



REV. CLAUDE D. WARDLAW

Rev. Wardlaw was guest preacher at Central before he had any idea that some day he would be its appointed pastor. His former church was Northeast Presbyterian, in Kansas City, Missouri. As a contribution to the war effort, he received leave of absence to engage in organizational and promotion work for the Defense Service Council of the Presbyterian Church, South. His duties brought him to Little Rock and in close touch with Camp Robinson.

In the words of one of his blunt-spoken church officers, Rev. Wardlaw is a preacher with his feet on the ground! He has pride in his church, constructive ideas, and a way with people that gets things done. Much has been planned, under his guidance for the physical improvement of the church when conditions permit. An increased membership and a steady attendance speak for the spiritual side of Central. Rev. Wardlaw is an Arkansan, born at Warren.

A man of subtle and sweeping imagination, he has a fine appreciation for the things that other people do. Though slight of build, he is forceful; and in the pulpit his stature grows and grows, towering over his subject and filling the auditorium with the soundness of his theme. Rev. Wardlaw came to Central in October, 1942.

Central caught the spirit of the hustling Yanks and the awakening Southern boys, and began figuring the cost of a new church. "A large family needs a large home," remarked Dr. Lawson, mindful of his own active family of five children, motherly Mrs. Lawson and grandmother Goodwin, all of whom were co-operative in the work of their adopted church. "And Central is going to have a big family," he prophesied. As a matter of fact, Central's membership more than doubled during his regime.

The war was over and building costs were dropping when ground was broken for the new church as you see it now. J. H. Donaldson, W. A. Treadway and R. W. Porter were the trustees named at a congregational meeting on December 21, 1921, to arrange for a loan of \$25,000 "to pay for and complete the erection of its church building on Lot 6 and the south half of Lot 5, Block 8, etc." On October 15, 1922, the congregation authorized an additional loan of \$5,000 to finish the job.

The members of the parent church had their anxious moments while Central was taking root, but they also had capable leaders—the Porters, Beatties, Campbells, McLaughlins, Simpsons, Engstroms, Herds, Jenkinases, Surtles, McKees, Wrights, Beadles, and others, who guided it through the critical stages of early growth.

Later, before moving on, the Founding Fathers gave their wealth of vision to new leaders—the men and women who crystallized their dreams in the handsome new structure of today. It is not likely they foresaw the changing conditions that were to bring similarly anxious moments to the courageous church officers who assumed the duty of liquidating a sizeable debt on one hand, and meeting current expenses (and the disbursement of benevolences) on the other.