HISTORY OF THE COVINGTON MILLS METHODIST CHURCH  

FOREWORD

This history of the Covington Mills Methodist Church is composed of information and facts supplied by members of the church who joined during its origin. Also, some of the information was taken from a membership register which dates back to the year 1912. Due to the lack of complete records, many of the pastors' names may be omitted, and some of the dates are approximate.

I am very grateful to those people, who supplied this information and were of great assistance in making possible the recording of these historical facts.

May 25, 1951

William A. Childers, Jr.

HISTORY

Church services were first held at Covington Mills in a small frame building located at what is now 20 East Street. The building served as both a schoolhouse and a church. As best could be ascertained, these services began about 1902.

During the year of 1903, a frame building was erected at a site which is now 608 East Street facing Blair Street. This structure, also, served as a church building and a schoolhouse. The officials of Covington Mills furnished the materials and hired Charlie Cousins and Bud Hopkins to build it. Both the Methodist and Baptist used this building for their worship services and maintained a union Sunday School. Preaching services for the Methodist church were conducted by theological students from Emory College at Oxford, Georgia. The name of the first one of these student preachers who conducted a service at the new church building was S. T. Hendrix. Rev. Duvall conducted the first Methodist revival at Covington Mills. A present member of the Covington Mills Methodist Church, Mrs. Lilla Blair, living here now was received into the church during this revival.

Bibles for the church building were donated by a salesman who conducted business with Covington Mills. The number of bibles and the name of this person is unknown.

On a night in the month of June 1905, Jess Piper was conducting a singing class in this building when a heavy storm cloud began to form in the sky. He dismissed the class to enable the pupils to return to their homes before the rains came. Hardly had the people arrived at their homes before a bolt of lightning struck the church, and it was burned to the ground. The only article saved from the contents of the church was a bible which had been taken home earlier by Jim Worsham who was a Sunday School teacher. The bible has been preserved by the church and is now in possession of Calvary Baptist Church of Covington Mills.

After the church building was burned, services were held in various homes until the year 1906 when a new frame building was erected at the corner of Mill and Wheat Streets to serve the community as both schoolhouse and church building. Preaching services were still being conducted by students from Emory College.
It might be stated here that during this time Preaching services were conducted on Sunday Mornings and nights, and the Sunday School was held on Sunday afternoons. Here are the names of some of those students from Emory College: Clyde Campbell, Charles Lipham, Irby Henderson, Rumble and Moore.

In the year 1909, Covington Mills Methodist Church was on a circuit with Mansfield, Concord, Gaithers, Lovejoy and Red Oak. During this year, the church was served by Edward George Mackay, who was a student at Emory College. (Dr. Mackay, at the present time, is superintendent of the Decatur-Oxford District to which the Covington Mills Methodist Church belongs.) Membership in the church at this time numbered forty-two members. During the year sixteen others were enrolled in the church by profession of faith and letters. It must be assumed that the years of 1910 and 1911 were ministered by students from Emory.

During the period from 1912 through 1916 the church was ministered by A. E. Caldwell, W. Millican, R. G. Smith and J. G. Logan. James William Oscar McKibben was the pastor for 1917 and 1918; during these years the church was a member of Newton Circuit.

Following World War I, the mill officials decided that a new building was needed to house the school and churches. Therefore, a brick building was erected at a site on Mill and Church Streets. The home of the mill superintendent was located on this site, and had to be moved across Church Street. Services were begun in the new building during the year of 1919. The first song in this building was "Lift Him Up" led by G. W. Chambers who was the pastor from Nov. 1918 through Nov. 1919.

Rev. Chambers was followed by Julian Roper who maintained the pastorate from Nov. 1919 to 1920. J. W. Tumblin was pastor for the years of 1920, 1921 and part of 1922. During the years of 1922-23, John Joel Marvin Mize served the Methodist Churches of Covington Mills and Porterdale.

The church was then served from 1923 through part of 1930 by James Knox Kelley and James Foster Young. They served both Covington Mills and Milstead, and the parsonage was located at Milstead.

Covington Mills Methodist Church was again associated with Newton Circuit in 1930, and it may be recorded here that it has remained a member of this circuit to the present time. L. P. Huckaby and Roger William Stone were pastors in 1930 through part of 1933.

During 1933 Rev. Stone was given another appointment in order that John Belk Godfrey could come and serve Newton Circuit while he furthered his education at Emory Junior College. During his stay here, a parsonage was erected on Floyd Street by the member churches of Newton Circuit. Godfrey stayed until 1937.

Pastors who have served the church and the dates of their ministry beginning with the year 1937 are as follows: W. B. Mills, 1937-38; Arthur Kinsey, 1938-40; H. Frank Barfield, 1940-41; M. B. Sams, 1941-44; Clifton Freeman, 1944-45; J. W. Eberhardt, 1945-48 and Albert Joiner, 1948-51.