BUCHANAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Century of Service

1879 - 1979
Buchanan Methodist Church: A Century of Service

Synopsis of Main Events

1879 - Organized
1888 - First Church Burned
1890 - Frame church built
1900 - First parsonage built
1908 - Brick church built
1918 - Parsonage moved to College Street
1927 - First parsonage remodeled
1958 - Beginning of building program for present parsonage
1958 - Educational annex added to church
1963 - Mortgage burned on new parsonage
1969 - Hymnals purchased; Sanctuary completely remodeled
1974 - Parsonage refurbished
1977 - Parsonage renovated
Pastors and Years They Served

1879  Billy Simpson (organized) - served after November Conference
1879  J.G. Worley
1880-'81  (No listing)
1882  F.P. Langford
1883  (No listing)
1884-'85  (No listing)
1886  J. Reese / H.M. Smith
1887  (No listing)
1888-'89  L.D. Coggins
1890  E.T. Hendrick
1891  J.C. Edmonds / J.M. Crowe
1892  S.A. Harris
1893  W.G. Crawley (Mission)
1894  J.W. Barley
1895  B.F. Searcy / J.T. Robbins
1896  J.D. Turner
1898-'99  C.P. Marchman
1900  C.M. Verdell
1901-'93  J.M. Fowler
1904  J.E. Rorie
1905  B.H. Greene
1906  L.H. Greene
1907-'09  J.W. King
1910  F.D.. Cantrell
1911  F.D. Cantrell (with Bremen)
1912  W.S. Gaines
1913-'14  C.A. Norton
1915-'17  J.W. Veatch
1918  E.P. Eubanks
1919  D.S. Patterson (with Mission)
1920-'22  G.P. Braswell
1923  O.P. McDermont
1924-'25  G.W. Hamilton (with Villa Rica)
1926  T.H. Maxwell
1927  E.P. Driskell
1928-'29  Carl Stanley
1930  H.D. Pace
1931  J.W. Chidsey  (To LaGrange - Retired)
1934  T.H. Williams  (deceased)
1935-'37  J.L. Black  (To Mt. Gilead)
1938  L.G. Hendricks  (Unknown)
1939-'40  M.B. Sams  (deceased)
1941-'44  C.R. Williams-From: Emory student
           Now at: 1st Church Eatenton
1945-'47  J.V. Jones -(deceased)
1948-'49  Hollis Brigham-From: Emory Student
           (deceased)
1950  George E. Chambers -From: Emory Student
           Now At: Hickory Flat
1951-'52  Garnet Wilder -From: Emory student
           Now at: Superintendent of Atlanta-
           Decatur-Oxford District
1953  Lewis Shurburt - From: Emory Student
       Now at: Left Ministry

1954  Larry Bauman - From: Emory Student
       Now at: Glenn Memorial, Atlanta

1955  F.C. Hicks -(deceased)

1956-'58 James D. Slay - From: Emory Student from Mississippi
       Now at: returned to Mississippi

1959-'61 Charles Boling - From: Emory Student from Alabama
       Now at: returned to Alabama

1962  John Morris -(unknown)

1963-'65 Hoyt Jenkins - From: Emory Student
       Now at: Dalton

1966  Charlton Storey - From: Emory Student
       Now at: left ministry

1967-'70 Henderson Rasberry - From: Emory Student from Mississippi
       Now at: returned to Mississippi

1971-'73 Ross Tipps - From: Emory Student from Texas
       Now at: Georgia Prison and Ministry Council

1974-'76 Randy Newkirk - From: Emory Student from Illinois
       Now at: Texas

1977-'79 Charles Wallom - From: Emory Student from Augusta, Ga.
       Now at: Alpheretta

1979-  Rick Cornwell - From: Cartersville
Foreword

Anyone interested in the Buchanan United Methodist Church should be grateful for the valuable history written by Mrs. Della Roberts Newton and Mrs. Addie Hutcheson McCalman in 1951. They were well qualified for this work. Mrs. Newton was the daughter of two of the founders, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts. Her brother, George W. Roberts, assisted. Mrs. McCalman was the daughter of the most outstanding early choir director and daughter-in-law of one of the most prominent early leaders. Her husband took over the work at his father's death. She was also organist and pianist for almost sixty years. Without Mrs. Newton and Mrs. McCalman's work almost nothing would be known about the Church's beginnings.

There have been at least two losses of records, maybe more. When the first church burned in the fall of 1888, evidently all records were burned. Then in 1967 when the official board instructed the treasurer to destroy records (meaning treasurer's records) prior to one year before, someone evidently took it to mean all records as they have not been found. There are conference records from 1956 to 1971.

In the Beginning...

The Buchanan Methodist Church was organized in 1879 in the first courthouse in Haralson County. There were four prospective members present: Mr. and Mrs. G.M. Roberts and Mr. and Mrs. Connell. Rev. Billy Simpkins was the pastor; nothing has been learned about him. He must have been a local preacher. The oldest roll located (1895) does not list any of these four as members; nor are there any Connell descendents of that name.
given. All of Mr. and Mrs. Robert's children were members and many of their grandchildren. It is not known if Mr. and Mrs. Roberts left their memberships in their original churches, neglecting to move them or if they were inadvertently omitted. Their grandson Charles B. Newton, the last on the roll, was prominent in church affairs until his death in 1967.

**Work of the Church**

The Church was started by those four members in 1879, but it must have had a fairly good following because in 1881 the column "Buchanan Dots" in the *Cedartown Advertiser* stated a successful revival had closed at the Methodist Church the Sunday night before. The membership has never been more than 125 at any one time. Of those, many were inactive, making the active enrollment forty or less. At one time or another since 1895, almost 500 have called it their church home.

Although smaller than the other churches, its membership has always carried more than its share of civic responsibility. Rev. Randy Newkirk (1974-77) saw the need of an up-to-date volunteer fire department. Largely through his efforts the fire department was reorganized and the best fire fighting equipment secured. Rev. Charles Wallom (1977-79) came here a fully certified recreational director just at the time the city was purchasing the City Park. His knowledge and hard work have helped to secure this property for the enjoyment of all ages. Three of the four present city councilmen are of Methodist belief. For the last several years they have worked long hours helping pull the city out of financial chaos and have put forth every effort to have a solvent, prosperous town.
Church Work - Sunday School

In 1884 a Union Sunday School was started with G.M. Roberts, one of the Church founders as superintendent. Then in 1895 with the organization of the Methodist Sunday School he was again the first superintendent. This is the last mention of Mr. Roberts in any way. Later other prominent members who served in this capacity were C.W. Ault, J.J. Beall and W.A. McCalman. The latter served until his death in 1918. He was followed by his son H.S. McCalman who was in office over thirty years. The late C.B. Newton and the late R.A. Edwards also made their contributions in this capacity.

The addition of the educational annex gave impetus to the Sunday School growth for some time. At present it need inspiration as the attendance is down.

In 1969 the Official Board decided to supply all Sunday School members with the Upper Room.

Church Work - Women's Organizations

The Women's Home Missionary Society was organized in May of 1906 (Source of information - a scrap of paper found by Mrs. Floy Strickland giving the minutes of the September meeting for that year). Mrs. L.H. Green, the pastor's wife, and Mrs. E.S. Griffith were the originators of the organization. Mrs. Griffith continued active in church work until her death in 1935. The name of the organization has changed with the times. At one time there were two groups; however, only one group exists at the present. Small as it is, it still carries its full load of responsibility.

Before the present parsonage was built, they had various projects to make up money for a parsonage fund. Then additional projects to insure it was properly furnished (such as linens, kitchen utensils, curtains, etc.) have been undertaken.
In 1958 the group decided that its members would take turns furnishing flowers for Sunday worship; this practice is still being carried by the group.

In 1974, they realized the need for cushioned pews and were determined to finish the project before Homecoming that year. Louise Mabry and Edna White Wyatt spearheaded the project. Enough was realized to not only cushion the pews but to complete the furnishing of the church kitchen.

For years the group sponsored Vacation Bible School. However, due to changing times, changing interests, and a majority of working mothers, this activity has been discontinued.

In 1974 and again in 1977 they completely renovated every bit of furniture in the parsonage.

For many years and through the present, the Women's groups can be counted on to assist anyone in need. This is not only done for their own members, but for anyone whom they found in distress, bereavement, or disaster.

Church Work - Music Department

As previously mentioned, T.A. Hutcheson was choir director for the first church and Mrs. W.T. Newton was the first organist. From limited information we know the church had at first pump organs and then at least three pianos and two electric organs.

Pianists/Organists over the years have included Mrs. H.S. McCalman, Mrs. Burwell Stanley, Mrs. Bob Reid, Mrs. Ellen Wyatt Holstein, Mrs. Randy Newkirk, Mrs. Janice Boatwright, and Mrs. Estelle Edwards. Music directors have included C.B. Newton, R.A. Edwards, Howard Hancock and Harold McWhorter. At present, Jane Register is our pianist and Rene' Mabry is the director.
Cooperation with the Baptists

The two churches have always worked together for the common good of the community. Before the first Methodist church was built, they offered the Methodists the use of their building. (Each church probably met only one Sunday per month). Then when our church burned in 1888 they again offered the use of their church. Reciprocating a most generous loan, the Methodists invited the Baptists to use their facility when the Baptists deemed their church a fire hazard, until their present church was built. At that time each church met twice a month.

Church Properties

The Churches: There have been three houses of worship. The first church was built across from the southwest corner of the courthouse square. It burned in 1888 being in use only a few years. Either all the records burned with it or they were later misplaced or destroyed. Not even a membership roll has been found prior to 1895.

The second church was built diagonally across Cedartown Street (now U.S. 27) and Church Street (now Williams Street). The Rev. L.D. Coggins was the pastor at that time. He must have been a hardworking, enthusiastic man as the local news referred to him and W.S. Ault, a church leader, as being "constant overseers of the construction." The only reference to its being finished was found in a local paper that the 1890 community Christmas Tree was to be "set up" in the Methodist Church. This was a small sanctuary painted red and white. When it was determined a new church should be built in 1908, W.C. Moore arranged to exchange lots with the church. That gave the church the two lots where it
is presently located. One had belonged to the Baptist Church, the other was known as the jail house lot.

Raising funds for the project was started on May 15, 1908. A list of the contributors was found when the McCalman home was vacated. It should be noted that many of the Baptists are on this list of contributors. The fund balance, according to their addition, was $1805.00 (this was for the sanctuary and narthex only). The old church was sold from the property to A.M. Griffith for $575.00. He moved it to his property and for many many years used it for a barn. On November 15, 1908 an estimate addressed to W.C. Moore stated the pews would be built and installed for $375.00.

In the late 1940's Rob Ault Edwards realizing the need for an educational annex, spent his tithe to have the basement dug. W.R. Rowell of Atlanta drew the plans without charge. This was being added in 1951 at the time of the first writing of our church history. The annex was dedicated in 1958.

The sanctuary was entirely remodeled in 1969 at the cost of $18,000.00. The chancel rail was extended three feet and curved; the entire church was carpeted throughout; the pews were refinished; and the beautiful lighting fixtures were acquired from Belgium with the help of an anonymous friend. Ward Mabry modernized the wiring of the sanctuary lighting controls and wired the cross which was built by Burwell Stanley, Sr. The present altar, pulpit and chairs were acquired from the estate of G.W. Roberts through Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Newton.

The Parsonages: J.M. Fowler (1901-1903) was the first minister to live in the first parsonage. According to the deeds, it was located on the north side of Griffith Street between Van Wert and Cedartown Street (now U.S. 27). By checking the city map, it is found that if this street were extended it would run between the present parsonage and Curtis Richards home. It is doubtful it was
an open street. In 1918 the parsonage was in such a state of neglect that the lower floor of a big two-story house called "the dormitory" on College Street which belonged to three prominent church men was used for a parsonage. At least two ministers lived in it before it mysteriously burned down. From 1924 to 1927, being a half charge church, the minister lived in Villa Rica. In 1927 the parsonage had been remodeled and the minister lived here. This time it was used with minimal repairs until it was in such a state of disrepair that it was not worth remodeling. It was agreed - a new parsonage was a necessity.

In 1958 R.B. Griffith had offered a lot on Head Avenue for a new parsonage; however, there was much disagreement about its being located elsewhere. Finally, it was decided to tear down the old parsonage and build the new one on the same spot facing the same street. The mortgage was burned in 1963.

The inside of the present parsonage and particularly the furnishings have been renovated several times. In 1974 all of it was refurbished. In 1977 it was necessary to completely renovate everything including furniture, bathroom fixtures, and kitchen fixtures.

A Century of Service...

One Hundred Years later, one cannot know what inspired those four to start this church. Yet through it, dedicated men and women have served God and their fellowmen, gaining their peace and satisfaction for a job well done in His Name. As He has let it stand, He must have a purpose for it. In that we have remained a "student church", one wonders if that purpose is to give Emory students a chance to determine their place in God's ministry. For the last several years church attendance and membership have been declining; however, the same dedication which has endured for 100 years will once again prosper for 100 years to come.
A Few Gifts and Memorials

- Communion-ware given by G.R. Roberts
- Cover for communion-ware given by Betty Carroll's class
- Pulpit and altar furniture given by estate of G.W. Roberts by Mr. & Mrs. Charles B. Newton
- Altar set given in memory of Mr. & Mrs. J.W. White by their daughters, Mrs. Frank Nash and Mrs. J.W.(Edna) Wyatt
- Pastors study furnished in memory of Mr. I.N. Daniell
- Nursery furnished in memory of a great grandchild of Mr. & Mrs. T.H. Backus
- A parlor is presently being furnished in memory of Mrs. G.B. Richards by her daughter Mrs. Dennis Hodge.
- Many monetary donations from former members, the last and largest being $5000 from the Charles B. Newton estate
- Communion linens recently given by an anonymous donor

"Sidelines"

*In the days before funeral homes, it was the custom for the church bell to be tolled from the time the body was taken from the home until it reached the church. Both church bells ringing at an unusual hour was a fire signal.

*Rev. C.M. Verdell was known as the "buttermilk and sugar man."
The weekends when he was to preach in Bremen, on Saturday he would walk to Bremen, visit among the members, preach, and on Monday morning walk back to Buchanan. He attributed his ability to walk so far and so fast to his drinking buttermilk with sugar in it.

*Rev. G.P. Braswell was an outdoorsman, loving hunting and fishing.

*A Hungarian, Jake Estvanko, came to church here for years. He did not understand Prohibition and continued to make his wine. When he was brought before the Judge, his only comment was "Every Sunday I hitch up my mule and go up to Mr. "Biddy McCammas(Billy McCalman's) Sunday School. The Judge said "But you are accused of making wine."
Again he said "Every Sunday I hitch up my mule and go up to Mr. Biddy McCammas Sunday School." After six or seven times of the same response, the Judge gave up and said "All right, you hitch up your mule and go up to Mr. Biddy McCammas Sunday School"
*Rev. Henderson Rasberry in his conference report said "When the members finally make up their minds, they stick by their conviction."

*Rev. W.G. Crawley told his congregation "Heaven is my home, but I'm not homesick."

*Several weeks after planting, Rev. Hoyt Jenkins asked Ward Mabry when the watermelons should come up that Ward had so precisely instructed him how to plant. Ward had told him to plant his seeds before sun-up on May 1. After a little questioning, it was noted that Hoyt had misunderstood and planted each seed 21 inches deep instead of hills 21 inches apart. Hoyt had spent several hours in the middle of the night digging holes deep enough to plant his seeds.

*Rev. Walker Chidsey, returning here to preach Homecoming, said "After the Courthouse clock strikes 12:00, nobody hears one word I say."

*Elizabeth Stanley, pianist for many years, failed to begin the Doxology at the proper time. Janice Willis Boatwright being nearby whispered "Praise God, Elizabeth." And Elizabeth loudly responded with "Praise God, what!"

*Many have fond memories of Mr. Charlie Newton as he led the Singing keeping time by jingling the change in his pocket and patting his foot.

*Mr. & Mrs. Charles Newton and Mr. & Mrs. Ward Mabry were attending conference at Lake Junaluska where parking was a problem since so many were reserved for Bishop or Doctor so and so. Ward painted a sign at the Recreation Department and installed it in one of the spaces. Mr. Newton being a avid bream fisherman, the sign stated "Reserved - Dr. C. 'Bream' Newton". The space remained open for the entire time; Mr. Newton kept the sign until his death.

*Not knowing the church silver had been stolen, Wilson Willis bought a set of silver from a man obviously trying to sell his stolen merchandise. Mr. Willis bought it in hopes of finding the real owner, only to find it was the church's silver.

*Many of our preachers have learned the signal for ending up their sermons when Mrs. Newton began to powder her nose.

*Who can forget the vast boom in our youth program when Henderson Rasberry was here?
Rev. Hoyt Jenkins was right when he looked over his Sunday evening congregation to see Bobby Deal and Ward Mabry were missing — knowing quite well they were fishing in Whit Wyatt's lake where he had shown them a bream bed the day before.

*Can you remember when we had the "Singing Christmas Tree" each Christmas?

*We have been honoured many times by great personalities coming to our church: Ray Moore (with WAGA-TV at the time) came and spoke; Ben Fortson, Secretary of State came and spoke; and Harold McWhorter, now a successful recording artist, began as our music director and still comes back often. Our best known personality is still an active member of our church: Whit Wyatt's baseball career has included being pitcher for the Brookland Dodgers, manager for the Atlanta Crackers, and pitching coach for the Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves.

*Can you remember a Sunday when at least one Calhoun has not been in Sunday School? It's not very likely.

*It's been said that Ric Mabry is actually married to Henderson Rasberry. Due to Ric's nervousness, he said the vows to Henderson and never even looked at Martha the entire ceremony.

*When Hilda McCalman was married in our church, the formal evening wedding found the men wearing tails. After the reception, the couple left, leaving one of Hilda's suitcases behind. Anyone knowing her father's (Stanley McCalman) small stature can imagine him running down the driveway carrying the suitcase with his tails flapping only several inches from the ground.

Obviously, this history was written, edited and typed by amateurs. Rachel Griffith spent many hours of gathering and organizing the information. Rene' and Jody Mabry edited and typed. Our small and inadequate contribution to this 100 years is this history for any pleasure it may bring to those who read it.****