The History of Bethesda Methodist Church, compiled & written by Duncan Taylor & Kathy Taylor Norman

All this history was gathered from old membership roll books & history that I, Duncan Taylor, had recorded years ago from information given to me by older citizens like Mr. W. M. (Sam) Cratin & Mr. Mark Tiller. Presently Miss Lydie Sisk has been very helpful in supplying me with names.

The history of Bethesda Church dates back to 1879. At that time, services were held at White Oaks School. This was about 1/4 mile from the present location. Wesley E. Smith held services here until 1881, when he became the regular pastor & served until 1882. James S. Cosby served from 1883 until 1885. T. H. Gibson served from 1886-1887. Wesley E. Smith served in 1888. E. A. Gentry served from 1889 until 1893. E. B. Reese served in 1894. A. J. Hughes served from 1895 until 1899. W. A. Farris served from 1900 to 1902.

In 1901, Miss Babe Drake gave one acre of land to build the church at the present location. Miss Drake lived in a one room house nearby. She did her cooking on the fireplace.

Bethesda Church was organized in 1902 by Dr. E. B. Reese, the father of Miss Gussie Reese. The church was dedicated in April, 1903 by Dr. W. P. Lovejoy, District Superintendent. I believe at that time, they were called Presiding Elders.

Around 1935, there was a bad storm cloud that caused the old church to lean to one side. Because of this, the old church was torn down in 1938. It was rebuilt using most of the old materials. It cost about $2,600.00 to rebuild the present building. There was a lot of free labor from local people, & others like Sam Woods Sr., E. D. Moody, Sammy Woods Jr., Scooter Bonner, Alton Matthews, & Hamp Arnold. The building committee at that time was Harris S. Taylor, Hamp Arnold, Paul Traxton, Mark Tiller, Lena Tiller, Boyd Escoe & Duncan Taylor as Chairman.
Murry Harrison & Eugene Mathews did the frame work of the present Church. Elmer Boggs was pastor from 1976-1982. At this time, Sunday school rooms, bathrooms, & a new well was added. Howard & Ola Young put up the paneling, laid the floor covering, & Howard made the double doors at the entrance to the Church. Hubert Aaron did the wiring. Later, some renovations were done to the Church. The altar was rebuilt, carpet runners were put down & the pulpit was redone. Most of this work was done by Howard & Ola Young with help from Duncan Taylor & Wayne Norman.

Some of the old members were:

1) W. A. Bryant Sr., who was the father of W. A. Bryant Jr. W. A. Bryant Jr.'s children were: Willie Mae Bryant, D'Neal Bryant, Alvin Bryant, Fred Bryant, who was the father of our present Board of Commissioners Chairman Billy Bryant. Lydie Bryant who married the late Stewart Sisk. Their children are: Marvin Sisk, who married Ruth Bray & Virginia Sisk who married Pat Shackleford Jr.

Mrs. Lydie attended school at the two room school house near the Church. She also taught school there. This school was consolidated with Meson Academy in Lexington about 1939 or 1940.

2) Mr. & Mrs. Otis Smith were members. Their children were: Lucy Smith, who married Dr. W. L. Green, Lena Smith who married Frazer Wise, Hoke Smith who married Mary Brooks, Annie Laura Smith who married James Maxwell, Bob Smith, Mary Helen Smith who married James Mayo, & Virginia Smith who married Harvard Hopkins.

3) Another member was W. J. Culberson, who moved near Winterville. His son & grandson operate a shop, grocery store, & trailer park on Beaverdam Rd.

4) Mr. & Mrs. William S. Chaifin, the parents of W. M. (Sam) Chaifin, were members. Mr. & Mrs. W. M. (Sam) Chaifin & their children were members.
Their children were Cornelius Chaplin, Howard Chaplin, Sidney Chaplin, Lewis Chaplin, Harriet Chaplin, Annette Chaplin, & Nelline Chaplin.

Mr. J.W. Woods, who was Sam Woods' father, was a member. J.W.'s children were Lou, Mae, Sam, Willie, & Rob. Lou, Mae, & Sam were also members. Sam Woods married Frances Norman. Their children were Wallace, Sammy Jr., Mary Helen, James, & Martha.


Robert Tidwell, the grandson of Henry Lee Tidwell & the son of Carl Tidwell, later joined Bethesda Church. He married Pearl Palmer. Their children were Lee & Tommy. Lee married Beth Bonet. Tommy married Fran Bradford. Later Tommy joined Bethesda & after he & Fran married, she also joined. Fran's daughter, Charlotte Bradford, joined. Tommy & Fran's daughter, Carla, was christened at Bethesda. Later they moved their memberships to County Line Baptist Church but they still come back to help out with the music, etc.

Mr. & Mrs. John Mathews were members. Their children were Alton, who married Willie Dell Woods (deceased) & later married Frances; Eugene, Loyd, who married Pauline McComber; Viola; Mary Dell; Johnny Loyd; & Everline, who married Bud Moon.

Another member was Mrs. Bennie Saxon.

Her children that were members were Frances, Rosa Lee, who married Joe Chaplin; Leila; Effie, who married Bill Williford; & Helen, who married Dial Tagg.
Some of the members dated back so far that we didn't know anything about their families. These are: Tucker Chadin, John Chadin, Reese Chadin, Luther Chadin, Howard Chadin, Pauline Chadin, Fred Chadin, Mr. & Mrs. Roy Chadin, Betty Chadin, Jessie Chadin, Rosa Chadin, Emma Chadin, Dora Chadin, Fannie Lou Chadin, Lovie Chadin, and J.J. Chadin. 

Amelia Chadin, Frank Chadin, Coile Escoe, Mack Escoe, Martin Escoe, Myrtle Escoe, Bell Escoe, Charlie Escoe, Tom Escoe, Mrs. Boyd Escoe, John Henry Thaxter, Dora Thaxter, George Judson Wynn, Hess Wynn, George Wynn, Birdie Wynn, G.M. Peterson, Rebecca Pederman, Mrs. R.H. Pederman, Ola Pederman, Willie Pederman, Mr. & Mrs. G.N. Pederman, George Pederman, Mrs. R.N. Pederman, Louisa Pederman, G.N. Pederman, Gid Pederman, Joe Pederman, Sr., Howard Pederman, Mr. & Mrs. William Coleman Vaughn, Mrs. Hester Brouwer, Mrs. Martha Joe Pertiet, May Pertiet, Estelle Pertiet, Teddy Pertiet, Mercer Atkins, Hattie Atkins, Mr. & Mrs. J.E. Sayers, Mr. & Mrs. Charles A. Frye, Bonnie Frye, Estelle Frye, William Henry Willoughby, Charles Buford Willoughby, Connie Johnson, D.E. Johnson, Lula Bell Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. V.L. Johnson, Barbara Johnson, Martha Ann Hayes, Leonard Bobbs, Mandy Hansford, D. & Sallie Hansford, Mr. & Mrs. T.J. Black Sr., Mrs. J.A. Salters, Gertrude Gilbert, Miss Maude Fambrough, Mr. & Mrs. W.T. Fambrough, Joseph Walker, Mrs. Annie Weisman, Mr. & Mrs. W.P. Smith, Hattie Smith, Charlie Smith, Mary Smith, Kate Smith, Mr. & Mrs. John Benton, Rosa Bridges, Faron Drake, Mrs. J.E. Drake, Babe Drake (She donated 1 acre of land for church), Rebecca Novell, Amanda Arnold, Mr. & Mrs. Etta Arnold, Julia Arnold, Melissa Arnold, Frank Arnold, Mr. & Mrs. M.P. Arnold, Mr. & Mrs. Noel Arnold, Mindy Mrs. Moses Arnold, Mr. & Mrs. Lillie Mae Adkins, Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Colley, Osborn Colley, Hazel Colley, Carl Goolsby, Mr. & Mrs. W.M. Goolsby, Mr. & Mrs. J.T. Byrd, Mary Ella Clark, Mr. A.L. Clark, Mrs. Gordon Cunningham, Billy Cunningham. (Billy graduated from...
Nelson Academy in 1947 along with Duncan Taylor. He was the son of Mrs. Vinnie Tiller. She was also a member.) Mr. & Mrs. Frank Clark, Mr. & Mrs. J. H. Dooley, Emory Dooley, Walter Dooley, Thomas Dooley, Jonathan Dooley, Mrs. Lois Little, Joe Hankford, Mr. & Mrs. W. J. McCree, Mr. & Mrs. Worth McCree, Timmie McCree, Lee Miller, Frank Sherrill, Kate Sorros, Mrs. Mamie Youngblood, Mr. & Mrs. R. L. Young, Mrs. J. W. Wood, Mattie Hammond (who later married Paul Hilyer), Mr. & Mrs. W. G. Morris, Harriett Louise Morris, Eunice Morris, Mrs. W. J. Sisk, E. D. Bonner, Robert Bonner, Henry Bonner, Addie Bonner, Sybil Bonner (married J. T. Hayes), Betty Bonner (presently married to Harold Jr. Echols, who was also a classmate of Duncan Taylor & graduated in 1947 at Nelson Academy), Mr. & Mrs. J. I. Teasley, Edwin Teasley, Mrs. Waver Brooks, Her Grandson, Johnny McCannon, was later a member & also helped out in playing piano. Mrs. Bud Fields, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Weltz, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Thompson, Early Hewitt, & Mrs. Neal Harrison (Neal was Sunday School teacher for several years & very active in Church.) Mr. & Mrs. E. H. Coe.

Some of the later members not covered in the above are: Tammy Farmer, Annie Mae Arnold (deceased), Mr. & Mrs. MaK Tiller (both deceased), Mrs. Lena, was a Sunday School teacher & very active in the Church), Rev. Marion E. Dean (deceased) Mr. & Mrs. F. E. LesEtcher, Mr. & Mrs. William Lindelof, Mr. & Mrs. B. E. Whitlock, Joe Brown, Lynn McCannon Taylor, Greg Taylor, Gladia McCannon Bridges, Gloria McCannon Bridges, Lucille McCannon, Grace A. Dayre, Lizzie Patton, Beth Naves, Mr. & Mrs. Leon Hill, Phyllis Hill, Rev. & Mrs. Elmer Boggs (Reverend from 1979 - 1982), Alice Ashley, George Arnold, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Everett Hobbs, Manita Tiller, Stephen Abernathy, Lisa Pittard.

Howard & Ola Young were very active members. They were always there when any job came up, ready to do their part.