better than it was when Spangler arrived. When she began preaching at the church a decade ago, it may have had 25 members, with only five attending services regularly. She's built that number up to an average of 25 attendees per service and a total of about 50 members. The small membership has never stopped the church from doing big things, she said.

"You know God can do anything with a small group that's faithful and this church has been faithful over time. When we get requests to do things, unless there's some other good thing going on, they always say 'yes,'" said Spangler.

Today, the church continues its active role in social justice issues says Spangler. Lloyd is a founding member of

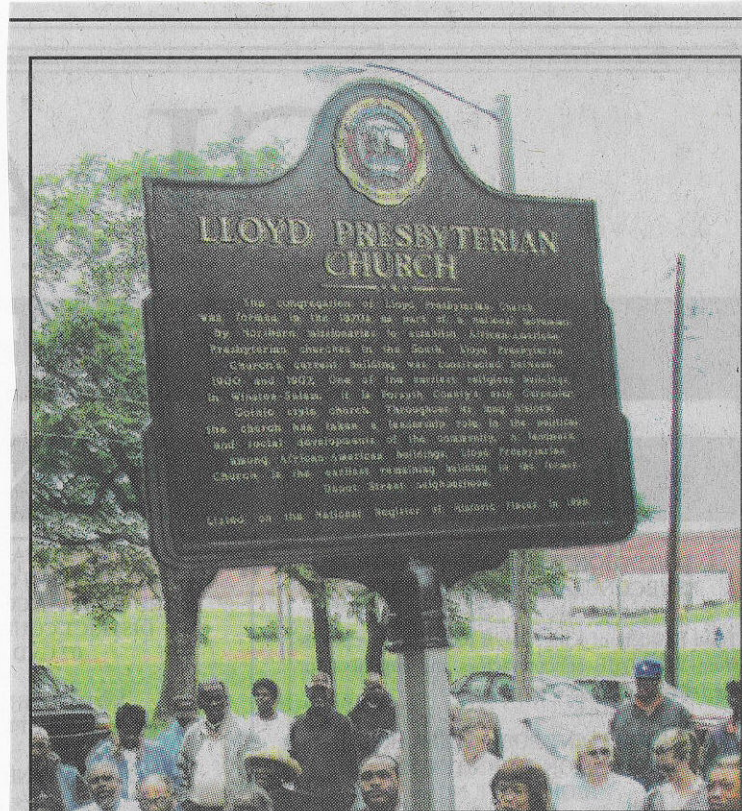
groups such as the grassroots organization CHANGE and Vigils for Healing, which holds tributes for local people who are killed violently. The church plays host to meetings of the Presbyterian Interracial Dialog and World Peace Day services.

Its basement contains a homeless day shelter run by Ella Pomeroy that operates from Sunday to Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The shelter is a place where homeless people can spend the day or simply come in for a quick respite from the outside weather.

"We're not a wealthy church; we're not a big church but we're an open, hospitable church, and a church that reads the scriptures and they say that God is a God of justice. So it's basically just about being faithful," said Spangler.

Spangler said that so far the Lloyd Restoration Committee has raised more than \$50,000 towards restoring the church. She said they've applied for grants from various local foundations to help raise the rest. She said she expects the money to be raised in full and the restoration of the church to begin next year.

Donations may be mailed to the Lloyd Presbyterian Preservation Fund at 205 McDaniel St., Winston-Salem, NC, 27105.



File Photo

This historic marker was erected in front of the church several years ago.