

North Charlotte Baptist Church - 1962 building designed by Wilber Kendrick Workman Warren Architects

Excerpt from a July 2018 feature article in the NoDa News:

*“When a group of mill workers at the Highland Park #3 mill first started meeting at a simple four-room mill home on North Meyers Street, which has since been razed. That house wasn’t just a place for Sunday worship, though, it also served as a night school that taught the mechanics of mill machinery and as a community gathering place. In fact, people fondly called the church “The Clubhouse.” All of that activity also meant that by 1908 the congregation had outgrown the space, so they decided to build a free-standing church on 36th Street where the Mercury NoDa now stands. Their first baptismal services were held in the old Mercury Pond across from Mecklenburg Mill, and the church regularly hosted tent revivals.*

*By 1950, it was clear that the congregation had once again outgrown their church home, and members voted to purchase eight lots on Whiting Avenue. The cornerstone of the original red brick church was laid in May 1951. By the time the first service was held at the new location in 1952, the congregation had swelled to over 500 people. It was at this time that the church changed its name to Whiting Avenue Baptist Church.*

*The new location proved to be extremely popular with the entire neighborhood—particularly the youth, who frequented its many programs. It sponsored church-league softball and baseball teams and offered billiards and other popular games of the time.*

*But this would not be the only sanctuary of the church built on Whiting Avenue. In 1962, the new Sanctuary featuring the stained-glass windows was completed next door. Its first service was on December 23, almost 54 years to the day of the first service held at the original North Charlotte Baptist Church. Whiting Avenue Baptist Church would continue to serve North Charlotte over the next four decades. By the start of the 21st Century, though, a lot had changed in the neighborhood. The mills were long-gone, many of the congregants had moved elsewhere, and few of the old-timers remained—leaving what had at one time been a vital neighborhood institution on what seemed to be its last legs. In 2001, The leaders of Whiting Avenue Baptist Church donated the building to Dr. Grigg to open a seminary, which started operating as New Life Theological Seminary in 2002.”*