

## **Campus History:**

Early church records were lost. Therefore, an accurate account as to when Orange was first organized is not available. The traditional story is that on a Sunday afternoon in 1832, a number of interested people gathered under a grapevine located in the general area of the present church to organize a Methodist Church. The name “Orange” was no doubt chosen after the County of Orange.

According to tradition, the first church building was a log cabin. The cabin burned and was replaced by a frame building around 1836 –1838. The frame building was torn down, and the present sanctuary was built in 1924. Imagine it without the steeple or the front porch. Those elements weren’t added until 1971.

The Hut was built in 1934. In 1966, more education classrooms were added to the campus (the part of the building where the nurseries are located now). The modern Fellowship Hall, kitchen, offices, parlor and additional lower level classrooms were completed in 1989.

Plans for the Fellowship Hall addition began in 1985. In December 1986, an every member visitation was held with the goal of raising \$500,000 in faith commitments over a 3-year period. A total of \$336,780 was pledged. Final pricing on the project in June 1986 was \$1,005,724. A groundbreaking ceremony was held two years later.

Other than renovations to the Hut, general modifications and upkeep of the existing facilities, no other building projects have occurred on the property. The Fellowship Hall and education building opened for occupancy on July 29, 1989.

Membership at Orange grew from 276 in 1981 to 488 at the end of 1988. Membership doubled in the 2 years following the opening of the Fellowship Hall and education building. From 1989 – present, membership has held fairly steady, averaging in the 800s.

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## **The Next Chapter:**

In 2003- 2004, Orange Church programs and facilities were evaluated and research on church growth (both national and local) was performed. The results of that study were reported to the Administrative Council in late 2004, and a building team was formed and assigned the task of developing a Master Plan strategy for OUMC.

Pastor Ray Warren, Page McAdams, Rick Strunk, Cindy Parks, Fred Brooks, Bill Mann, Sharon Guerry, Diana Backus, Lynn Tocci, Steve Cranfill, Dave Davis, Ken Scheffel and Barry Kendell served on this team. At the inaugural meeting on January 11, 2005, Pastor Ray opened with prayer and instructed committee members to keep focused on Christ’s glorification, not Orange Church’s, in the mission to build, in response to and in preparation for continued growth.

In November 2005, a capital campaign (Growing With God) was conducted. The goal was \$1.8 million toward a \$3.6 million building plan (Worship Center /Education bldg.). The decision to move forward with a large Worship Center required the church to go through the town of Chapel Hill's rezoning process (a 12-18 mo. Review process that stretched into 3 yrs.).

The results of the 2005 Growing With God campaign were:

Amount pledged: \$1,115,085

Amount collected: \$950,000 (and continuing)

Cost to Design the plans and complete the Review/Approval Process: \$324,183.42  
Orange UMC received its Special Use Permit and Rezoning Approval in March 2008. A condition of the SUP was that significant work must begin by March 2012.

A Building Presentation was held on May 18, 2008 in Hanes Auditorium at Chapel Hill High School. The revised estimated building costs, the church's funding status, borrowing capacity and financial model were all explained and reviewed in a detailed power point presentation. The church's borrowing capacity was very limited. The \$6 million price tag presented at that time included retiring existing debt. A ballot to approve or decline moving forward with an ambitious 2<sup>nd</sup> capital campaign (\$4 million over 4 yrs. with construction in 2011, if \$3 million on hand) was mailed to every member and an all-church conference was held on June 1, 2008. The plan was approved.

A serious economic crisis in the fall of 2008 gave OUMC leadership pause. The cost of the building had increased considerably over time due to many design changes that the town required and due to inflationary building climate at the time. A 2<sup>nd</sup> capital campaign would be necessary to move forward. The timing did not seem right.

\$386,193.52 of the Growing with God funds was used to retire all church debt (parsonage and fellowship hall). This left a balance of \$289,986.11 (and continuing) in the capital improvements restricted fund.

In early 2010, a group of OUMC leadership looked at strategies for keeping the SUP open. Completing site work (estimated at \$1.5 million) would meet the requirement for significant work. A 2002 Special Use Permit for a Hut addition was also set to expire in 2012. It was recommended that the church perform a Capital Campaign to fund the site work and use general fund gifts to fund a Hut addition. Work began on submitting the plans for Zoning Compliance Approval in Sept. 2010. The ZCP was approved in April 2011. It cost \$70,000 to complete this process. The construction documents were put out for competitive bid, line item pricing.

March – May 2011, the capital campaign, Gather. Grow. Go., was conducted. The goal: \$1.5 million over 3 yrs. A challenge of a \$100,000 cash offering on Commitment Sunday, May 22, 2011 was presented to the congregation.

*This is your opportunity to help write the rest of Orange Church's story ...*