HISTORY

NAME OF THE CHURCH: Harris Chapel United Methodist

LOCATION: Palmetto, Georgia

NATION, REGIONAL AND LOCAL DENOMINATION CONNECTION: Member of the Atlanta-College Park District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church

Harris Chapel United Methodist Church is said to have been founded in 1879. At this time it was a member of the Atlanta Annual Conference of Georgia of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. However, reports of the Palmetto Methodist Episcopal Church to the Annual Conference made in the years between 1864 through 1890 indicates reports were made from Palmetto Methodist Episcopal Colored Mission. There exist among the property of the Church a Silver Pitcher bearing the inscription "Palmetto Methodist Episcopal Church." This is believed to have been presented to Palmetto Methodist Church (now Harris Chapel United Methodist Church), the year and circumstance of the presentation is not known. The exact circumstance surrounding the naming of the Church Harris Chapel and the founding in 1879 could not be documented. In light of these factors, we could therefore conclude the possibility that present day Harris Chapel United Methodist Church is an outgrowth of Palmetto Methodist Episcopal Colored Mission.

In the year 1895 a three acre trace of land was purchased in the township of Palmetto, Georgia, located on the left shoulder of Highway 29 going north across what is now known as Center Street. For 73 years this was the home of the present Harris Chapel Congregation.

In the year 1896, because of a separation in Georgia Methodist Episcopal Conference forming what was known as Savannah and Atlanta Conference, this church because of geographical location became a part of the Atlanta Conference. In 1951 these two conferences were reunited to form what was the Georgia Conference.

Because of a declining membership at St Mark Methodist Episcopal Church, Cowetta County, was disloved in 1953. At a session of the Annual Conference held at St Mark Methodist Episcopal Church; this congregation was merged with Harris Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church of Palmetto, Georgia. At the time of the merger, the terms included transfer of property owned by St. Mark to be transferred to Harris Chapel. This included the original site of the St Mark Methodist Church, $400 cash money and 17 persons for membership. The land is now used for burying purposes.

1 Journal of the Georgia Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Dec. 1864.
Procedure was made in the same year by the two churches to secure a new site and rebuild the church. So in 1953, the congregation purchased another three acre track of land, present site, and the church was rebuilt. in 1974, a $10,000 renovation of the interior was completed.

THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

The town of Palmetto was chartered by a State Legislative Act approved on February 18, 1854. The name is said to have been conferred upon the little village at this place by a company of South Carolina soldiers enroute to the Mexican War. They said the village reminded them of their native state, the "Palmetto State".

The public school system was established in 1885. Ramah Baptist Church, the oldest church in the County was begun in 1882. The Palmetto Methodist Church was built in 1852. Palmetto first house was built in 1829 by Lacy Griffith, the first Postmaster. Palmetto is situated 25 miles south of Atlanta on U. S. Highway 29 and on the Atlanta and West Point Railroad. The railroad was completed from Atlanta to Palmetto in 1851 and extended to West Point, Georgia in the next two or three years. Palmetto is located on the highest point above sea level of any place between Atlanta and New Orleans. The railroad is built on a watershed divide. Water falling east of the railroad flows into the Atlantic Ocean and that falling west of the railroad flows via the Chattahoochee River System into the Gulf of Mexico. Palmetto now has eight churches and a population of more than 3,500.2

Palmetto, Ga., has a mayor-council form of government, the residents elect a mayor and six councilmen to serve two-year staggered terms. The Councilmen are elected at large. Palmetto utilizes committees to administer city affairs. The mayor serves as chief executive officer. A City Clerk assists with administrative function. Palmetto provides its residents with water supply and distribution, sewage collection and treatment, garbage collection, police protection and jail facility and electric distribution. A county operated and volunteer staffed fire department serves the citizens. Palmetto receives the following services from Fulton County: garbage disposal, library services building inspection, street maintenance and animal control. In conjunction with Fulton County, Palmetto provides parks and recreational facilities. Atlanta Gas Light Company provides gas service3

THE PRESENT DAY CHURCH

The Present Day Harris Chapel Church is situated in a small black Community bonded on all sides by its residents. The surrounding community have provided large number of children and adults to be accommodated at Church. The Educational Ministry is responsible for formulating the Church Porgram.
The Church is presently seeking to meet the challenge of its community by becoming more involved in the local community activities. It is strongly recommending direct involvement in the local government and thereby protecting personal interest and property. The total membership at present as reported to the Annual Conference is 200. It is the function of this Local Church to minister to the needs of persons of its own community and to provide appropriate training and nurture to all age groups, cultural groups and ethnic groups as minimal expectations of authentic church.

The ground on which the church is located is the Northwest quarter of Land Lot # 94 of the 7th district of originally Coweta then Campbell and now Fulton County. It contains three acres and is bounded as following: On the North and East by the Palmetto-Fayetteville Road and the lot Nelson Henry; Fayetteville Road and the Colored Cemetery; it is in the shape of a "Y".

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3 City of Palmetto, "Statement from the Mayor's Office."
LISTED BELOW A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PASTORS SERVING HARRIS CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1887 - G. A. Arnold - Palmetto Methodist Colored Mission
1995 - David Gray - Palmetto Methodist Colored Mission

1897 - W. C. Bryant
1898 - J. W. Tharpe
1899 - J. W. Tharpe
1900 - J. A. Usher
1901 - S. B. Beauford
1902 - H. H. Mouzon
1903 - Albert NcNeal
1904 - A. J. Wilson
1905 - A. J. Wilson
1906 - A. J. Wilson
1907 - A. C. Cheerless
1908 - A. C. Cheerless
1909 - W. C. Bryant
1910 - No Report
1911 - J. O. Smith
1912 - J. O. Smith
1913 - A. G. Story
1914 - A. G. Story
1915 - A. G. Story
1916 - John Crolley
1917 - No Report
1918 - No Report
1919 - N. J. Rose
1920 - No Report
1921 - No Report
1922 - No Report
1923 - J. J. Jones
1924 - J. J. Jones
1925 - J. J. Jones
1926 - J. J. Jones
1927 - J. J. Jones
1928 - J. J. Jones
1929 - R. B. McPherson
1930 - R. B. McPherson
1931 - R. B. McPherson
1932 - No Report
1933 - J. C. Cunningham
1934 - E. D. Adams
1935 - E. D. Adams
1936 - E. D. Adams
1937 - E. D. Adams
1938 - N. A. Bridges
1939 - N. A. Bridges
1940 - E. H. Lee
1941 - E. H. Lee
1942 - E. H. Lee
1943 - E. H. Lee
1944 - E. H. Lee
1945 - E. H. Lee
1946 - J. W. Queen
1947 - J. W. Queen
1948 - J. W. Queen
1949 - J. W. Queen
1950 - J. W. Queen
1951 - J. W. Queen
1952 - J. W. Queen
1953 - M. R. McMillian
1954 - M. R. McMillian
1955 - A. M. Bridges
1970 - A. M. Bridges
1971 - A. M. Bridges
1972 - Dr. Wynn
1973 - Dr. Wynn
1974 - M. F. Davis
1977 - M. F. Davis
1978 - E. J. Best, Jr.
1979 - E. J. Best, Jr.

Report from the Appointment Report made by the Bishop Annually at the Annual Conference. From the Minutes of the Annual Conference.