Flippen United Methodist Church

1840-1981 History

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BRIEF HISTORY OF FLIPPEN

1840--Organized under name of Zoar Methodist Episcopal Church. Zoar is a Biblical name meaning "little." (See Genesis 18, 19). Mr. Thomas Owensby deeded to the first trustees of Zoar (Matthew Gilbert, Allen Johnson, and Benjamin Crabb) one acre of land for $10.00 on the east side of Highway 42 at the intersection of Tunis Road. On this site the building was constructed of peeled pine poles. Rough, wide boards were used for the weather-boarding. There was no ceiling. The benches were home-made, with one board for the back support.

1844--Methodist Episcopal Church split, and Zoar became part of Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

1854--There were nine districts in all Georgia. Previous researchers speculate that Zoar was on the Covington Circuit in the Athens District. If so, W.R. Branham would have been the first pastor on record.

1855--Zoar placed on McDonough Circuit, in newly formed Atlanta District.

1859--McDonough Circuit placed in newly formed Griffin District. Through the years that followed, re-organization would become a frequent experience for this congregation-changing several times from one circuit to another (mostly McDonough or Stockbridge) and from one district to another (mostly Griffin or South Atlanta). Other churches that were to be joined on a circuit with this congregation include Jonesboro (1861) and Jackson (1864).

1864--General Sherman, in his famous "march to the sea," led his men along the road by Zoar; but, for some reason, spared the little church from the torch that claimed most other things along his path.

1866--Zoar and the four other churches on the McDonough circuit, entered the newly formed North Georgia Conference, when the Georgia Conference divided into the North Georgia Conference and South Georgia Conference.

1871--Lay Delegates were first sent to Annual Conference-among the delegates from the Griffin District was a member of Zoar, Mr. Joseph N. Harris.

1872--Zoar was one of seven churches on the McDonough Charge.

1878--First report of ownership of a parsonage for the pastor of the McDonough Charge.

1881--Salary of pastor of McDonough Charge was $476.67 annually-not counting chickens, syrup, and potatoes.

1886--Zoar was sold, along with the one acre of ground for $100.00 cash to one Mr. Harlow. The Southern Railroad from Atlanta to Macon was completed. Flippen was made a Post Office. Zoar membership felt that the Flippen Community would be a better location for the church and authorized the then-trustees (J.R. Price, J.R. Pair, and C.R. Patterson) to secure a lot of land and construct a new church, to bear the name of the community, "Flippen." Mr. A.G. Harris gave the land where the church now stands. Mr. Jim Bailey, of Jonesboro, was employed to build the church. During construction, the congregation worshipped in the Flippen School. That year, the sanctuary was complete and ready for dedication. Bishop Warren Candler
1886--Continued

preached the dedicatory sermon. A significant change came about when the worship services were begun in the new building—a new organ was purchased, so that the members sang to the accompaniment of a musical instrument for the first time. The first organist was Sallie Fannie Harris (daughter of Judge Absalom G. Harris, Zoar's first delegate to Annual Conference, and mother of present member, Harris McCurry). The first Sunday School Superintendent at Flippen was Mr. Henry Lovern, who held that same position at Zoar.

1893--Flippen's "Conference Askings" totaled $800.00.

1895--Myrtice Lovern, age 15, was the first person buried in the present Flippen Cemetery.

First wedding in Flippen was that of J.C. Harris and Miss Tallie Johnson.

1897--Epworth League (now UMYF—United Methodist Youth Fellowship) first formed at Flippen.

1900--Flippen organized Women's Missionary Society (now called UMW—United Methodist Women). Mrs. M.D. Rountree was elected President.

1905--Flippen membership was 207.

1908--(about) A porch with columns spanned the front of the church.

1909--Flippen paid its pastor $225.00.

1910--Total budget of Flippen was $540.00.

1934--Flippen was remodeled: three class rooms were added on the north side of the building, a choir loft constructed, new pews purchased, the curtain class rooms in the sanctuary were eliminated, along with the slat benches (one of which can still be seen in the fellowship hall). At the same time, the steeple was taken off, the front porch was enclosed to make the vestibule and two class rooms. To accomplish all this remodeling and addition, the sanctuary building was jacked up and moved back from the highway (351). At this time, the present steeple was added.

1939--With the merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Methodist Protestant Church, Flippen became a congregation of The Methodist Church.

1940--Flippen was again remodeled, made possible by the contributions of Mrs. Oza Johnson Wright (Mrs. E. Edward) of Atlanta. Improvements included roofing, painting, carpeting, pulpit furniture, and a beautiful memorial window to her family.

1943--(about) Logs were sawed to build the first tent at Shingleroof.

1947--The pastor, Reverend C.J. Grilhe, drew the plans for and supervised the construction of a recreation building at a cost of $2,500.00.
1947--Flippen organized a Wesleyan Service Guild (now a part of the UMW-United Methodist Women).

1951--The marriage of Miss Elsie Rowan to Mr. Edward L. Thomas was the second wedding in Flippen Church.

1956--The old frame sanctuary was made into an attractive brick structure. Three and one-half story brick structure added to the north side of the church (housing fellowship hall and class rooms), stained glass windows were added to the sanctuary, the sanctuary was carpeted, and much landscaping was done. Central heat was added. Total cost of the improvements was $55,000.

The church purchased its first parsonage and furnished it.

In June meeting at First Methodist Church, Athens, the North Georgia Conference voted approval for Flippen to become a station appointment; so, Flippen's place on circuits came to a close after 116 years.

1956--From 1956 until 1966, the church was pastored by six students at The Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Services were held every Sunday morning and evening.

1961--The recreation center was made into a parsonage and the old one was sold.

1965--The first electric organ was purchased on October 18.

1966--Flippen received its first full-time pastor, Hoyt E. Jenkins. Two additional class rooms were constructed on the top level of the educational building. A choir was formed.

1967--In May the Methodist Men, as a service project, air-conditioned the sanctuary. The Stewart family gave altar furnishings, including a sacrament set. Mrs. James Zachry Thompson gave robes for the newly-formed choir.

1968--On January 17, Flippen voted to purchase the property and home of Mr. Ralph Hinton for $30,000. That home became the parsonage. The former parsonage became additional educational rooms. Church ground now includes 5½ acres.

In April, our denomination merged with the Evangelical United Brethren, and Flippen became a congregation of the United Methodist Church.

1969--Flippen build a "tent" at Shingleroof Campground.

1970--Paved the parking lot.

1971--Sanctuary renovated: new carpet, new pews, narthax desk, baptismal fount.

1972--With the renovation of the sanctuary completed, a service of dedication was led by District Superintendent Neal Windom on February 20. Dan Crawford, pastor, gave the invocation and participated throughout the program. The sermon was brought by Reverend Reynolds Greene, Jr., Missions and Evangelism Chairman, North Georgia Conference.
1972--Parsonage connected to Henry County Water System.

1973--Parsonage was air-conditioned.

1974--Flippen purchased a second-hand organ from Hanleiter United Methodist Church in Griffin for $1,000. The old organ was sold to Mrs. Gene Collum. Church connected to Henry County Water System.

1975--The new parsonage, which sits in a beautifully wooded area just behind the parking area, was dedicated. Our Bishop, Reverend William R. Cannon, preached at the eleven o'clock service and led the dedicatory services in the afternoon. He was assisted by District Superintendent Neal Windom; former pastor, Dan Crawford; and pastor, Scobie Branson, Sr. in the burning of the note. This was also Homecoming Day for the church.

1976--The renovation of the church office was accomplished. New shelving, desk, chair, wall paper, a blind and draperies made the office convenient and lovely.

1978--A new kitchen and fellowship hall were added at a cost of $30,000. Dishes, knives and forks, glasses, utensils and other necessities were purchased for the kitchen. Sunday School Department and Fellowship Hall were air-conditioned.

The Friendship Sunday School Class sponsored the purchase of playground equipment and had it installed on a playground behind the church annex. This playground was surrounded by a chain link fence, sponsored by the United Methodist Men.

1979--The church steeple was reroofed, aluminum siding was placed on the sides of the steeple, and the woodwork on the church and annex was painted.

A historical room was restored in the annex so that there would be a permanent place for the church records.

The United Methodist Men installed a cook-out patio.

1981--A grease fire in the kitchen at the parsonage necessitated some improvements there at a cost of $3,000.

The parsonage was reroofed.