

**Jesus said, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”
Simon replied, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”
Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.”**

John 21:16

Times for Growth
Al Bramble, 1952– 1962
Charles Wesley Garrett, 1962- 1966

From the August 29, 1951 “Church News” – “The Methodist Church is a world organization on which the sun never sets. In America it began in 1766 with the preaching of a Methodist Irishman, Philip Embury, in New York City. On December 24, 1784 some sixty Methodist preachers met in Baltimore for what is historically known as the Christmas Conference, and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. The blessing of God was on this venture and its success was immediate. Moving westward with the tides of immigration it reached Lawrence where this church was organized in 1854.”

The summer of 1952 marked the first time the national political conventions were televised live. In November of that year a Kansan, Dwight Eisenhower, with his running mate, Richard Nixon, were elected to the first of two terms as President and Vice President. The University of Kansas fall enrollment topped 6,000. The city of Lawrence had about 25,000 residents and plans were beginning for a celebration of the centennial of the birth of our city two years hence. Mary Patterson Clarke was completing her second history of First Church.

First Church had about 1200 members at the beginning of Al Bramble’s ministry. By fiscal year 1954 (June 1, 1953 through May 31, 1954) the general budget expenses had risen to \$31,410.16 while receipts were reported as \$30,391.81. Conference assessments that year were \$7,822.00. Total staff salaries were reported to be \$12,099.50. Contributions to the building fund, independent of the general budget, were \$25,504.84.



Al Bramble

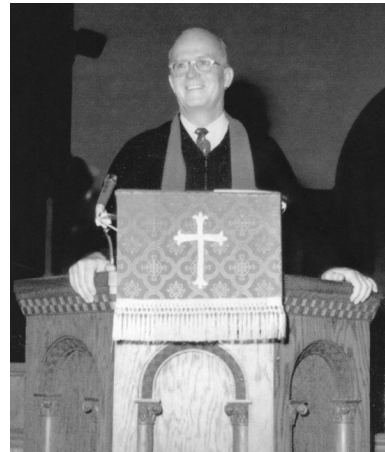
Born in 1913 Al Bramble grew up in the El Dorado, Kansas area where he graduated from high school in 1932 and community college in 1934. He completed a degree at Baker University in 1936 and went on to complete a theology degree at Boston University School of Theology in 1939.

Rev. Bramble served as pastor at Danvers, Massachusetts Methodist Church from 1940 to 1943. In Kansas he served Crawford County Larger Parish from 1944 to 1946, and at Parsons 1946 to 1952. He came to First Church in June 1952.

While Lawrence celebrated the Centennial of its founding in 1854, First Church celebrated “One Hundred Years of Methodism in Lawrence, Kansas 1854 to 1954.” The newsletter, “First Methodist Church Tower” of September 22, 1954 announced the centennial events this way. “As the Church Tower tells you, we’re 100 years old this year. So we’re celebrating our centennial with a special worship service at the 10:50 a.m. service next Sunday. Then in the afternoon, 2 p.m. at the church, an Open House and historical exhibit. At 3 p.m. an informal program at which former pastors and old friends will speak. Then at 4 p.m., our centennial tea. This is your party. We urge you to come and bring your friends.

It’s quite an achievement to celebrate 100 years of service in this community. We who live in the present and constitute the living church owe much to our forefathers. Not only have they passed on to us a building, a program, and an organization—but also a spirit, which, if we possess it, will enable us to serve the future as the past has served the present. A reading of history reveals a spirit guided by a great purpose, willing to sacrifice and dare for it, and devoted to the causes of that purpose. We know that purpose is God, known through Jesus Christ. If we, as the past, live for Him; completely devoted to His causes; willing to sacrifice and dare—then we will give to the future as we have received from the past.”

Former senior pastors Dr. Gordon Thompson, Dr. Robert Hunt, and Dr. O.E. Allison all participated in morning services on September 26 and spoke briefly at the “Historical Fellowship Service” in the afternoon. The title Reverend Al’s morning sermon that day was “Past, Present, Future.” Church membership at that time was about 1400.



Rev. Bramble in First Church pulpit

The bulletin for the Centennial Sunday service included a page history overview by Dr. Mary P. Clarke. Part of her writing included the following. “Throughout the years a number of people, nearly one hundred twenty-five, gone out from this church or the University Student work affiliated with it, into fulltime religious work as ministers, missionaries, deaconesses, Christian Association leaders, and teachers of religious education. Through personal contacts with these and others, and through numerous study groups we have much interest in the Church Around the World. In 1854 the eyes of the world were on Lawrence; in 1954 the eyes of Lawrence are on all the world.”

In October 1954 Rev. Bramble initiated Sunday evening Fellowship Services from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Recreation and cafeteria were 5-6:30 followed by age group meetings. “For adults, from 6:30-7:30 [there will be] a hymn sing and service. The Sr. MYF [Methodist Youth Fellowship] meets in Ecke Hall from 6 to 7:30 (Counselor, Irene Gutschenritter); the Jr. High MYF meets from 6:30 to 7:30 (Counselors Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Paddock); the Junior children meet with counselors Mr. & Mrs. R.L. Harris. And there is a nursery for the very young.” Under the leadership of Choir Director, Gerald Carney, and with the incentive of one-half hour University of Kansas credit for participation, the chancel choir grew to 77 members by

December 1954. There were 21 sopranos, 22 altos, 14 tenors, and 20 in the bass section. Choir rehearsal was each Tuesday at 7:10 p.m.

In January 1956 Al Bramble was joined by Associate Pastor, James J. Nabors, who had recently completed ministerial training at Vanderbilt University School of Religion. He had responsibility for the Youth Division as well as “general pastoral duties.”

By February 1956 the Methodist Men, led by Martin Jones as president, completed the construction of a library room above the Church Office. The room included a “beautiful set of shelves lining the north side made of mahogany and durably constructed.” Others working on the project were Harold Craig as chair of the library committee and Alan Fisher, Phillip White, and Olie Parsons.

In June 1956 First Church hosted the Centennial session of the Kansas Annual Conference. The church newsletter announced the event as follows:

“The Centennial session of the Kansas Annual Conference will meet at First Methodist, June 5-10, Bishop Dana Dawson presiding. The Conference begins with a Communion Service Tuesday afternoon of the 5th, at which our choir will sing.

One hundred years ago the Kansas-Nebraska Conference was organized in Lawrence. The historical significance of this event will be the theme of the service (open to the public) on Tuesday evening, at which Roy L. Smith will speak.

Roy L. Smith, widely known as one of the most effective speakers of Methodism, will be the preacher for the evening services at 7:45 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. These services, open to the public, will offer our people an unusual speaker with a great message.

Rev. Ron Meredith will be the speaker at the morning devotional services at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday through Saturday. He is a speaker you will not want to miss. Services open to the public.

Bishop Dana Dawson and Bishop Ivan Lee Holt will preach at the Sunday services on June 10. There will be two services; one at 9 a.m. with Bishop Dawson preaching and one at 11 a.m. with Bishop Holt preaching. The double services are provided to accommodate the anticipated attendance.

The business sessions of the Conference run each day from 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Visitors are welcome. Russell Mosser is the lay delegate representing our church.

The entertainment of the Conference is a tremendous responsibility for the local church. It calls for every member to give of his time and ability when called upon. Still, though a great task, it is a very rewarding experience. And when done we will be happy that it was our responsibility.”

Looking back a hundred years to Lawrence in October 1856 the Kansas-Nebraska Conference was organized. Bishop Osman C. Baker, for whom Baker University was later named, was the presiding officer. There were 13 names on the roll of that Conference including Dennis, Lovejoy, Ferrill, and Griffing, all of whom served as pastors of First Church in its early years.

In December 1957 Nettie Wismer, Chairman of the Commission on Education, announced the resignation of Ruth Ann Paddock as Director of Children's Work. Ruth Ann had served in that position for about 3 years. In her announcement Miss Wismer said, "We shall miss Ruth Ann as Director of Children's Work. She has given faithful service. Much credit must be given to her for the marvelous growth and interest in the children's work of the Church School. Our wish is that she will find much happiness and joy in her chosen field (her home) and as layman in her church." She was replaced in February 1958 by Joanne Breyfogle, who joined the staff as Children's Worker.

Two new committees were formed in 1958, the Wills and Legacies Committee, which will "assist church members with any problems they may have in disposing of material goods for the benefit of local church ...," and a Committee on Christian Vocations. Also, in 1958 First Church began planning for a major facilities expansion of a new education building. In October co-chairs of the Fund Drive, Gerald Pearson and Karl Edwards, reported collections of \$47,000 from 150 persons. That same month the Church welcomed a new visitation pastor, Rev. Hjalmar Larson.

One of the interesting activities to grow out of the Keystone Sunday School class for young married couples was a square dancing group. Helen Edwards said that in the fall of 1959 she and her husband, Karl, volunteered to help with their recreation program and suggested square dancing as an activity. "Karl purchased a few records and decided to try his luck at calling. The group seemed to make good progress and to enjoy dancing, so his interest grew and he decided to continue. His first public dance was a benefit to raise funds for the Church building program in the spring of 1960. The Barn Dancers Square Dance Club grew from this start and lasted many years."

In 1960 to make way for a new education wing Smith Wrecking was hired to demolish a brick building North of the church. That same year Rowena Pine was employed as a Lay Visitor with compensation set at \$1.50 per hour not to exceed 30 hours per week.

Late in 1960 preliminary plans for a new education wing were approved and First Church launched a new Building Fund Drive to last from December 1960 through November 1963 with a goal of \$175,000. The Church School moved into the new building in April 1962.



In 1961 Mabel Whited, formerly director of the Wesley Community Center in Dallas, TX was hired as Christian Education Director at an annual salary of \$400 per month. In 1963 Bonnie Miller replaced her as Director of Christian Education at a salary of \$6,000 per year.

Following his pastorate at First Church, Rev. Bramble served as district superintendent of the Independence District of the Kansas East Conference from 1952 to 1968, and maintained a special services relationship to the conference while working at the Kansas Office on Aging from 1969 until his retirement in 1977.

After retirement, he helped to establish the Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature serving as its president from 1984 to 1986. He also helped to establish the Warm Hearts in Lawrence, a program for heating assistance to those in financial need. He received a Substantial Citizen Award from Lawrence Kiwanis Club in 1984, and was selected as the 1986 Distinguished Older Kansan at the 11th Annual Governor's Conference on Aging. He participated in the Senior Olympics in 1989 and 1991, placing second at nationals in 1989 tennis.



**Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Al Bramble
[probably in Chicago in the mid-1960's]**

In 1962 John F. Kennedy was in his second year as President. Tensions were high between the United States and the Soviet Union. In June Charles Wesley Garrett replaced Al Bramble as senior pastor at First Church.



Charles Wesley Garrett

Dr. Garrett came to Lawrence after serving a pastorate in Chanute, Kansas. Prior to that he served the Grace Methodist Church in Winfield, and churches in Texas and New York State. A native of Texas, he received his seminary training at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, and received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Southern Methodist University. His doctorate is from New York University.

While in Lawrence, Garrett served in 1963-64 as secretary of the local Ministerial Alliance and in 1965-66 as its president. He also served a years term as secretary of the Lawrence Council of Churches. His responsibilities in the Methodist Church have included being chairman of the Committee on Family Life of the Board of Education of the Kansas Conference, Chairman of Leadership Education for Higher Education for the State of Kansas, Chairman of the Inter Conference Commission on Higher Education for Kansas. He was a member of the Kiwanis service club.



Rev. Garrett in 1963

In July 1962 First Church mortgaged "parsonage number two" at 1421 W. 2nd St. Terrace for the sum of \$7,000 to be used to remodel the parsonage at 1527 Massachusetts for the Garrett family. Rev. Garrett's annual salary was set at \$8,000 with an \$800 expense allotment.

Trinity Methodist Church, a new church in East Lawrence, was beginning its birth. First Church began seeking ways to help this new congregation. It was reported that Sunday School attendance at the new church was in the "60 to 70" range with church attendance at 20 to 30 each Sunday. Architectural drawings for a 150 member church were being prepared and Trinity was planning a fund drive for September 1962. First Church offered use of our church facilities on October 14 for a planning meeting for Trinity with the other three Methodist churches in Lawrence to help ascertain possible membership for the new church. E. J. Allison presided at the meeting. In 1963 Trinity contracted for the construction of their church for about \$46,000 with plans for completion by Christmas. In spite of support for the new church by First Church and others in Lawrence the Trinity congregation dissolved in???

In November 1962 the Official Board heard a report from Dr. William Moore, Dean of the Kansas School of Religion, who presented plans for development of the School. Dean Moore noted that the University of Kansas cannot directly support the program, but has encouraged the expansion of the School and accepts up to 25 semester hours of credit toward the completion of University of Kansas degree programs.

A January 1963 Fellowship Supper was attended by 82 persons. The programs "consisted of slides and commentary by Professor and Mrs. Tiedman, recently returned from teaching in

Japan. Rev. and Mrs. Ingram Yoder, missionaries in South America, will present the program at the February 4 Fellowship Supper.”

At the January 23, 1962 Official Board meeting “Charles Arthur called attention to the forces being mobilized to alter Kansas legislation relative to the sale of liquor. He noted our special concern for the many young people in our community by reason of the University, expressed confidence in the legislative leadership with respect to this matter, and urged support for the continuation of the present Kansas program of regulation of the sale of liquor.”

The July 1963 minutes of the Official Board reported simply “that a new organist, Mr. Dan Abrahamson, had been hired by the Music Committee.” At the same Board meeting it was reported that “Methodists along with Catholics, Jews, and others are moving to help in the construction of the new building of the Kansas School of Religion, which will be built on the present site of Myers Hall. ... There are more Methodist students at KU than at all three of the Methodist Colleges in Kansas consequently we should support the School of Religion at KU.” First Church expected to contribute about \$500 for the year, but that was later lowered to \$250 because funds were not available.

In 1964 at the request of organist, Dan Abrahamson, and with the support of the music committee the church authorized a renovation of the Russell organ at an estimated cost of \$3350. Considering that this was equivalent to nearly a half years salary of the senior pastor at that time this was quite a commitment to music ministry for First Church.

In response to recommendations by the Commission on Christian Social Concerns in the summer of 1964 the Official Board adopted the use of the following statement on equal opportunity in housing developed by the United Church Women of Lawrence:

“I believe that God created each human being in His own image and that He expects each man to respond with concern for every other human being. Discrimination is contrary to my faith and contrary to democracy. Realizing that some people are suffering and being humiliated because of their color or ancestry, I believe it is necessary to me to make my own faith known.

I believe that discrimination in housing opportunities is inconsistent with the principles of a free society, and that every person of good character, regardless of race, religion, or national origin has the right to rent, buy, or build a home which he can afford in our community.

I will accept as a neighbor any law-abiding, responsible person moving into my own neighborhood, and I will not practice racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination when I am involved in a real estate transaction.”

SIGNATURE _____
ADDRESS _____
TELEPHONE _____

