

HISTORY OF BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Bethany Methodist Church was organized about the year 1885. There have been three different locations of the church. The original Church was located on the Sam Thompson place about one and a half miles west of the present location. Several years later it was moved to a different location about one-half mile south of the present location on land owned by Edward C. Bustin. The Church remained at this location for a number of years and then, in the year 1898, it was move to the present site. The building cost approximately \$1000.00 It was dedicated May 20, 1900.

There are five titles to the Church property. On July 5, 1856, Edward C. Bustin deeded three acres more or less to the trustees of Bethany M. E. Church, South and to their successors. This property was to be used for Church, school and cemetary purposes. On August 4, 1890, Edward C. Bustin deeded one-half acre more or less to the trustees of Bethany M.E. Church, South and their successors. On March 21, 1898, Edward C. Bustin added three-fourths acre to the original property. On this three-fourths acre the present Church was built. In October and November 1946, T. E. Rivers and Mrs. M. J. Ellington gave the trustees of Bethany Methodist Church some additional property on which to erect a Church Annex.

Among the early trustees of the Church were: Robert Rivers, James Boyd, Charles A. Cannon, and John C. Horton. They were serving on the board of trustees in 1856.

In 1890 the following were trustees: J. N. Rivers, Enoch Jones, B. F. Harper, R. A. Rivers, and John Ellington.

Between the years 1890 and 1898: Rev. Joe Rivers, Robert A. Rivers, J. B. Clecker, J. H. Ellington, J. H. Harper, H. T. Rivers and J. F. Boyd served on the board of trustees.

The trustees in 1950 were T. E. Rivers, O. F. Harper, G. C. Spence, Z. P. Ellington, L. A. Harris, Sr., W. G. Boyd, Charlie Boyd.

Five members of Bethany Church have become members of Methodist Conferences. They are as follows: Rev. Richard Cleckler, Rev. P. M. Boyd, Rev. Johnny Speir, Rev. Walter Jones, and Rev. Bert M. McDade, Jr.

This Church also had one local preacher, Rev. Bill Thompson, who preached about the years 1880 to 1898. One licensed preacher, Rev. Joe Rivers also served this Church about this same time.

The committee has been able to obtain a partial list of preachers who served Bethany Church.

1904-1907	Rev. Charles Lipham
1907	Rev. W. S. Gaines
1908-1909	Rev. E. H. Wood
1910-1914	Rev. H. C. Henry
1914-1915	Rev. Charles S. Bass
1916-1917	Rev. H. C. Radford

1918-1919	Rev. J. A. Quillian
1920-1921	Rev. A. J. Sears
1922-1923	Rev. J. H. Allison
1924	Rev. Arthur Maness
1925	Rev. W. W. Watkins
1926-1927	Rev. E. P. Eubanks
1928-1930	Rev. C. A. Hall
1931-1934	Rev. E. W. Jones
1935-1940	Rev. J. T. Robbins
1941-1942	Rev. James M. Moore
1942-1947	Rev. Julian F. Thompson
1948-1949	Rev. Hunter Bassett
1950-1951	Rev. F. W. Price
1952-1953	Rev. Clarence Whitley
1954-1955	Rev. Marvin K. Miller

Prior to 1904 we find the following serving Bethany Church:

1885-1886	Rev. Britton Sanders
1891-1892	Rev. W. C. Fox
1898-1899	Rev. Lyman Hall Green

The Church was in the Georgia Conference until 1866. When the state was divided, and there was a North Georgia and a South Georgia Conference, Bethany was placed in the North Georgia Conference.

Bethany Church was on the circuit with Fairburn Methodist Church from 1905-1941. At first there was preaching once a month on the second Sunday. Later the Church was made a half station with Fairburn Methodist Church, having services twice a month-second and fourth Sundays. The Church remained in the Fairburn Circuit until 1941. Then it was placed with two other Churches: Ebenezer Methodist Church and Hopewell Methodist Church in the Fayetteville Circuit. The pastor served Bethany twice a month; First and Third Sundays. In 1950 it was made a full station with Rev. F. W. Price as the first full-time pastor.

Bethany Church Parsonage

The following report was submitted to the First Quarterly Conference in 1950:

Bethany Church - Griffin District - Rev. Henry H. Jones, Superintendent

(An exact copy of the report)

Your parsonage steward submits the following report:

The first Sunday in September, 1949, the M.Y.F. of Bethany Church organized what we called the "Fifty Club". The aims of this group was to build a parsonage for Bethany Church. The group was divided into five smaller groups with a leader for each group. Those selected were: Fred Thomas, Chairman; Charlie Harper, Treasurer; Paul Boyd, Edwin Ellington, and Rufus Harper. Each of the five were to secure 10 members to donate \$1.00 each month toward building a parsonage fund. The aim was carried out.

Just before Christmas the M.Y.F. sent out a Christmas letter appeal to friends of Bethany Church asking for donations. The response to this letter was generous. Over \$300 came in as a direct result to this appeal to our friends.

In February, 1950, we had raised a total of \$665.38, and we decided it was time to begin in earnest. Trees were donated by various members of our community, many were given by members of other churches and again the cooperation was most pleasing. With help from inside and outside our Church, these trees were cut into logs, hauled to the mill, and converted into lumber. In March 1950, the foundation was poured and actual construction was begun in April. We built a five room bungalow and on the 10th of July, work was near enough completion that our pastor and his wife moved in. On July 29th we had "Open House" and invited our many friends to visit with us and see the fruits of their gifts. We are grateful to God for his many blessings in helping to make this thing possible in Bethany Community.

This short "History of Bethany Church" was prepared December 1950, by the following committee: T. E. Rivers, Z. P. Ellington, and Lois Oakley.

We the committee, wish to express our appreciation of the assistance rendered to us in gathering material for this history to Lester C. Dickson, O. F. Harper, Elizabeth Harper, Mrs. Z. P. Ellington, Mrs. T. E. Rivers, and Mrs. Jewel Cochran.

This paper was written by Lois Oakley and submitted December 17, 1950.

On February 25, 1974, the Council on Ministry met to plan the Ministry of Bethany United Methodist Church for that year. One of the programs suggested and adopted was that Homecoming be observed this year on September 22, 1974. One of the items suggested for Homecoming was that the history of the Church be updated. I have attempted to do that. However, during that time and now, Mr. O. F. Harper passed away and several members of the Oakley family, especially Miss Lois Oakley, have been hospitalized. We miss their interest and knowledge about the history of Bethany. With the help of Mattie Mae Harris, Edna Harper, and Rev. A. M. Wade, Sr., I am submitting the following with the recognition that it may not be completely accurate. Therefore, I plead for your understanding and help. If you have any information about the history of Bethany, please write it down and send it to me. - Rev. J. Larry Amos

Bethany United Methodist Church - 1955-1974

On August 7, 1955, the 100th Anniversary of Bethany Methodist Church was observed. From a photo album made at that time, we know that it was a very big occasion and was well attended. Dinner on the ground was held and the table was loaded with many good and appetizing things to eat. Rev. Marvin K. Miller was the pastor. Among the former pastors attending were Rev. Richard Cleckley, Rev. Arthur

Maness, Rev. Julian Thompson, Rev. Hunter Bassett, Rev. Clarence Whitley, Rev. W. S. Gaines. Each were given a gavel made from wood of the old Church. Couples, widows, and widowers who had been married for at least fifty years were also honored. The 100th anniversary cake was given by Mr. Cecil Poe.

Rev. Miller was followed by Rev. Donald Penieur. Rev. Penieur is now serving a Church in Richmond, Ky. In 1957, Rev. Marion Bloodworth became the pastor at Bethany. He is now serving a Church in Swea City, Iowa. In 1959, Rev. W. B. (Bill) Roane became the pastor. During his pastorate, a two story Church School building was erected that contains nine rooms and two rest rooms.

Rev. Carlisle Phillips, Jr., a missionary to Taiwan on leave for two years, became the pastor of Bethany. However, he suffered a bad back injury and was unable to fulfill many of his pastoral duties.

In 1963, Rev. Amos M. Wade, Sr. became the pastor. When he arrived, the Church building was in a state of disrepair. The front steps had fallen in, the front doors were boarded shut, and the sanctuary floor had bulged up in several places. During the first or second Official Board meeting after Rev. Wade arrived, a discussion took place concerning the repairs needed.

Mr. C. G. (Charlie) Harper, Sr., declared that he was ready to go in debt to repair the Church. Mr. O. F. (Oscar) Harper declared that he would give five hundred dollars if the Church "would go all the way". The Board agreed to do that.

A figure of \$4000.00 was set as the amount needed to start work and a day was set to reach that goal. When the day arrived for the \$4000 to be in, a total of about \$10,000 had been raised. About \$16,000 was raised in all to cover the project.

Mr. Charlie Harper was given the task to refurbish the Church. Among the items accomplished were a vestibule to replace the front step and two entrances, a new floor was laid, two furnaces were installed. Mr. Bob Torbush helped to install a new water cooler in the vestibule. Mr. Marvin Cochran built and donated a hymn board, a Church School board, and a desk for the vestibule. The exterior of the Church was then brick veneered. It was decided to leave the walls of the Church as they were.

All was not all work and worship. A new volley ball court was also built. Also during the pastorate of Rev. Wade, the Annex floor was refinished and tile laid. Rev. Joe Black, District Superintendent, remarked when he saw all this progress, "I have never seen such fast improvement and the people stay out of debt."

In 1968, Rev. Herbert J. Barker was appointed as pastor to Bethany. However, he chose to return to his home conference, and Rev. Fred Schoenberger served Bethany in July and August. The members of Bethany were deeply saddened at the news of his death shortly after leaving Bethany.

In September 1968, Rev. Riley Burton was appointed pastor. Rev. Burton now serves a Church in Summit, Miss. Rev. Mike Cordle became the pastor in 1970. Rev. Cordle is now the pastor of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church in Carrollton, Ga.

Sometime during the pastorate of Rev. Burton and/or Rev. Cordle, the Church Sanctuary had additional work done. New carpeting was put in, the ceiling was lowered, air conditioning was installed, new chandeliers installed, and the sanctuary walls painted.

Rev. Kenneth Deitle became pastor in 1972. During that year, the Church began planning for a new parsonage. The one built in 1950 was becoming inadequate. Floor plans were reviewed and costs were estimated.

In June, 1973, Rev. J. Larry Amos was appointed pastor at Bethany. On Sunday morning, July 15, 1973, Rev. W. C. Bowen, District Superintendent, led a special Charge Conference and a special Church Conference. These two conference voted unanimously to build a new parsonage on the land adjoining the Church and facing Rivers Road. The Board of Trustees were instructed to build a parsonage at a cost up to \$55,000.00 and to sell the old parsonage. Members of the Board of Trustees were Paul Boyd, Claude Rivers, Banks Oxford, Frank Flanders, O. F. Harper, C. G. Harper, Jr., Paul Hughes, Julian Benton, C. F. Boyd, Addison Smith, James Bullard, and Rufus Harper.

The Trustees elected the following as members of the Parsonage Building Committee: Frank Flanders, Chairman; Paul Hughes, Charlie Boyd. Paul Boyd was elected as an alternate. The Building Committee elected Paul Hughes as the on the site foreman.

The following were elected Parsonage Building Fund Committee: Ralph Harris, Chairman; James Thomas, Treasurer; Gladys Tarpley, Banks Oxford, C. G. Harper, Jr., and Rufus Harper. At this time there was \$600 on hand.

On July 28, 1973, Mr. Clifford Flowers and another worker for Akin-Flanders Construction Co. dug the basement for the new parsonage. An official ground breaking service was held on the site on August 19, 1973.

The following were later elected to furnish and decorate the new parsonage; Mrs. Paul Hughes, Mrs. Bob Terpenning, Miss Anne Tarpley, and Mrs. J. H. Windham.

The trustees, building committee, building fund committee, and decorating committee, along with many other faithful members of the Church and community gave many untold hours of effort, work, planning, and money to this project and each is to be highly commended.

Rev. Larry Amos and his family moved into the new parsonage on February 23, 1974. The parsonage is a beautiful brick home with four bedrooms, two baths, built in kitchen, family room, living room, dining room, utility rooms, carport, screened porch, and a full basement. There are more than 4000 square feet of living space in the new parsonage. "Open House" is to be held today (September 22, 1974).

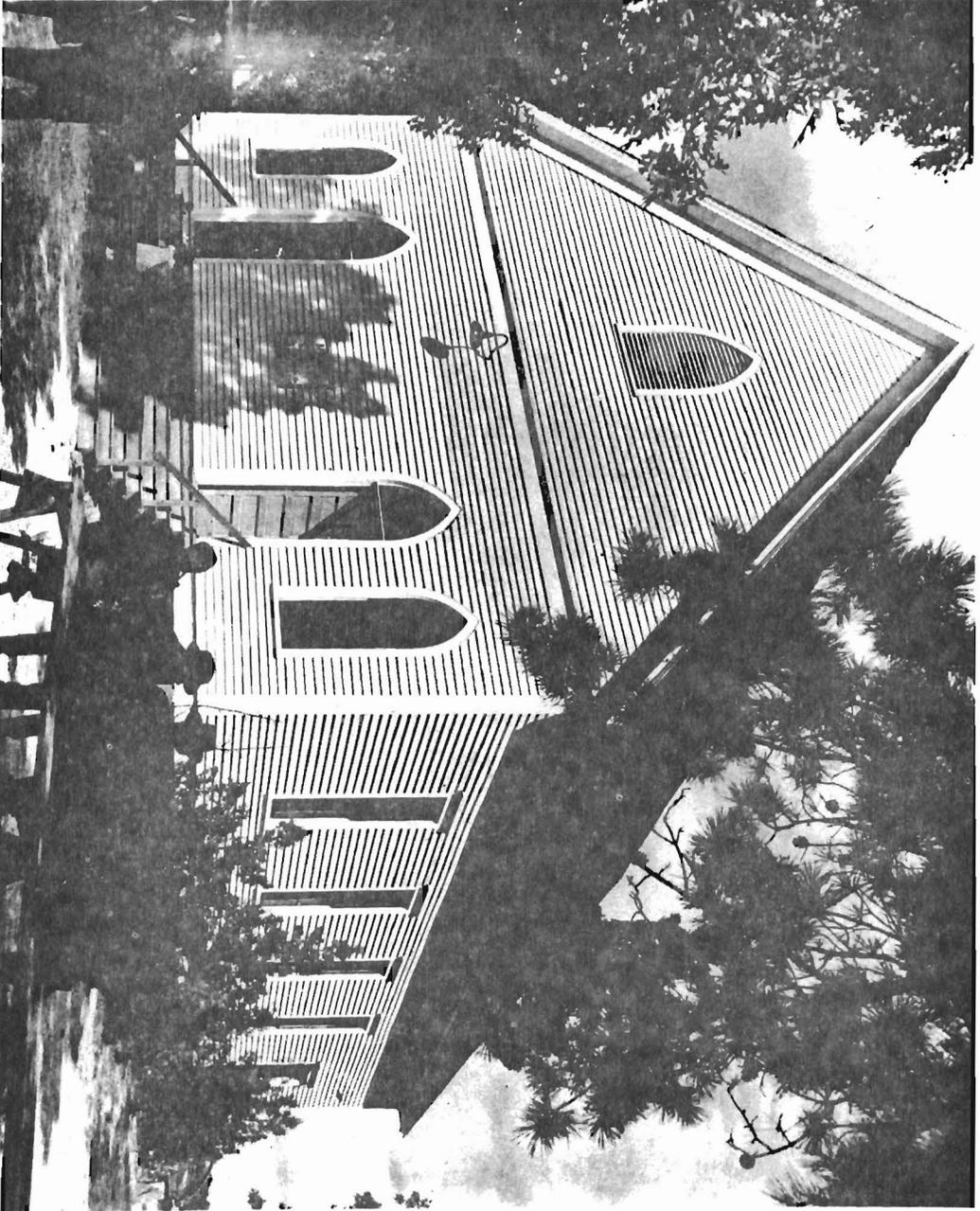
The old parsonage was sold to Mrs. C. G. Harper, Sr. In July 1974 the building fund committee reported that the new parsonage with an insured value of \$60,000.00 had been paid off completely. Actual monetary cost for the parsonage was about \$40,000 for the building and \$5,000 for furnishings. These figures do not reflect the hours and gifts so freely given by members of the Church.

Not only was the full cost of the parsonage paid, but about \$1000 remained in the building fund committee. In rapid succession during the summer of 1974, the Administrative Board voted to paint all the outside woodwork of the Church and Church School Buildings, add a new 14 foot by 24 foot kitchen to the Annex as well as a new stew cooking area and barbeque area, and brick veneer the Annex. The painting of the Church and Church School buildings has been completed. The work on the Annex, at an estimated cost of \$6000 to \$8000, is now in progress.

Not only is the Church growing physically, but in numbers as well. Last year 23 new members joined the Church.

The following is a list of pastors since 1955:

1955-1957	Rev. Donald Penieur
1957-1959	Rev. Marion Bloodworth
1959-1962	Rev. W. B. Roane
1962-1963	Rev. Carlisle Phillips, Jr.
1963-1968	Rev. Amos M. Wade, Sr.
1968	Rev. Herbert J. Barker
	Rev. Fred Schoenberger (two months)
1968(Sept)-1970	Rev. Riley Burton
1970-1972	Rev. Mike Cordle
1972-1973	Rev. Kenneth Deitle
1974-	Rev. J. Larry Amos



BETHANY METHODIST CHURCH
FAIRBURN, GA.