A HISTORY OF THE CRAWFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Compiled by
Mrs. Florie Smith, Church Historian

The Crawford United Methodist Church can be traced directly to a tent meeting held on a lot owned by Mr. H. H. Little and conducted by Reverend J.A. Sewell, who at that time was serving the Lexington Charge. Rev. Sewell was assisted during this tent meeting by Rev. W.P. Lovejoy, the presiding elder of the Athens District; Rev. C.A. Jamison, a pastor of the Athens District, who brought the Word of God; and by other pastors and laymen who rendered valuable assistance thru song, prayer and personal work.

Five men, all good and true, were elected to the first Board of Trustees. To these men go much of the credit due so many in the building of this house of God in Crawford.

Mr. David M. Guadling
Mr. L.C. Goodwin
Mr. K.P. Carpenter
Mr. Walter Maxwell
Dr. J.T. Bowen

Rev. Sewell and a faithful group of Christ's followers worked heroically to construct the church building on a lot purchased from Mr. A.S. Rhodes on March 30, 1905 for the sum of one hundred twenty five dollars (125.00). The original deed is presently recorded in Book LL, Page 678, at the County Clerk's Office in Lexington, Georgia.
Construction of the building was accomplished by volunteer labor, pastor and layman working together while the ladies provided dinner for the many days required for the labor.

The Trustees were tireless in their efforts to accomplish the task. Mr. Walter Maxwell, though not a member of the church at this time, was very active and gave liberal support to having a Methodist Church erected in Crawford. Mrs. T.J. Bowen and Mrs. Sallie Moore canvassed for funds with which the first organ was purchased. Mrs. J.W. Griffin and Mrs. Bowen worked together to secure the money to purchase the first carpet placed in the church. There were doubtless many others whose names are not recorded who assisted in this work, and though they are unknown to we who remain, most assuredly proclaimed Christ's love by their diligent efforts on His behalf.

Mr. Charles R. Colquitt, while not one of the first Trustees, worked on the building and was very active in the affairs of the church; serving as Steward, Trustee and Assistant Sunday School Superintendent at various times until his death.
The Charter Members are recorded as:

- Mr. David M. Gaulding
- Dr. and Mrs. J.T. Bowen
- Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Griffin
- Mrs. Mary Colquitt
- Miss Sallie Colquitt
- Mr. C.R. Colquitt
- Mr. K.P. Carpenter
- Mrs. Willie Crowleu
- Mr. and Mrs. C.H. Daniel
- Mr. T.C. Goodwin
- Mr. G.S. Hargrove
- Mrs. Ed Huff
- Mrs. Sallie Moore
- Mrs. Macon Johnson
- Mrs. Lizzie Willingham

On October 31, 1905, a fifth Sunday, Bishop Warren A. Candler preached the dedication service of the Crawford Methodist Church. Since the Discipline of the Methodist Church requires that a building be totally free from indebtedness prior to dedication no small amount of apprehension was felt by Rev. Sewell due to the fact that the building was not completely paid for. This presented no obstacle for Bishop Candler however, for he proceeded his sermon with an offering which secured the required funds to pay in full the balance needed.

Early after the organization of the church a Sunday School was organized with Mr. David M. Gaulding as Superintendent. It met at four o'clock in the afternoon, and continued to do so until June 3, 1917, at which time the
members voted to change the hour to nine-thirty in the morning. At this time Mr. R.O. Smith was Superintendent and Mr. James Y. Bowen served as Secretary.

During these years the church building was maintained, incidental expenses met, fuel and oil provided, by a few of the loyal members.

Crawford was first placed on the Lexington Charge, but when Rev. Sewell was appointed to the Winterville Charge he continued to serve Crawford from there. Services were conducted during this time in the afternoon. Later Crawford was placed on the Union Point Charge and given the First Sunday as a regular day of service and worship.

In 1919, with Center Church of Stephens and Mt. Pleasant Church of the Mt. Pleasant Community combining with Crawford the Crawford Charge was formed. A parsonage was purchased in Crawford and since this time the pastors have all lived in Crawford. At this time Crawford adopted the First and Second Sundays as regular preaching days.

When the Church was first built the members were very proud of their accomplishments and it seemed to meet all their needs, but as the Spirit of Christ grew within the congregation so grew the congregation in numbers. It was
soon evident that additional space was required to adequately serve the community of believers. In 1934-1935, under the pastorate of Rev. D.L. Hagood, a movement was started to erect a Sunday School room to the rear of the church. Mr. W.H. Gordon, a member of the church who operated a lumber mill in the vicinity, offered to give the lumber needed for construction if the work would be accomplished.

This was all that was required to fire the enthusiasm of the members. A day was set aside for those members who could use a saw and hammer to begin work. Mr. J.O. Wilher, a finished carpenter and a member of the church, assisted the other members in their efforts and the first room was completed in a few days. This room was set aside as the beginners department.

During the pastorate of Rev. W.D. Gray (1944-1949) additional changes were made to the church building. When the church was originally built it had two front doors, one on either side of the church, which opened into a large entrance hall leading into the sanctuary. The street side of this hall was enclosed by a beautiful stained glass window. This was a beautiful feature of the church, but due to the need of additional space it was changed by closing the two side doors and placing one door in the center of the front. Part of the hallway was
partitioned off into two Sunday School rooms. A nice portico with cement floor and enclosed with ironwork railings was erected at the church entrance.

During the pastorate of Rev. J.S. Strickland (1952-1954) there were five additional Sunday School rooms, a large recreation room and a bathroom erected onto the existing structure. The previously erected Sunday School room was sold to Mr. James Maxwell and removed from the premises. The funds derived from this sale were utilized in the building of the new rooms. Mr. J. Allen Huff, Sr. donated the finished lumber required and Mr. J.W. Griffith gave the rough lumber utilized in these additions. Since the members could not be in constant attendance at the work site two carpenters, Mr. C.O. Fleeman and Mr. Van Lowe, were employed to make the additions.

As with all things in which the Spirit of Christ is working, the church continued to move forward from the beginning. Having now a structure which fulfilled the requirements of space and comfort for some time to come, the Stewards turned their attentions to the inward beauty and utility of the church.

A new piano was purchased, since the one purchased during the early part of the twentieth century was in need of much repair. The old piano was moved into the recreation
for still further use.

A large granite marker was given by Mr. Alec Harvey, who operated a stone quarry in the county, and placed at the entrance of the church with suitable inscription to show the church name and date of founding.

At one time there was a dwelling house located just a few feet from the church. The Stewards purchased this house for the sum of two-thousand dollars and moved it away, thereby gaining a nice parking lot for the worshipers in the church. The money for this came from both the church and the conference, with the conference giving one-half of the purchase price.

Within the last few years a new electric organ, new carpeting, steeple chimes, new pews, pulpit furniture and altar set have been purchased or donated to the church. In addition a perpetual burning light was given by Mr. James Maxwell in 1972 in loving memory of his wife and daughter, Mrs. Annie Laura Maxwell and Miss Virginia Maxwell. This memorial was erected at the entrance of the church.

Praise must be given to those faithful Stewards and Members who down thru the years have given so untirelessly of themselves, their prayers, time and support of Christ's
Church in Crawford.

Least we forget, we now list those under direction and leadership this work in the Name of God has been accomplished.

Bishops Under Whose Name The Church Has Existed.

Bishop Warren Akin Candler
Bishop Arthur James Moore
Bishop John O. Smith

District Superintendents Who Have Faithfully Served This Church.

Rev. B.P. Allen
Rev. C.F. Venable
Rev. S.F. Wiggins
Rev. W.S. Robinson
Rev. J. Lee Allgood
Rev. Jessie W. Veatch
Rev. C.C. Jarrel
Rev. H.L. Byrd
Rev. M.M. Maxwell
Rev. Charles Middlebrooks
Rev. J,H, Barton
Rev. H.S. Smith
Rev. J.C. Callaway
Rev. Harvey C. Holland
Rev. Paul A. Turner
Rev. William H. Ruff
Rev. Lamar A. Cherry

Pastors Who Have Served The Crawford Charge.

Rev. J.A. Sewell 1905-1906
Rev. A.B. Sanders 1906-1907
Rev. Frank E. Jenkins 1907-1909
Rev. H.J. Ellis 1909-1912
Rev. E.A. Ware 1912-1913
Rev. George W. Barrett 1913-1914
Rev. J.R. Jordan 1914-1916
Rev. W.W. Benson 1916-1918
Rev. H.S. Smith 1918-1919
Rev. P.A. Kellet 1919-1921
Rev. George L. King 1921-1923
Rev. W. E. Purcell 1923-1926
Rev. L.B. Jones 1926-1929
Rev. W.W. Watkins 1929-1931
Rev. J.O. Burnetter 1931-1932
Rev. T.L. Rutland 1932-1933
Rev. H.L. Wood 1933-1935
Rev. D.L. Haggard 1935-1939
Rev. C.A. Reece 1939-1940
Rev. C.F. Hugge 1940-1944
Rev. W.D. Gray 1944-1949
Rev. J. Ray McFar 1949-1952
Rev. Ralph Mabry 1954-1957
Rev. John D. Booth 1957-1959
Rev. A.W. Williams 1961-1963
Rev. Samuel A. McDowell 1970-present

With this list of those who have served according to the abilities given to each by God we must include recognition for services rendered down through the years by the dedicated members of the church, both men and women, who have made this history possible.

It is our prayer, that in the years to come, that the continued warmth and friendliness which has and now does prevail will be continued in this congregation in the Name of Christ our Saviour.