

**Hopewell ARP Church 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, Session 1  
"It's Jesus's Church: Presbyterian, ARP, and Hopewell History"**

***Dr. C. N. Willborn takes us on a brisk survey of how Christ, the one Lord of the Church, and the Head and Savior of the Body, has graciously prospered and preserved the Hopewell ARP Church as part of His bride.***

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Good evening. It's good to be with you. I been looking forward to this since we settled on a date. Sometimes last year and. We my wife Carol is here with me right here 36 glorious years we've been married as of this past August the 11th and and so glad she could come with me she hadn't often get to travel with me but now that the kids are older and we only have one who's sophomore in college still living at home, he's close by us in college, so.

We get to do a little a few more things together than we used to and we're happy for that. I want to read some scripture as we get going tonight that reminds us of whose church this is anyway, you know, I teach. Three three courses in the in the required curriculum at Greenville Presbyterian theological seminary and which is where I was teaching full-time when I met your pastor James Hakeem, he came over with a group of fellows who were rumbling about South Carolina trying to be taught a little of Presbyterian history and here in the United States, there's no better place to study Presbyterian history than South Carolina, it's.

Like the Scotland of of North America and and so his professor Dr. Duncan Rankin brought him and I don't know there's seven or eight of you fellas they were all pitched into a into a van and.

I met them and got to spend two days with them. I didn't get to go to the low country of South Carolina with him because I was teaching and my schedule wouldn't wouldn't allow but it was good to meet them then and I still keep up with two of them actually Pastor Hakeem is one and Pastor Caleb Kangelosi down in Jackson Mississippi is the other we're we're we're frequent communicators, that was a good time that we spent together.

Turn with me to Ephesians four. I'm gonna read a four verses there and then we're gonna flip over a page in my Bible and read from chapter five. This sort of sets the tone for the whole weekend, but particularly for tonight and again in the morning for the first session now.

I've never I've never been to a conference with her. I was the speaker or not that this didn't happen you look at the you look at the topics that are assigned and very seldom does the speaker honor those topics and and he goes. Somewhere off and I can tell you he didn't mean to do that he had good intentions he every bit of him meant to do exactly what the pastor or the conference organizer asked him to do but as he began working on it and going down this road it just turned into something else and.

All of mine did that this time and my wife said what time do I finish anyway tonight? Okay my wife this means nothing but I'm gonna do it anyway. I told my wife driving over here. I said, you know. I've got way too much material she said what's new and I said yeah, but I don't how I really don't have a clue what I'm gonna do tonight.

I still haven't landed on exactly what how I'm gonna do this. I think I did. Right back here in the pastor study just a few minutes ago, but we're gonna find out here in a moment read with me. God's inherent invaluable word Ephesians 4 beginning in verse 1, therefore.

I the prisoner of the Lord implore you to walk in the manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called with all humility and gentleness with patience showing tolerance for one another in love being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace there is one body and one spirit just is also you were called into one hope every.

Recalling one. Lord one faith one baptism one God and father of all who is overall and through all and in all. Now keep that in mind one God and father of all who is overall through all and in all but all those one there's one Lord there's one faith there's one baptism there's this one calling chapter five verse twenty two wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord for the husband is the head of the wife we'll talk about this in the morning when we talk about the whole issue of in the context of worship and the means of grace and particularly the little subset of that, which is on on family.

Worship and private worship so we'll come back to that then for the husband is the head of the church our head of the wife as Christ also is head of the church, he himself being the savior of the body. As the church is subject to Christ so also the wives ought to be to their husbands and everything but the focus there in Paul is on Christ being the head of his church and that's the story of Presbyterians, it's the story certainly of the the Scottish church and all its iterations and it's the story of.

The Associate Reform Presbyterian Synod here in the United States as it has its its background in that in that wonderful lineage often when I go places for the first time when I was teaching the seminary they they would often I'd be preaching almost every week that I said yes anyway and I would go and they'd say now when you come we like you to do it, maybe in an adult Sunday school class.

Okay fine. And so I'd say what you want me to do do do whatever you want, but you know, You know do something on church history if you want to because most people don't know anything about church history. Okay, that's good. And occasionally, they'd say do something specific to Presbyterianism.

And okay, that's good. And so the first question I asked just. To the open group was so when did Presidentianism begin? Now, that's a rhetorical question for you because it's not a Sunday school class. But, Often. People would say. John Calvin. Well, okay sort of kind of yep. Occasionally you'd have someone who knew something more of church history and they'd say John Knox and I'd say well, okay.

I see where you're going with this. But technically Calvin and Knox and their successors really just rediscovered it. That's what that's what the Reformation was. We have to remember that the Reformation had its origins in the Renaissance period. And Renaissance means revival or recovery or rediscovery. And that's exactly what those men did.

They rediscovered all these wonderful truths that had been kind of smeared over and covered up by the late Middle Age church. And and the technically the right answer to the question, when did Presbyterian as a mechanism in the garden,

All the way back in the garden. And then you see it all the way through the Old Testament the holy issue of elders ruling God's people. And all of God's people being a covenanted bunch. You

know, they were they were a clan. And you see that exemplified particularly when things went wrong?

Because when things went wrong. Not only did the person who went wrong suffer but the whole people of God suffered because they were a covenanted band they were they were they were the Scots have it right being of that covenant told lineage they refer to their clans. And the clan is not just you know, this this this bunch of Hakeems right here, but the clan encompasses his dad Nabil and his sister and his brother and that's the whole Hakeem plan keeps going back and, It's big.

Heard in that and so his daddy. I met his daddy long before I met him and I'm not I'm not as old as his daddy but and boy when you said 20 years ago, I was really young then. I was just out of high school or something but but.

But the the Hebrews understood that they were God's plan they were his covenanted people. So you have to go all the way back to the Old Testament for Presbyterianism and then the New Testament certainly and then it started kind of fading and and there's a whole I teach a whole ancient church course that three-hour lecturer is just how biblical ecclesiology.

How Presbyterianism was lost and became Episcopalian. And the ones that rebelled against Episcopalianism became sort of kind of baptistic. And then of course Rome took it up and the Episcopacy became just the the way it was understood and it was then with Calvin that that was uncovered and the whole idea of elders and churches connected together but not by a central man figure but by a central god-man figure Jesus Christ the head of the church.

But Calvin is one line of the Reformation and one of his prime students John Knox then really took Calvin's work and and Presbyterianized it. And then one of his students Andrew Melville even did a little more biblical theology with it and gave us basically the Presbyterianism we know today from the Bible.

That's who you are. Now, I'm going to start right there though and kind of do a little quick trail up to the origin of the ARP here in the US. Okay, and then some ARP USA in general and then at the end something specific to y'all right here at Hopewell.

So I've got about 31 minutes. As he did. To do that. So, here we go. Church of Scotland was founded in 1560. There were five or six Johns that wrote the Scott's Confession of 1560. I joked with students in class. I'll say, you know you if your name was not John you didn't get to be part of the the Presbyterian party here.

It's true. There were there were six Johns and they were the the collaborators and knocks put the finishing touches on the Scots confession of 1560 that became the doctrinal basis for the Church of Scotland. And that is referred to affectionately the mother Kirk of all Presbyterians of the modern..

They also put together what they called a book of discipline. If you're familiar with their book of church order your book of church order and the BC are the book of order. I think it's just called in the ARP and it has those divisions. It has,

You know, what you what you need to do for the directory of worship. It's got the discipline portion and so the book of discipline. So you had the book of discipline and you had the Scots confession of 1560. And those became the Constitution for the Church of Scotland. Knox died.

Let me tell you something about Knox though because this is this is a biblical. This is vital to biblical Christianity, this is essential to your life as individuals as families as a church. And it's prayer. We're going to rehearse this tomorrow when we talk about worship corporate worship family and worship private.

John Knox if if you've any of you've read a biography or maybe heard anything in university about John Knox it was probably particularly at university. It was probably if you said what do you know about John Knox some feminist professor male or female has taught you his monstrous blast against the the regimen of women?

And that was during the time of Mary one of those one of those bloody Marys they were all bloody but but it was it was it was the bloody Mary one and she had just ascended the throne and people just assumed well that's when he blasted away at women and and leading in the country and women in general, which is it's not a blast at women in general, but it is a blast that women you're surfing the authority over men that they ought not to have.

And it's not politically correct, but then he didn't live now. He lived then. But that's not what he wrote. When Mary ascended the throne the best we can determine historically looking at the chronology the first thing John Knox wrote was his treatise on prayer. I've used the treatise on prayer in different contexts for prayer meetings.

Just taking part of it over a period of time and using that as a devotion time and then launching into the corporate prayer time. We did that early on in my time at Covenant Presbyterian Church back twelve years ago or so.

Do you think about that? So here's this this the woman who's notoriously wicked. She wants to bring Roman Catholicism back as the as the religion of the land or even I should say establish it as the religion of the land and Knox writes a treatise on prayer. That's the reason she said, I fear the prayers of John Knox more than 10,000 soldiers.

Presbyterians. Have always been a people committed to prayer. It's one of the things that was first lost in American Presbyterianism and in your church the Associate Reformed Presbyterian before liberal decline. Prayer meetings were lost. One of the first signs that a church is being revived and restored vitality is a praying church.

A church that prays I was told some oh no it's been probably a year ago now someone visited our church at Covenant in Oak Ridge on a Sunday morning and afterwards. I was greeting them out in the North X and they were just passing through really and I said well, we hope you enjoyed being at Covenant and and and and this person said this Joshua pray a lot.

And I said we sure do because God loves to hear his children climb up as in his lap and talk to him. Just like any good parent does. Oh, okay. And you could tell they never thought about that in their life. But that's the truth of the matter. Churches will lose two things Lord's day and prayer meetings and that's a sign of of spiritual moral decline and you'll find a denomination or an individual church soon in liberalism without those two high view of those two things.

The Lord's Day and prayer John knocks with his was a man of prayer. But they were also committed to the Scriptures. They were committed to the then Renaissance concept of advantage back to the source back to the very found. And what was the found what was the what was the source?

Where was where was the truth bubbling up? Well, it could be found in the middle.. Men and cell Aquinas and others. It can be found in the petristics the early church fathers Augustine Ambrose

Arenais and men like that, but ultimately Calvin four they all agreed we have to go to the ultimate source in the ultimate source is the Holy Scriptures.

So as they began working their way back to a biblical ecclesiology in this is something I'm going to say later on when we talk about presbyterianism and we talk about the history of Presbyterian Churches, one of the things that you're going to find and and I'm going to tell you this tonight but as you read the histories one of the things that you come to realize is this.

Almost every major period in Presbyterian Church history.

Ecclesiology is at the very heart of the debate. Whose church is it how will the church be the church and what's the church supposed to be doing? We're having that right now in my my communion the Presbyterian Church in America. We're actually having debate over what's our mission on this earth.

Now, you'd think 2,000 years after the Lord Jesus Christ declared one of the last things he said was go make disciples baptize them in the name of the triune. Godhead and teach them all that. I've commanded you. You'd think our mission would be pretty easy to figure out. And yet we look more like the like the United Way and we look more like.

The good side of Planned Parenthood and we look more like all these social and political institutions sometimes then we look like the church. And then we wonder why people are confused. And don't know what we stand for. But there's no wonder because the churches confused and doesn't speak with one mouth.

It it's got all sorts of different things. Dr. Morton Smith, who is the founder of reform theological seminary outcome and about it at the end in a few minutes. Stop to see me when I was pastoring in Birmingham several years ago before I've moved to Greenville to teach full-time.

And he brought me a bulletin from a church where he'd preached the day before. And he said look on the back of this. And I looked and I didn't know what I was looking for. I said, okay, but am I looking for doc he said look at the ministries of the church.

And I knew immediately query was going. He said we don't have ministries. The church has one ministry and is to proclaim King Jesus to people who are lost and dying and going to hell and if we multiply or add to that. Then we're telling them that the good news is something in addition to Jesus.

And that's what Paul was against in the book of Galatians. I'll never forget that little 90 second theology lesson, he gave me. And he's right. These early men were not confused about what their mission was because they had been in a church the Roman church that had been about everything but the gospel.

And even the gospel. Was about everything instead of about. Changing people's lives and bringing them into the family of God and turning them into holy and godly people. So Melville Andrew. Melville comes along. And he's knocked his successor when Knox dies. And he is a polymath he is a genius he's been all over Europe he studied with all the great minds he comes back and he is an educator and he reforms education in the in the ancient universities of Scotland and he's teaching everything he's teaching the languages he's teaching the math courses he's teaching the science courses he's teaching the literature courses, he he can do everything and knocks dies and the church comes and says we need you.

We don't need you in the university we need you leading further reform in the church we need you to devote it just to your just to the church and he gave that away and came and began working and he provided us the second book of discipline and in the second book of discipline.

Which comes in 1578 we have Presbyterianism in its purity and every book of church order that a Presbyterian has had in his or her hand since is largely from that second book of discipline that Andrew Melville gave the church now you say I don't have a con never heard of Andrew Melville.

Most of you heard of John Knox right he said that name surely and but Melville is another he's he's one of those we don't know. I'll tell you how important and he was during the during the the the 19th century Reformation in Scotland when the church the free Church of Scotland came into existence in 1843 with Thomas and all of his his buddies.

You know what the impetus was for that reformation was a series of biographies that had been written by a gentleman and he had written oh he'd gone back and discovered all these old men from earlier John Knox Andrew Melville and the like he wrote a volume on the life of John Knox it's about that thick.

McCree.

Then wrote a Biography on Andrew Melville. And you know how much it more important he thought Melville was than Knox about three times more important. He wrote two volumes of biography on Melville and each volumes about that pick. So each volume just about doubles what he wrote on John Knox.

By the time he finished you're like whoa, Andrew Melville was important. Now, here's a little story Melville and this gets to the kingship of Christ. Hmm. I knew I've had to way too much. But. Not to eat but too much material for the time. Melville. Had more than one encounter with King James.

The sixth. Of Scotland who would later when Queen Elizabeth died in 1604. King. Jimmy of Scotland would become King James the first of the United Kingdom.

King James owned the position of kings and queens of that day and that was Rex Lex the king is the law.

Melville didn't agree with that. Melville held a view that the Bible presents and we hear it everyone swallow US President will throw it around George W. Bush was particularly fond of talking about the rule of law. That we have to obey the rule of law. We are people of the rule of law.

And Drumelville understood that. And so there was this first occasion then the second occasion where King James was misusing his his authority and his his Rex Lex viewpoint. And Andrew Melville's in his presence at one time and this eventually got Melville kicked out of the country and he lived his latter years in in France in exile.

South of France not a bad place to be exiled if you're going to be exiled. And on one encounter I don't have the quote with me, but it goes something really close to this. He said to King James taking him upon his the sleeve of his blouse. He said.

There are two kingdoms. There is. The kingdom of this land of which you're the king and of which we are subjects. Then there's the church. Of which King Jesus alone is the ruler. Of which you are a subject.

His whole point was don't confuse. You're not the king of the church. Ever since Henry the eighth. English and English kings had taken that position. They were the head of the church. And Melville was reminding him no, there's only one head of the church. And when it comes to the church, King Jesus is the head and you're a subject just like I am.

And you have to submit to that. Now that's going to that's going to be vital to all Presbyterian history. It doesn't matter which branch that comes out of Scotland and lands anywhere in the world that concept right there is essential. It's a core belief of Presbyterians that there is one king and there are two kingdoms.

There's the kingdom the civil magistrates and there's the kingdom of King Jesus the church the household of faith. Now keep that in mind because it's going to come back around. Now 1638 comes along and then 1643 and two important thing happens the covenants the national coven of 1638, that's going to become important in your history and the ARP.

The National Covenant comes along. Alexander Henderson is important about that one. And then 1643. On the very beginning of the Westminster assembly meeting in London and they have five very important men from Scotland who don't have a right to vote, but they've been allowed to come down because of the solemn league and covenant that was enacted.

And so they come came down and those five men had an ordinar amount of influence on the Westminster assembly and in the products of the Westminster assembly the Westminster confession of faith the larger and shorter catechisms which are the doctrinal basis for your congregation here. Further your church the AARP and for all Presbyterians everywhere.

And so that covenanting concept they believed that the king. In order to be sworn in or a queen should covenant to promote and acknowledge. The doctrine of the church. That they had an obligation to the church. Now that all changed in 1689 when actually a wonderful cold regents come in helped a lot of people especially Presbyterians, William and Mary.

And they declare that to active toleration 1689 the glorious revolution breaks out, but one thing causes problem, they won't sign the covenant. Now the Presbyterian should have already known it didn't really much matter if you signed the covenant or not if you're a king. They just had a bad experience with King Charlie too.

King Charlie too after his daddy had to gone away. And then Oliver Cromwell had come and done some bad things for Presbyterians and then all the Presbyterians are thrilled that King Charles will sign the covenant and he's on his way back to London and as he crosses from Scotland into England, he signs it and then he gets to London and he tears it up.

And he goes to war against Presbyterians and you've got the whole issue of the 1662 active uniformity and Presbyterians are put out their church buildings on one day some 2,000 reformed ministers lost their churches. And England Scotland that's not a big circumference that's not a big plot of land but just to give you something of an idea that'd be like this coming Sunday every PCH in the United States being closed down and locked up and the congregation is not being able to enter their worship halls.

That's a bunch of churches and a bunch of ministers with that leads into the whole covenanting concept and the and them deciding they'll meet under the trees the meat and barns the meat and haulers wherever they have to meet to keep the Lord's day and honor King Jesus and keep his church which Jesus has promised the gates of hell, including kings and queens will not prevail against her.

That's important factor. That's also part of your story immediate story now. I'm going to get to that okay, not in the US quite yet, that'll come in a moment a real fast moment. But while the ARP is not organically connected to Scotland. It is connected to Scotland like every Presbyterian is I've already told you that.

But the name comes from Scotland and the early ministers came from Scotland and the early ministers came from a particular church in Scotland the Church of Scotland that I mentioned earlier began 1560, it runs continuously through all that stuff. I told you about the Covenanting the Westminster assembly the 1689 glorious revolution, it works all the way through Queen.

Anne's ugly tenure and her reenacting the patronage act. That's a big issue. Hang on to that. If you don't know what it is, I'm gonna tell you in a minute. The patronage act because this is something that has troubled the church always it's part of the reason the church in Scotland existed.

It's the reason the seceder church or the Associate Presbyterian is going to exist and therefore the associate part of your name comes into existence. As the reason the preacher in Scotland exists today because of the patronage issue. I'm not going to tell you what it is yet. Just hang on because something else happens before we can even get to that in the 17th late teens into the 20s, we have a we have a dot criminal curfew in the Church of Scotland.

A man who's teaching at one of the universities teaching divinity is brought upon charges rightly so because he was a rank Armenian. In fact, he was such a rank our minion that he was probably a Pelagian. That means he didn't believe man's dead in a sense. That's enough. There's more to that but if I if I say that that's enough for everyone here to know that's bad.

Because if you're not dead in your sins, you don't need to save your. Well, they'd say, oh yeah you do you need someone to give you a good example how to live so that you don't fall into bad habits. That's the basic simple superficial pelagian position. If you want to know a famous pelagian here in the United States Charles Grantison Finney, the father of modern evangelicalism is the is the arch pelagian of the 19th century.

So this guy comes up on charges. And at the same year there's also another case from a Presbytery concerning vows that they're adding on to ask men questions to be sure they're getting to certain theological suspicions that are in the church. Now at that general assembly, the professor at the University was.

Basically acquitted and commended for his work and sent back to teach the young men divinity. At that same time. The assembly said this other deal is wrong. And the other deal was this. It was a simple question being asked by actor artery Presbyterian in the church of Scotland and the question went like this and I'm not going to read you the question because the questions really can confusing.

It all not to be but the question was this do you believe that a man can improve himself and make himself fit for Jesus to save? That's the essence of the question. Now Maurice seeing people go. No. Dead men can't make themselves more fit, right? You ever seen a dead man move over in the casket.

I know it sounds kind of morbid and dark but I I like.



I'm a William. Faulkner. Admirer. So that tells you that I don't mind dark things and and and and but that makes the point doesn't it? Dead people don't move. What you want for supper? They don't care.

So, That was the question plain and simple do you believe a man can improve himself enough for Jesus to save him?

That same assembly that let the Pelagian go back to work teaching young divinity students said. They can ask that that's a bad question that's off limits and that's wrong, they're suggesting that Christians aren't supposed to be holy. You're like, whoa. They're not suggesting. Christians shouldn't be holy. They're suggesting heathens can't be holy before they're saved.

Well, a group of men one by the name of Ebenezer Erskine one by the name of James Fisher another one William Moncrief and one by the name of Thomas Boston and a few others said who we got a problem. We got a bigger problem than the Archer Roger Presbyterian even knew.

And so they start circulating this book to help sort of sort out some of the problems. It's called the Mayor of Modern Divinity is written in the 17th century. It's an old book been forgotten, it's not even in print and James Hogg one of the men says, hey, let's republish it.

So they republished it well guess what? General assembly of 1720, two years later says hmm bad book. This is an antinomian book. They banned it. It's still banned in the Church of Scotland today. First time I heard Sinclair Ferguson talk about this he said he was a minister in the Church of Scotland and he said I can't recommend that you read the matter of.

I'm a minister in the Church of Scotland. And it's banned but I can recommend. That you read volume seven of Thomas Boston's collected writings. Which is the Mayor of Modern Divinity. In its totality with Boston's annotations to help clarify a few things and explain some things further. Well this led to what was called the marrow controversy and I'm gonna be over simplistic now because my time is almost up and I've not even got to the Americas yet.

They were. They were told to not teach this doctrine. They filed a formal protest. General assembly said shame on you and that was the end of it. So the Marilyn men thought okay, well we can still preach and teach and Boston's got his new addition of the marrow out we're fine.

Until 1731, so get remember, that was 1720 so 11 years creeps along and. That whole marrow things very complicated and good godly scholars disagree on exactly what was going on in the church of Scotland what all the problems were or weren't but one thing was for sure. They had trouble with the plain gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because the marrow modern divinity is just plain simple. Covenant theology. 101. God has covenanted with the people from before time. He sent his son. Jesus to save his people from their sins and that good news is to be proclaimed to everyone everywhere so that he might save his people through the means of preaching the gospel, that's all that was about.

Now these men knew Ebenezer Erskine particularly was very he was keenly aware that we had a gospel problem in the Church of Scotland and yet they continued to preach and teach. And stay in their church here's the straw that brought the camels back though that led to the seceder movement that's this 1731 the government re-uped the patronage act and the general assembly of the Church of Scotland approved it and commended it.

Now here's what the patronage act was that churches shall not call the minister. But the patrons of the community will. And the patrons. Simply had to be. Protestants.

Now in Scotland, that meant the wealthy were usually Episcopalians or Anglicans Church of England. So we wait minute. You're telling us that the congregation. Doesn't have the final vote on who will be their minister preaching on the Lord's Day and leading them in Catechism and. That's right. It could be in Episcopalian.

It could be an Anglican. Whoever the wealthy moneyed man of the community is. He would have the final say on who the minister was. Well, I just told you the general assembly said, okay. All right, that's huh. Well, Ebenezer Erskine William Moncrief. James Fisher and other said no, it's not okay.

This is King Jesus as church and we will not let the king of the of the kingdom usurp the authority of King of the Church. So, they they left. And they formed the Associate Presbytery 1737, they form the associate Presbytery Synod or Presbyterian Senate, okay.

So now they're no longer part of the Church of Scotland. They have seceded. They've stepped out and said we're the real church. 1743 comes along and another church is formed. That's the that's the relief church or the reformed church the reform Presbytery. That's two men who couldn't be in the seceder church because they had two strong of you of covenanting.

They still insisted that since the church of Scotland and these seceder ministers didn't believe that the king or queen had a right over the church. They couldn't be part of the succession. So they started their own church. Now, they had not been members of a church or a Presbytery since way back in six.

Teen eighty five.

All right, so now we've got the Associate Presbyterian. We got the reform Presbytery. Now jump ahead 1782 comes along and there's a whole bunch of Presbyterians all up and down by this time all up and down the Eastern Seaboard and. Particularly up in the New England area lower New England and Mid-Atlantic States Presbyterian Emmett is particularly heavy.

And you've got both the associates and you've got the reform up there.

And now they're in this country and you don't have the King Queen thing. And I'm oversimplifying but forgive me for that for time and it's really not all that important at the end of the day for me anyway. Some people still take it pretty seriously. The reformed group decided hey no reason we can't join with our seceder brothers here because.

Declaration of independence we're free, we're not under the king queen and new country in the making excuse me, so let's let's just get together and so they did so then you have the reformed and the associates becoming the associate reform. Thus your name. 1820 this church was established during that period of the joint associate reformed.

Now. An 1822, two years later. The southern Synod breaks off. From that joint venture okay and now you've got the associate reform but in the south and it's distinct from that associate reformed up there and. That's all you need to know. For this much.

That's how you came into existence as a denomination of churches. Now I just mentioned this church comes into existence in 1820 as remarkable, isn't it? I take tours of students and friends of the seminary and our friends to old church locations and buildings and South Carolina the oldest Presbyterian Church building in the south is down on Johns Island South Carolina, it was built in 1719, so it it predates your building of 1854 quite a bit.

But it's still pretty remarkable isn't it you think about it what this building has been through and and hasn't been burned down yeah. I suspect it's probably been burned in part from time to time because there were other days of the old potbelly stoves back there someplace and a lot of the buildings.

I take people into down in the low country of South Carolina, you can still see the whole up there in the ceiling where the pot belly pipe used to go out into the sky. And as you probably know I couldn't find anything on this but a lot of those old buildings were used to stable horses during the the revolutionary war and again during the war between the states of this building didn't exist during the revolutionary war, but it did during the war between the states and there was a lot of activity right around this area, so I suspect you stable horses at some time in this in this building it was always interesting to me that the soldiers would camp out.

On the grounds and they put their their horses and tack and in the church buildings. But I'm not sure what that says about them, but nevertheless that happened. Now, let me just give you a few names and then I'm gonna real quickly get to something important Isaac Greer is the organizing pastor of this church and of the first and and this church then became part of the first Presbytery.

Of the Associate Reform Presbytery Senate of North and South. Greer was one of those men, you know. I'm sure we have a few men like this. I'm sorry. I'm probably not man enough to be a man back then but you know, I I read the lives of some of these men and I'm like, oh goodness.

Those men were really. They were real men. Greer traveled all over the southeast Florida, Georgia Alabama Mississippi and came through here and started this church and then got it going and left and went on and then a and built they built a log building first and then then they come to Robert Galloway is the first regular pastor this congregation had and was pastor when they built another building after the log when burned down like they usually did.

In 1839, then it burned down later on and then this, Building as I understand from the best. I can tell from the Quranology, that's the sequence. This is the third building that came along. And has been here ever since which is still remarkable. Like many of the Presbyterian churches in the South during the Anabellum..

Slavery was an issue. And slaves would have worshiped. I you know, most the galleries were either built originally or added to the older pre-existing buildings for the slaves. So they could have joint worship and the slaves would come in usually very steep stairs. I don't know how you access that.

I haven't got to see that yet, but you go up very steep stairs and access the galleries and, And the the associate and reform Presbyterian Church, like many took a position that the slaves should be treated better than they were. And they certainly need to be part of our churches and they certainly need to be evangelized and they need to be catechized and you have that all over the south and you have some pretty remarkable stories of men who catechized and taught and preached to and established preaching stations around the the the farm country and also built buildings to accommodate them for worship.

And argued for families slaves men, women married not to be broken up not be sold. Children not to be sold from their families. For marriages to be until death do us part. Now. Unfortunately as the war years approached and politics became more hostile a lot of people lost sight.

And a lot of things happened that should have never happened. The bottom line is there's no excuse that great men didn't have better sight concerning slavery in the South but not just the South. It was other places as well. We could talk about this a long time. It's one of those topics people don't generally because it can be quite incendiary.

And I find frankly most people don't know enough about that antebellum context historically to talk about it intelligently. But that would really help. Particularly in days like this in which we live. So we can do that off the record unofficially around the count fire later tonight or tomorrow if you like but nevertheless, you know, it's the untold stories that need to be told but when you try to tell them you're not politically correct and that's a sad part of our current.

Social and political scene and that's all I'm gonna that's his political as I'm gonna get. Now. This church. Like all Presbyterians was committed to. Psalm singing. And you probably know that your church the ARP was committed to Psalm singing exclusive song singing until 1946 1946 something interesting happened. Not unique but interesting and it was the culmination of what Nathan Hatch in 19th century historian has called the democratization of American Christianity.

Bottom line is and 1946 the ARP decided, you know, the people want to sing hymns. They love victory in Jesus and they love and they love and if we don't let them sing them we're going to lose them to those churches that do. So they changed their constitution and they adopted a new hymnal that had Psalms and hymns and the instruction was given to Presbyteries to the local churches but while the hymns are here, we shall henceforth see a majority of Psalms in our worship services.

Well, you know about how long that lasted. Until somebody complained about couldn't we sing three hymns and one song. Cause you know those hymns just have a you know, they sound like the state fair and the county fair and you know wouldn't it just be wonderful to see more hymns.

And so they did. Now the fact is since the days of Calvin hymns had not been a part of Presbyterian worship. I realized there's a hymn that appears in our hymnal knowing the PCA, I greet the whom. I sure deemer art and it is a beautiful piece of poetry.

I like it. The music was written by Louis Burgess. Who was one of the one of the tune writers for Calvin and Geneva. So people go oh Burgess Geneva due to Calvin wrote that thing. And for years it appeared in his hymnal as John Calvin. And his buddy Louie.

But his historians looked at it, they're like, no. I didn't. And it was not in the Geneva Salter ever.

The only thing that appeared outside the Psalms in Calvin's Salters ever were the apostles creed the Lord's Prayer. And the Ten Commandments. And Simeon's song. But by 1562 edition of the Geneva Salter only Psalms appeared and that became the standard for Scottish Presbyterians and it was the standard for most Presbyterians until.

The 1900s early and it still the position of our reform Presbyterian Church North America the Covenant after branch that y'all were tied into up in the north for that early part. It's still part of the free Church of Scotland, although they do hymns now to and there are some churches Scotland churches that still do and then there you have spotted churches within the PCA in the OPC and the ARP that only do Psalms still.

But that gives you a hint into something that happened in 1940s, that was symptomatic. It's not a cause but it was symptomatic. I'm gonna be real fast with this. It was symptomatic of a liberalizing of the church. Let me jump forward. The ARP by 1970 was a liberal denomination.

No way to cut around that or get through that. I don't tell you on the human side what happened to change it. We know ultimately God did. And it's a beautiful story of what's taking place in what is taking place in the ARP right now. But here's what happened.

A group of men will just say 1970 for a nice round figure. A group of men said Erskine seminary stinks. We can't trust it. We're not going there. Our church needs ministers who know the Bible and believe the Bible and will preach the Bible. And they left their homes in the Carolinas largely and went to Jackson, Mississippi, and attended a new seminary called Reformed Theological Seminary which was started by a bunch of Southern Presbyterians out of the PCUS, another branch.

And they were educated there. And when they finished they finished right about the time that the PCA was for me in 1973. And those men included John Carson and Jamie Hunt and Chuck Wilson and two men that I admire greatly, Charles and the Todd twins as they're called, Charles Todd and his brother Calvin Todd, and there were several others.

They're all finishing and they sit down with Dr. Smith, Morton Smith, who was the founder of RTS, the founder of Greenville Presbyterian Seminary, and said, Dr. Smith, we think we want to go in the PCA when it starts. With you men. And Dr. Smith said, no, boys. I got this story from John Carson and from Morton, it agrees on both sides.

So, I think it's good anecdotal history. No, boys, and he called them boys because they were boys. Boys, no. You need to go back home to your church. And you can, you can in God's with God's mercy and grace, you can change your church. Some of you need to go on and get PhDs so that when there are openings at the seminary and the college, you are qualified because the ARP's big on taking care of its own and hiring its own, still is by the way.

John Carson went on. And got a PhD and went to pastoring the church in King's Mountain, and then all of a sudden, lo and behold, they need a new president at the seminary and the college, and John put his name in the hat as they say, and he was the only ARP son to apply.

And even though they were other qualified men, more liberal, more suited for the situation back then, John got it, just like Dr. Smith said he would. And that began something of an evening effect. In due west. And then these other men stayed in their pulpits, Charles. Todd just retired three years ago from Salem, out in the Memphis area. Charles Todd went there from RTS and stayed 43 years and saw that church reformed from a Baptist Armenian Church.

To a reform church, confessional church.

And that's how this has happened over the last 30 years. For fit, almost 50 years now of gradual leavening and gradual reform and bringing the ARP back from what everybody considered in the sixties, from liberalism. Now, there's still issues. I can say that because I also say in the PCA we got bigger issues than you have.

Larger issues is the proper English word. But that's your story, and when you step back and you look at your like, wow, that's a good story. That's who we are. You mean we have our John Knox, is one of our fathers, yeah. Andrew Melville, yeah. I didn't even mention Samuel Rutherford, the author of *Lex Rex*, which most American historians credit with being one of the seminal documents of our Republic, but it was written in Scotland by Presbyterian Minister.

That's why King George. Referred to this little uprising over here as that Presbyterian revolt over in the colonies. We have quite a heritage by God's grace and mercy. And I tell the students

every year when I start the ancient church course and then two years later when I'm doing the modern church course, one of the lessons you're going to learn.

Is this. This is Christ's Church. Because if it weren't and if he hadn't said the gates of hell should not prevail they would have. Because the church is full of sinners. Satan wouldn't had the fool with us. We'd have ruined this thing a long time ago, just all these sinners that pass through the doors of the church, but Christ is king.

He's the head and he preserves his think about it. Paul said that we're the bride of Christ.

It's remarkable, isn't it? We're the bride of Christ a husband's how much do you love your bride? Christ loves us the church. Exponentially more. That's the reason we exist today and that's the reason we will be victorious. We're going to win. The meek shall inherit the earth not a little strip of land in the Middle.

East the whole stinking thing. Is his for us. Father thank you. I pray that you'd use this for these folks encouragement and to challenge them to to keep the faith and to keep the gospel in their hearts and on their lips in Jesus' name. Amen.