

Introducing  
Story  
Memorial  
Presbyterian  
Church

Marion, North  
Carolina



Story Memorial is one of four churches founded by James Story, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Marion. Pastor Story established these churches while pastoring a much larger congregation and never owning an automobile. He developed a Bible study, primarily composed of the Elliott family in west Marion, to gather this congregation. Our original building, which now includes fellowship hall and some Sunday School rooms, is shown to the left.

As the PCUS, commonly known as the southern Presbyterian church, began to lose its theological moorings, a number of teaching elders and a larger number of ruling elders begin trying to reclaim the denomination for the historic Christian faith as summarized in the Westminster Confession and the two Westminster Catechisms. Finally, in 1973, pastor Red Yeargin and our long serving clerk of session Jack Lonon joined like-minded church leaders of PCUS congregations at Briarwood



Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama to form a new denomination. One early name of the denomination was Continuing Presbyterian, reflecting that their efforts were not toward something new but rather a maintenance of the historic faith.

Beyond being merely history, this step in 1973 continues to define the nature



and character of Story. We are definitely and proudly Presbyterian. In the tradition of the Westminster Standards, and we embrace much of the theology of great Southern Presbyterian teachers such as Dabney and Thornwell. However, along with the denomination as a whole, we vigorously reject their

racism and affirm the PCA's acknowledgment of sin in opposing civil rights in the past. We are sufficiently comfortable as Presbyterians that we are not attracted to any extreme positions, such as those sometimes characterized as "thoroughly Reformed." Nor do we have patience for some more recent trends such as "new perspectives."

We have moved on in technology and physical plant. Our new building, which



provides our sanctuary, and more classrooms, is shown to the above. Also, we do provide a conference room, and offices for pastor, secretary and other staff that may be needed in our Church Office, which was once our manse. We do not provide a manse now.

*Church Office*

We stand firmly in the Southern Presbyterian tradition of collegial leadership. The pastor only has administrative function as part of the session. Anyone who feels that he is called to be the supreme authority of the congregation will not be comfortable here.

The Presbyterian tradition values an educated ministry. We do expect a minister to have completed a three-year professional program beyond his undergraduate degree. We do expect a minister to have profited from that instruction and to be able to underpin his sermons, and his life, with his knowledge of such subjects as Hebrew Old Testament, Greek New Testament, church history and systematic theology as well as an in-depth knowledge of English Bible. However, the congregation will not respond well to a lecture in Hebrew grammar offered as a sermon.

We do expect a minister to be appropriately involved in this community as he lives among us. Such involvement will be the basis of appropriate outreach and evangelism. We do feel that our congregation has sufficient needs that a solo pastor has only a moderate amount of time for formal community engagement. However, we would not want his engagement in the community to distract from his priority, which is preaching the Word and shepherding the congregation.

This congregation has a number of current and retired public school teachers and other educators who have worked for years in the public school system. In general, we have found our local school system work workable. Moreover, there is overwhelming data that private schools, who can select, and reject, candidates for matriculation do not exceed public schools, that are committed to educating all students, in even such fundamental achievement areas as basic reading and math. We have had families that choose to homeschool. That choice is respected, but any attempt to argue that homeschooling or private schools are to be preferred to public schools will not be well received. In fact, a prospective minister's having a wife who is a public school teacher or other staff would be seen as a definite plus.

Story Memorial is located in the city of Marion, a small town with a population of 7,717 per the 2020 census. It is the county seat of McDowell County, a rural and small-town county with 44,717 residents, again per the 2020 census, within its 445 square miles. It is included in the Asheville-Waynesville-Brevard, NC Combined Statistical Area. Nevertheless, the reader is cautioned that Marion has a much more small town/rural atmosphere than does Asheville, and it is too far from that city to be considered suburban Asheville.

If your background is in an urban area, a small town with its warmth, and probably a taste of nosiness, may be an adjustment. However, we believe that if you come here to love this congregation and the town of which it is a part and to immerse yourself in both congregation and town, will find yourself warmly welcomed and hardily loved back.