



SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2020 MORNING MESSAGE

THIRD SUNDAY OF AUGUST

TRANSITIONAL PASTOR TED LAND

BRADENTON, FLORIDA

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

The Reverend Doctor Thomas Cunningham Cook was the pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the 1960's. During his tenure, Fifth Avenue merged with Little Brick Presbyterian Church, which was located about two miles east on Fifth Avenue.. The Reverend William Jarvis was pastor at Little Brick.

The articles of agreement for the merger of the two churches called for Dr. Cook to become Senior Pastor, and serve until he reached retirement age. Bill Jarvis was to become Associate Pastor, and serve until he got a call to another work. Both buildings would be sold, new property would be acquired, a modern building built, and a new pastor with a proven record of new church development would be called.

I was elected a deacon at Little Brick Church when I was a student at the University of Tennessee. I think I was 17 when elected, 18 when ordained and installed. Because I could type, I was elected secretary of the Board of Deacons.

When the committee to study and plan the merger of the two churches was proposed, the membership from the two churches was not designated by name, but by office: The Clerks of Session of each church, the President of the Women's Organization at each church, the Chairmen of the Boards of Deacons, the church Treasurers, and the Secretaries of the Board of Deacons. And because I could type, I became the secretary of that committee.

Dr. Cook retired, Bill Jarvis became pastor in Cleveland, Tennessee, the Little Brick property sold to what became Greater Ebenezer Baptist Church. Dr. Martin Luther King, Senior, affectionately known as "Daddy King" preached the "Re-dedication Service."

The two congregations worshipped together for a few years in the 5th Avenue Sanctuary. When the Boards of Deacons were combined, I became the Secretary of the new Board of Deacons. Because I could type.

The Choirs merged, and Julia Smith of Fifth Avenue became the Director, and Bill Hambricht of Little Brick became the organist. I still sang in the choir. Not because I could type, for a change!

Both churches were suffering from shrinking membership in changing neighborhoods. Both had outdated buildings though with beautiful stained glass windows and rich histories.

A significant problem with both sanctuaries was that they had been built before the advent of air conditioning, and were not suited to add-on installation. At Fifth Avenue, the bricks in the building had been made from clay mined from the site of the church. That East Tennessee red clay will stain your Little League Baseball uniform permanently when you slide into home plate. But it does not make permanent bricks.

The long beam that ran under the center aisle at Fifth Avenue was a massive piece of wood, fifty feet long or longer, twelve inches by twelve inches, cut from a single tree. And it had sagged to the point that when the ushers walked down the aisle with the offering plates to the singing of the Doxology, one could feel the floor bounce. The City of Knoxville finally forbade Fifth Avenue Church from worshipping in the sanctuary until it was strengthened or replaced. Instead, we worshipped in the basement Fellowship Hall.

Your Transitional Pastor,

Ted Sand