

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

Fall 2026 Newsletter



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See Page 4 for information on the Fall October 10 Meeting

BROWNSON MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SOUTHERN PINES

Brownson Presbyterian Church, founded in 1936, is a daughter church of Bethesda P.C. in Aberdeen. By the mid-1750s Highland Scots had moved up the Cape Fear River Valley and established three kirks: Long Street, Bluff and Barbecue in the Cross Creek (now Fayetteville) area. Within a few years Scot settlers would reach the Pee Dee River. Before the Revolution the Episcopal Church was the official state church, state supported and the only denomination that could use the name church. Presbyterians, and other sects, typically used the term meeting house to describe embryonic churches.

BETHESDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bethesda P.C. was recognized in 1788 as the Church at the Head of the Rockfish. The Rockfish Creek emerges from a spring in Eastern Southern Pines and flows to the Cape Fear River near Grays Creek south of Fayetteville. From probably an original brush arbor, two successive log cabins led to the Civil War-era structure that still stands. In the early 1800s, Bethesda maintained a classical school named Solemn Grove. Old Bethesda and the current church in Aberdeen are shown below.



Visit <https://ncphsociety.org>

FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ABERDEEN

Faith Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1882, after the Civil War, by Black members who had worshipped in the Old Bethesda P.C. There a cemetery and a thriving community developed around the church. A manse, homes for members and the Sarah Lincoln Academy (named after Lincoln's stepmother) were constructed. Members were schoolteachers, loggers, carpenters, blacksmiths and other skilled tradesmen. These freedmen and women were an important part of the growth of Blue's Crossing, now Aberdeen. The academy closed in 1932 when public school became available for Black citizens. The congregation was dissolved in 1990. The Friends of Faith, a 501(c)(3) corporation, now operates the renovation and preservation of the landmark church, which has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places within Aberdeen's Historic District. Visitors will especially enjoy the renovation in progress and the preserved longleaf heart pine pews and interior.



SCENES FROM THE SPRING 2026 NCPHS MEETING

The Spring Meeting was held in the Wilmington area. Three events comprised the program: the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Moores Creek at the Moores Creek National Battlefield, the dedication of the Scottish Immigration Memorial Cairn at Brunswick Town, and a visit to Black River Presbyterian Church at Ivanhoe. It was a rainy day at Moores Creek and we joined the Scottish Society of Wilmington for a barbecue lunch. A crowd of 200 attended the immigration memorial ceremony on a bluff overlooking the mouth of the Cape Fear River, the site of at least 20,000 Scottish Highlander immigrants disembarking straight from Scotland. A visit to the 1740 Black River P.C. concluded the weekend. Black River was founded by Scottish Highlanders from the Isle of Arran in the Scottish Hebrides.



NCPHS members at the Scottish Immigration Memorial Cairn at Brunswick Town

Agenda for Fall NCPHS Meeting
Meet at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Southern Pines

10:00 a.m. Greetings and Business Meeting

11:30 a.m. Scottish History Lecture, Katherine Fort, Wilmington
Katherine is President, Scottish Society of Wilmington

12:30 p.m. Lunch TBA

01:30 p.m. Tour and History of Old Bethesda Presbyterian Church
in Aberdeen (hosted by Rev. David Priddy)

02:30 p.m. Tour and History of Faith Church, Aberdeen (hosted by
Rev. David Hudson and Julie Formanski)

03:30 p.m. Farewell

Registration for NCPHS Meeting on Saturday, October 10, 2026

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Name of Home Church: _____

Registrations: ____ @ \$25 = \$ ____

Dues if included: Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership \$125: \$ ____ Total enclosed \$ ____

Please send this form by **Oct 1** with a check payable to NCPHS to:

NCPHS
PO Box 20804
Raleigh, NC 27619-0804