Brief History of Christian Science in Chattanooga

*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils:*

*freely ye have received, freely give. (Matthew 10:8)*

 *...a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master,*

*which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.*

*(Manual of The Mother Church, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 17:8)*

Our church, like all Christian Science churches around the world, is a branch of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, MA. Our pastor is the Holy Bible and *Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. With no professional clergy, Readers are elected from the membership to conduct our weekly services held on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening—where everyone is welcome.

Christian Science was first introduced in Chattanooga in 1886. By the latter part of 1887, a small group of individuals and families began meeting in homes and by 1891 larger public spaces in downtown Chattanooga were used for regular church services. The church was chartered as First Church of Christ, Scientist by the Tennessee State Legislature in 1897. By 1899, Sunday services, consisting of Bible Lesson Sermons published by The Christian Science Publishing Society, were held at the old Second Presbyterian Church, at the corner of West 8th and Chestnut Streets, where a Christian Science Reading Room was also located.

As the church grew, property at McCallie Avenue and Houston Street was purchased for a church building in 1910 and in 1911, Second Church of Christ, Scientist was chartered. However, the two churches combined again as one in 1925, holding services at 312 (now 612) McCallie Avenue. As the church flourished through the decades, a new building was erected on the site in 1940, a Sunday School and nursery extension added in 1951, and adjacent property purchased for parking in 1955.

For many, a Christian Science Reading Room is often the first point of introduction to Christian Science. Our local Reading Room has been in operation since 1891, providing a quiet place to read, study, ask questions, and purchase Bibles, the Christian Science textbook *Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, and other authorized Christian Science publications. It is currently located in our church lobby.

Public lectures on Christian Science were held in Chattanooga as early as 1898 and have continued ever since with at least one lecture given annually by a member of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship. Whether in-person, by broadcast or online, each lecture is a gift of healing to our community.

With healing at the forefront of our church, members from all walks of life have served as Christian Science practitioners, nurses, lecturers, and writers. Since 1899, innumerable verified testimonies of healing from Chattanooga church members have been and continue to be recorded in Christian Science periodicals published internationally by The Christian Science Publishing Society and in Wednesday evening testimony meetings.

We invite you to join us.