HISTORY
of
ARAGON METHODIST CHURCH
A SHORT HISTORY OF ARAGON METHODIST CHURCH
1907-1961

A faithful committee of fifteen members of the Aragon Methodist Church have worked tirelessly and efficiently so that this written record of the history of Aragon Methodist Church might be prepared in time for the fiftieth anniversary which will be celebrated on July 15, 1951. A great deal of the early record comes directly from the memory of some of the older residents of the community and may be in error on specific dates and figures, but the essential information is correct. Some of the persons who have helped in securing and preparing this record are: Mr. and Mrs. Sam Williams, Miss Rachel Williams, Miss Gladys Gaines, Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Gurley, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams, Freeman Kilpatrick, Mrs. Susie Jackson, Mrs. Winfield Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Felt Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Felt Dunn, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Gaines, Miss Eva Statham, and Rev. and Mrs. Fletcher Andrews, the present pastor.

At the North Georgia Annual Conference of 1900 the Rev. W. A. Harris, then pastor of the Rockmart-Bethlehem circuit, made known the fact that a large industrial development was being built at the point at which the Seaboard and Southern Railroads came together. This community had been named Aragon, and it was upon his suggestion that plans were made for the immediate organization of the Aragon Methodist Church. Between conference and the first service the mill company then operating in Aragon also requested of the bishop that a preaching place be set up and until such a building could be constructed services were held on the second floor of the company store building. The first services were probably held in the Spring of 1901. The only record we have of those early members includes seven names but others probably belonged also. Those seven were: Mrs. M. M. Shaw, Wiley Robinson, George Burnley, Mrs. J. E. Robinson, Mrs. Viola White, Wesley Burnley, Mascomb Chatrell and G. L. Brock.

The first church building was located on the highest ground in the village on Aragon Road about 21/2 miles North of Rockmart near the spot where the present building now stands. The first structure was a wooden frame building with a small steeple. It was heated by two oil-bellied stoves. It was built in 1901 and the records show that G. L. Brock was the first Superintendent of the Sunday School.

The first Pastor to serve the church was Rev. J. Q. Watts who was serving Lindale circuit and preached in Aragon two weeks' ends a month. He preached on Saturday nights and twice on Sundays to ever increasing crowds. The Presiding Elder was Rev. W. F. Glenn. During the ministry of Rev. Watts Rev. Kellett preached a revival in which at least ten persons joined the church. Among these were Mrs. G. L. Brock and Miss Eva Statham (who is still on the active church roll). That year there were 275 members on Lindale circuit but no record of how many of those belonged in Aragon.

Brother Watts was followed by Rev. R. F. Read. At this time (1906) the Gaines family joined the church. Brother A. M. Gaines served in almost every capacity from Superintendent of the Sunday School to janitor. His children are still active in the work of the church. Brother Read was paid the then handsome salary of $400.00 for his year 1905-06.

The history of any church can be recorded easiest by an outline of its pastors, but for the purpose of this record as much as possible will be said concerning individual members of the church. It was in these early days the Bro. Gaines called on the members at prayer meeting for verses of Scripture and one loyal soul, who was surprised at being called on at all is reported to have said "You know Brother Gaines, I can remember chapters and chapters, but right now I can’t think of a single verse!"
The first mention of music in the church was of the old reed organ and of the many people who played it... Among these were Miss Rose Wingard, Miss Mary Randall and Miss Mabel Gaines. The minister who served during 1906-08 was Rev. L. F. Huckaby. The Rhodes and Wingard families moved their memberships to this church during his ministry. Also joining the church about 1908 were the Randalls and the Herrings. One of the members recalls of Brother Huckaby that "he was a consecrated and devoted man but he had two children who nearly tore the place apart." Such is the burden so often the case with the preacher's family. Rev. Huckaby is also remembered for his wonderful singing.

In 1909 a horse-trading preacher was sent by the bishop to Aragon. Rev. Ledbetter was presiding Elder, and R. P. Tatum was the preacher. Aragon had been included in the Polk Mission and the pastor lived in Cedartown. It is said that frequently he went back to Cedartown on a different horse from the one he came with. However, we hasten to mention the first really big revival which was held in the Aragon church during the ministry of Bro. Tatum. Charlie Tillman was the preacher and twenty-five new members were received on profession of faith during the two week period. Immediately plans were made to make Aragon a Station church. Mr. Gaines was Supt. of the Sunday School during this period of growth.

The whole community was affected by the change in ownership of the mill. Walcott, White and Campbell sold out to A. D. Julliard, the present owner, in 1910. Mr. Redmond came as Superintendent and J. R. Turner came as pastor. As he began his ministry one remark would show some light on his ministerial abilities, Mr. Redmond is quoted to have said "I can manage every person in Aragon but that Methodist Preacher"... Brother Turner did such a fine job and was so well loved by the people of Aragon that he served this church for five years, a record once equalled but never yet surpassed. Among the things remembered by various people of this five-year period are first that G. L. Brock, a very active member had four of his children baptised in these years, Fred, Henry, Corrie, and George. Brother Turner crocheted for the members of his Sunday School class a number of table coverlets some of which are still among the treasured items of those who still live in this community. It is said that both men and women cried when Brother Turner was moved, he had endeared himself to both Methodist and Baptist folk and his leaving was sad for all.

W. F. Rhodes was Supt. of Sunday School and Miss Maude Davitte was one of the leaders in the Ladies Aid Society. It was often the practice to have a picnic dinner at the Big Spring and it was recalled that Mr. Hill Wingard always insisted on eating as many chicken gizzards as he could find. Some of the people joining the church at this time were Gladys Gaines, J. R. LeMaster, L. W. Mitchell, Bete Williams, W. E. Collum, and Bide Golden. T. M. Hockersmith was presiding Elder.

The first board of stewards of which there is still a record was composed of Mr. Sam Williams, Mr. A. B. Gaines, Mr. G. L. Brock, Mr. B. H. Phillips, and Mr. Hill Wingard.

The first War years and the period immediately afterward were remarkable principally in the number of different pastors who served Aragon. Between 1916-19 four pastors came and went. Rev. Middlebrooks came and left in six months to enter the chaplaincy. He was followed by Rev. J. E. Cline and Rev. Elrod in succession. Rev. Elrod was said to have been on a diet but if you were visited by him in the early morning it would take about two slices of ham, six or eight biscuits and a lot of butter just to tide him over to lunch... Rev. Jesse Veatch preached a revival in 1918 in which 21 joined the church.
The Church Parsonage was built in 1919 during the ministry of Rev. Poarch. The Board of Stewards traded the lot belonging to the church which stood behind the church to the mill company for the lot on which the parsonage now stands. The building was originally a five room house with two large porches, it is now six rooms and one porch.

In 1919 also Brother Tom Williams and family moved to Aragon and joined this church. Seven members of the Norrell family also came in at this time. Mr. Gaines was chairman of the Board.

Mr. Poarch moved in the middle of the year (to Nebraska) and Rev. Gordon Rainey who had already been scheduled came for a revival. It is said that Rev. Middlebrooks, who had returned to fill our Poarch's unexpired year, spent more time courting than working on the revival, but it seems that both efforts were successful as Bro Rainey added 14 to the church roll and Bro. Middlebrooks married an Aragon girl just after conference.

The years between 1920 and 1930 were also years in which many changes in pastors and work were evident in Aragon. Some Sunday school reports from this period indicate that attendance was near the 100 mark. Mr. D. W. Collum had a class of intermediate boys who were among the finest ever seen in this church. The pastors who served were Rev. Betts who stayed seven months, Rev. Crutcher, Rev. Cowart, (who married while serving this church) Rev. McHan, Rev. Roark, (who lost his wife and two children while here). One of Bro. Roark's boys tells of carving on the church door and being caught at it by his father and the terrible justice which followed several hours of sanding off his handiwork.

W. L. Brackman was pastor on April 19, 1926 when the church-building caught fire and burned to the ground. In recalling the fire some say that it occurred just after school and was during a service in the church. The building was almost a total loss, but through the efforts of a splendid building committee the new building was finished in late 1926. That committee was composed of J. C. Platt, J. A. Huckeba, D. W. Collum, G. H. Harrison, A. M. Gaines, J. L. Moore, T. M. Williams, E. W. Herring, and R. D. Harvey. This committee went to Powder Springs, Ga. and copied the plans for their newly completed building. The sturcture then erected still stands with one addition.

J. O. Burnett followed Mr. Brackman. He had five children. One of the historians recalled his favorite sermon which had frequent references to the "charred walls of Hell"

In 1929 Rev. J. W. Coffman came to Aragon and was here at the beginning of the depression. However, amid the sufferings of the people, a man came who filled the parsonage with children and filled the hearts of his people with love and respect. He was Bro. B. W. Kilpatrick. Brother 'Kil' as he was affectionately known, stayed in Aragon five years, equalling Brother Turner. These were perhaps the hardest years financially but were among the most fruitful spiritually. Among the Lay Leadership were George Harrison and Tom Williams both of whom served as Supt. of the Sunday School, F. L. Dunn, Sam Williams, Jake Belk, and A. M. Gaines all of whom were on a board of stewards during these times. While Brother Kilpatrick was in Aragon sixty-three persons joined the church. The Sunday school attendance climbed to an all time high of 125 average.

The departure of Brother Kilpatrick was not as complete as his arrival, for while he added one, Charles who was born here, he left three who married Aragon people and chose to remain behind. B. W. Jr. Married Louise Wadsworth, Freeman married Margaret Elliot, and Dora Ella married Otis Brumbelow. All of these remained active in the church and filled many of the important offices.
Adrian Warwick was called the "eating preacher"...as though all Methodist preachers are not noted for this...During Brother Warwick's ministry there was felt to be a need for Sunday School Rooms which were built on to the back of the church. Many people helped in this construction work which was finished in 1935. Among the present membership which joined in these years were the Houserks, H. C. Miller, the Gurleys, and the Wildors. M. M. Brackman succeeded Bro Warwick and a great revival at this time was conducted by Rev Bussey.

Sam Millmaps followed Rev. Brackmann and in these pre-war years there was another upswing in membership. Added were the John Dunns, the Abornathys, and the Fords. H. C. Holland was the presiding Elder. The board of Stewards included Tinsley Brumbelow, Freeman Kilpatrick, Tom Williams, Tom Randall, and H. C. Miller.

T. F. Cook was in Aragon two years. He was an older man and did not get to be as active because of the War as he might otherwise have been. The company was working seven days a week.

Much could be said of the church during the Second World War. Paul Stokes came and preached both in Aragon and Yorkville. But it was the work of such loyal laymen as T. M. Williams, Freeman Kilpatrick, Mrs. Herman Williams, Mrs. King Fichtower, H. C. Miller and Buck Williams which held the church on such a high plane. Brother Stokes was in Aragon from 1941 until 1945 which was another of the more difficult years, but the war kept people at home and increased their interest in the church. A youth revival in 1944 brought 12 young converts into the church.

In the last five years three preachers have come to Aragon. Brother Ellison, one of the finest singers to ever served, Brother T. C. Ford who led the young people into a closer walk with God, and Brother Griffies who was a steady pivot in and industrial crisis were all valuable in their own way and made contributions of various sorts to the life of the church.

As any church grows and changes however, it is the laymen which make the power and strength of the church itself. Any community which places the going to and working in the church in an important place in their lives will have good churches. This is the case in Aragon. The Present board of stewards includes the following: Houston Dunn, Julian McBravy, J. B. Williams, Garden Gaines (Chairman), J. O. Gurley, Hoyt Purser (Supt. Sunday School), Billy Williams, Lyle Bond, Herman Williams, Mack Jones, Elmo Wilder, and H. C. Miller.

Fletcher Andrews came in June 1950 and is the present pastor. He has four children. Delma Hagood is District Superintendent.

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RANDOM NOTES: In time past the church has cultivated an acre of cotton and sent the proceeds to the Children's Home....Orphanage Day was the day that the cotton was picked. The trees about the cemeteries were planted in 1920 when Bro Botts was pastor. A Choir in 1917 was composed of Roy Rhodes, Hubert Underwood, Alfred and Edwin Randall, Earl Herrin, Allen and Lewda Gaines, Howard Williams, Clara Boss Randall, Lois Herring, Mamie and Annie Robinson, Lynn and Mary Wingard, Mary Randall, Sarah Rhodes, Ruby Statham, Clara Brown, Glady's Gaines, and the Wingard boys. Clement, Newton, Frank and Gordon. Christmas at one time was a treat of fruit and presents held on Christmas afternoon....Sunday School picnics were all day affairs....Children's day was a great occasion....The church chimes were donated by J. O. Gurley....All Methodist preachers like to eat........