

## HISTORY OF FRIENDSHIP METHODIST CHURCH

In dividing the topics which should share in the program of the Home-coming of Friendship Methodist Church there has been assigned to me the simple topic, "History Of The Church". As our statistics have been destroyed, it has left the field open for a wide range of speculative history.

The story of the creation of the world begins with these words, "In the beginning", and from that start hence there has been a more or less definite record of events in chronological order. If this writing is permitted to begin with these words, "In the beginning", we pause to contemplate that specific time and place.

Certainly as churches are first begun in the hearts of those who comprise their membership, The Friendship Methodist Church began in the lives of devout men and women before the definite year and date which it was organized. Friendship was organized in September 1890, by Isaiah Rivers, a local preacher from Bethany, and Felix Brown, the pastor at Fairburn. Lonnie Eason and Thad Lewis were largely responsible for its organization, they attended a meeting run by the Salvation Army at Bethany. They were converted at this meeting and joined the church. They came home and started a Sunday School in an old store house at this place. It grew in interest and as there wasn't a Methodist Church nearer than Bethany, Riverdale or Fayetteville they began to work to get one here. The first protracted meeting was held under a brush arbor built by the men and boys of the settlement, and services were held in the old store house when the weather wasn't suitable to have services under the arbor. When conference met the new church was put on the Fayetteville circuit with an afternoon appointment. Services were held in a one room log house the first winter as there was no way of heating the old store. It was located on Mrs. Eason's place where Mr. Wiley Chapman now lives.

The newly organized church members began to work to build a church. Mrs. Jane Eason donated the land to build the church on. The men cut and hauled the logs and soon had the building up. At first services were held in the building with only sheeting floor and punching seats, but the members of the church were faithful and kept on working until they had a good floor and seats. In 1894 the church was dedicated by Dr. John D. Heidt.

We had always called it the new church but before it could be dedicated it had to have a name so there were several names suggested to the Quarterly Conference to be voted on among them was "Friendship" which was suggested by Miss Nevada Lewis. When the vote was taken, Friendship was chosen.

The list of charter members accepted as authentic is:

W. L. Cox, Cadellia Cox, Amanda Flowers, W. J. Cox, Lonnie Eason, Lucrecia Cox, Levina Eason Johnson, Thaddaus Lewis, Julia Mitchell, Kiriard Turner and wife, Arthur Turner, Francis Turner, and Jim Turner. All of them have passed on

John Spier was the first pastor assigned by the conference to Friendship Church. The following men have served this church as pastor:

John Spier, E. H. Wood, G. W. Thomas, R. A. Seal, A. B. Weaver, Loy Warwick, John Spier(2nd time), Rev. Snyder, E. C. Aiken, William Spier, I. W. Keithley, W. J. Debardeleben, A. B. Sanders, J. D. Milton, George Gary, J. R. Jones, Rev. Conway, J. S. Askew, M. M. Maxwell, H. H. Dillard, O. L. Kelley, L. Oaky Wilburn, Paul Touchstone, Jack Nickols, Robert Stewart, A. D. Whitimore, J. Clinton Ward, J. D. Gibson, Marvin Felton, Carl Dodds, William A. Tyson Jr., C. S. Middlebrooks, P. G. Curry(Present Pastor). Blake Craft and J. C. Coons

Local preachers giving their time were:

Rev. Todd, Rev. Jones, Tom McGarity, Jim Farr, Joe Farr, L. E. Landrum, Tom Brown and Isaih Rivers. Those I mentioned have had regular appointments, other local preachers having given time during protracted meetings were:

~~Charles Knowles, Joe Banks, Bogan Mask, Walter Jones and others.~~ All of these were back in the early days of the church when people had time to go to church both day and night and week after weeksometimes. Thus Friendship Church was born. Today we are proud of our church and cherish the memory of those loyal souls who made possible the church of today. We reap the benefits of the bushels of corn fed to the preachers horses and the potatoes that went on the dinner table. If those who have gone ahead sacrificed to give it to us, how much greater is our obligation to hand it unblimished to those generations which are coming after us.

Friendship Church has had two buildings, the first was wrecked, to some extent by winds, so it was decided to build a new church at the same location. This was June 1936, J. Clinton Ward was the pastor in charge. The first services in the new church were held in April 1937. J. D. Gibson was the pastor at this time. This church was dedicated September 10, 1944 by William A. Tyson Sr.

This church had three members who went out to preach the gospel, ~~othe members had sons who went out.~~ ~~So let us not be discouraged,~~ work started here when those few men and women started this church is being carried on in other parts of the country as well as here.

We have three members of this church who are over 80 years old. Two of them have been members for over fifty years, the other has been a member here and elsewhere much longer.

Since our last homecoming we have lost by death, one of our beloved pastors, Rev. Loy Warwick, also two members, W. O. Carter and Azero Barber.

Ministers from the following states have served as pastors of Friendship Church : Georgia, S. Carolina, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Texas.

Friendship United Methodist Church

1951 - Lloyd Jackson	
1952 - Clyde Blackstock	
1953 - Charles A. Graves	
1954 - "	
1955 - Paul Douglas	
1956 - "	
1957 - J. M. McNeil	
1958 - Ernest C. Grose	
1959 - Emmett L. Rape	
1960 - Albert M. Beatty	Assistant - Frank Seghers, Jr.
1961 - Marcus Booker	" "
1962 - "	Assistant - Francis L. Ford
1963 - Sidhey T. Ayer, Jr.	
1964 - "	
1965 - Larry Speed	Assistant - Donald W. Hiten
1966 - William M. McCutchen	
1967 - Bill M. Green	Assistant - H. A. McNeil
1968 - Samuel A. Storey	
1969 - James Edgar Foy	
1970 - Gary Knight	
1971 - "	
1972 - "	
1973 - Grady A. Lively	
1974 - J. Ray Thompson	
1975 - H. Frank Barfield	