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HISTORY OF BETHANY CHURCH  
GAINESVILLE DISTRICT  
JEFFERSON CIRCUIT

Bethany

The year of 1870, on land given by J. L. Harris, about 1/2 mile east of the present location, a school house was erected. A Sunday School was organized and occasionally preaching services were held. Uncle Billy Deabors, C. C. Carey, R. A. Seale, Henry Cranford and possibly others were doing the preaching.

Those taking part in the organization of the first Sunday School were Frank Dowdy, Joe Freeman, Dick England, Edd Sharpe, Ezekiel Boggs and others.

A short time before Bethany Church was organized, a protracted meeting was held under a brush arbor near the Venable Old Home. Much interest was manifested at this meeting and the people of the community began to advocate building a church.

Mr. Mike Williamson proposed to give \$50.00 toward the erection of a building provided five other men would each do the same. This amount was quickly subscribed by J. L. Harris, Ezekiel Boggs, Joe Freeman, Martin Venable and Edd Sharpe. A number of others subscribed a smaller amount, either in cash, material or work.

On January 5, 1878 Bethany Church was organized in the School house, the Church building not being completed at the time. ✓

"Copy of Minutes of Organization"  
January 5, 1878

A meeting was held this day at Harris School House to organize a New Methodist Church. Brother C. C. Cary preacher in charge preaching, meeting was opened with a song and prayer by the preacher. The following names were enrolled as members:

Ezekiel Boggs	Julia Fitzpatrick	Mary A Venable
Eliza A Boggs	James L. Harris	Lucy M. Venable
John W. Boggs	Martha M. Harris	Wm. E. Venable
Jacob N. Boggs	Martha A Potts	Margaret Venable
Sallie E Boggs	Joseph C Sorrow	Matilda Venable
James S. England	Sarah E. Sorrow	Benjamin A Wilkes
Joseph S Freeman	Caroline E Tuck	Mary I Wilkes
Susan Freeman	Montine Venable	

Brother J. L. Harris was on motion elected Secretary, when the preacher pronounced the church organized and ready for business. On motion the church was named Bethany. Brother Boggs and J. S. Freeman appointed class leaders by the preacher in charge. On motion the 1st. Saturday at 11:00 O'clock and Sunday following were fixed for the days of preaching. On motion Brother E. Boggs was appointed to assist Brother Dowdy in the Sunday School at this place.

C. C. Cary, preacher.  
J. L. Harris, Sec.

After the organization the church building was soon completed and on April 28, 1878, Uncle Henry Cranford preached the dedication sermon. The ground on which the church stands and also the ground for cemetery south of the public road, was given by J. L. Harris, Sr. The ground for the cemetery north of the road was given by J. L. Harris, Jr. The first wedding held in the church was that of Bruce Smith and Georgia England

Pastors serving the Church are as follows:

Billie Deavors  
C. C. Cary  
R. A. Seale  
W. A. Farris  
H. L. Bradley  
J. V. M. Morris  
Rev. Kinney  
F. G. Hughes  
J. M. Lowry  
E. K. Akin  
W. P. Rivers

J. R. Speck  
J. W. Stype  
H. B. Mays  
W. T. Bell  
H. F. Branham  
W. L. Peris  
B. H. Trammel  
G. D. Stone  
J. W. Bailey  
Price Jackson  
G. T. Sorrells

H. O. Greene  
Dave McBrayor  
J. S. Askew  
Jessie Terrell  
Ray Jones  
W. M. Parson  
Rev. Willingham  
J. B. Lynn  
Harvey Smith  
H. L. Smith  
D. B. Cantrell

W. R. Green  
W. B. Hughes  
Rev. Garrett  
A. S. Ulm  
B. M. Bowen  
Truman Thomas

Sunday School Superintendents

F. W. M. Dowdy  
Ezekiel Boggs  
J. L. Harris  
Nat Sharp

Andy Parks  
W. N. Lemaster  
C. O. Pittman 30 years service  
W. H. Maley 29 years service