

H I S T O R Y

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H I A W A S S E E M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

H I A W A S S E E G E O R G I A

R E O R G A N I Z E D

1950

SOUTH-WEST CO.



1952



Interior
Sanctuary
1954



Exterior
1954

THE EARLY CHURCH

was located one half block south of the present church. It has been established that regular services were being held before 1900. Mrs. Cicero Burch moved her membership to Hiawassee Methodist Church at the age of sixteen years from the Fodder Creek church. Mrs. Burch stated that at that time there was a large membership with a regular pastor.

The first pastors, not in chronological order, were: Brothers Reid, Henson, E. L. Adams, Ellis, Hughes, Hampton, Elizer, and "Uncle Nath" Thompson.

Among the early members were Mrs. John Nicholson, Stanton Nicholson, Phillip Woodring, Mrs. Burch, Jim Nicholson, Hannah Lyons, Mrs. Lou Woodring Brown, Lessie Nicholson, Maisie Nicholson, Mrs. Emma Miles Brown, Cicero Brown and some members of the Penland family.

Services were discontinued some thirty or thirty-five years ago.

They were discontinued and the old church sold in 1935 - A. B. Elizer served as pastor 1933-34

This information gathered by Dr. John B. Cobb, by visiting those members of the early Church, and recorded in a history prepared by Mrs. Mercer Brown in 1953 and '54. This journal will be found at the Church.

1. The legal description and reasonable valuation of real estate: -----

18th District and First Section Towns County, Georgia and being part of lot of land number 112, containing a fraction part of an acre. Valued at one thousand two hundred dollars.

2. The specific name of the grantee in deed of conveyance of real estate to the local church:

Quit claim from Pat Harrolson to Myrtie Brannon--Warranty deed from W.V. Rice to Myrtie Brannon--Warranty deed from A.H. Brannon and Elizabeth B. Stoinoff to Hiawassee Methodist Church and Trustees.

3. Outstanding capital debts and how contracted:

None. At the time this report was drawn, there was a lien on the property, but it was lifted in 1961.

4. Detailed statement of the insurance carried on each parcel of real estate, indicating whether restricted by co-insurance or other limiting conditions, and whether adequate insurance is carried.

No restrictions. Policy #147111: Federated Mutual & Implement & Hardware Company: Gainesville, Georgia; \$8,000.00.....\$6,000.00 on the building and \$2,000.00 on the furniture. Note: This has been raised to a total of \$12,000.00.

5. The name of the custodian of all legal papers of the local Church and where they are kept.

Mrs. Roy Sparks is the custodian, and the legal papers are kept in the vault located in the Hiawassee Motor Company building.

6. Any other information that might be helpful:

Description of land: Beginning at the corner of the land of C.O. Howell, Mrs. Elaine England and W.V. Rice; runs thence easterly direction with the line of Mrs. Elaine England 150 feet more or less to street, being the old highway # 2--thence with the right of way of old highway # 2 a northerly direction 100 feet to conditional corner, then a westerly direction parallel with the line of Mrs. Elaine England 150 feet more or less to a conditional corner, this corner being the same distance from the street as the beginning corner, then a southerly direction 100 feet to the beginning corner.

Trustees at time of property purchase were: W.O. Sparks, C.L. Young and Harrison S. Barrett.

Note: This taken from the May 1, 1956 report of the Trustees of the Hiawassee Methodist Church to the 4th Quarterly Conference.

Hiwassee Methodist Church is located near the center of the Town of Hiwassee in Towns County, Georgia. It is on Main St., which is U.S. Highway # 76, Ga. # 17 & 75 running through the center of Town. Hiwassee is the County seat.

The Church takes the name of the old Church which was discontinued some thirty-odd years ago.

The properties of the old Church were sold and the money put on savings in the Bank of Hiwassee by Mr. W.O. Sparks in the early 1940's. This property is now in the hands of the Hiwassee Hardware, Inc., and was purchased by them in 1950.

The present Church property was purchased from A.H. Brannon and Mrs. Elaine England, in 1950.

Our first District Superintendent was A.B. Elizer in 1950-'52. Following him was Zack C. Hayes, who is now pastor of the First Methodist Church in Gainesville, Georgia--1951-'58. Haskel C. Stratton took over the Gainesville District in 1958 and holds that position at this time.

Our Church property and building is valued at twenty thousand dollars. Furnishings are valued at three thousand. The North Georgia Conference designated our Church as a Mission Special and we entertained pastors from Churches in the Gainesville District at a tea, to show them what had been done with their gifts.

On two occasions during the short life of our Church, we have had the honor and privilege of hearing our Bishops speak.

In November, 1954, Bishop Arthur J. Moore met with us for a fellowship supper, followed by a service of Thanksgiving in our new Sanctuary. It was an inspirational meeting for those of us who had dreamed of seeing our Church completed.

On July 9, 1961, Bishop John Owen Smith dedicated our Church to the Glory of God. Of the twenty-three charter members who started the Church, only five were present for the dedication. A luncheon was held at the Elementary School for Bishop Smith, following the morning service.

We have had many wonderful speakers during the years. One outstanding one in my mind was during the exchange of pastors between the South and North Georgia Conferences in 1958 and Bro. Jack McCullough came from Midway to preach our Revival. It was a heartwarming experience.

Bro. Jack Waldroup of North Carolina, was always a welcomed speaker. Blairsville Circuit hated to give him up, and he could have had his choice of pastorates.

Dr. Clegg, from Young Harris College has warmed our hearts with his messages of wisdom, as has Dr. Smith, Dr. John Minter, and to the ministerial students at Young Harris, we will be forever grateful.

HIAWASSEE METHODIST CHURCH

Reorganized 1950

In 1949, a small group of Methodists, along with others who needed a Church home, began a series of Prayer meetings in the homes. These meetings attracted others, including their Baptist friends and were soon too large to be held in private homes. Rev. Ralph Mabry, of the Towns County Circuit, instigated the move toward organizing a Church, but until something concrete could be done, a meeting place was needed. Their Baptist friends, Rev. J.K. Hutchings included, offered the use of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church for Vesper Services, and the meetings continued there on Sunday afternoons at five.

In 1950, Dr. John B. Cobb came as pastor of the Towns County Circuit and it was under his direction that the Hiawassee Methodist Church became a reality. Dr. Cobb lived in the parsonage built by the Circuit, of which Hiawassee was now a part, on property given by Mrs. Garrett in 1949.

The old Church property had been sold and the money placed in savings some years back. A new lot was purchased for the Church from A.H. Brannon. It was originally a part of the old Riley Cloer estate. The Conference gave five hundred dollars, and the owner two hundred and fifty dollars toward the purchase price of one thousand dollars. The remainder was raised during a revival held at the Baptist Church. One thousand dollars from the sale of the old property remained in the bank.

Mr. David Cuttino, an Atlanta architect, drew plans for the building without charge and the Highway contractors saw to it that the lot was properly graded. Trees were marked from Government land, Mr. Boyd Woodring donated his time to directing the

cutting, Mr. Clarence Young gave the use of his trucks and men for hauling, and Mr. Doyle Ledford sawed the lumber without charge. When the members had raised two thousand dollars in goods and services, the Manget Foundation, of Newnan, Georgia gave one thousand dollars.

The charter members, in chronological order: Mr. Harrison S. Barrett, Mrs. Harrison S. Barrett, Mrs. G.W. Bond, Miss Lee Bond, Mrs. J.N. Brown, Mr. James Brown, Mrs. Cicero Burch, Mrs. John B. Cobb, Mrs. Hattie E. Fruit, Mrs. E.V. Garreaux, Mrs. Ila Kelly, Mr. Woodrow B. Neal, Mrs. Woodrow B. Neal, Miss Mary Beth Neal, Mr. H.A. McElhannon, Mrs. H.A. McElhannon, Thomas E. Nelms, Mrs. Kathryn B. Nix, Mrs. Gertrude R. Sparks, William O. Sparks, Mr. Boyd Woodring, Mr. Clarence L. Young, Mrs. Marjorie F. Young. Of the original twenty-three charter members, ten remain.

The Rev. Eugene Brown came in 1951 as pastor of the Circuit, and a tent revival was held on the church lot. Construction was begun and the framework completed enough to hold services.

The Rev. C. A. Johnson followed in 1952 and our first Sunday School was held in July 1952, when the Fellowship Hall was completed. The first officers and teachers of this Sunday School were: Mr. Clarence Young, Supt., Mrs. Roy Sparks, teacher of beginners, Mrs. Clarence Young, juniors, Miss Lee Bond, Intermediates, Mr. W. B. Neal, Adults. Mr. and Mrs. Neal gave a piano to the church at this time, and Miss Mary Beth Neal was our pianist. The first Daily Vacation Church School was held in the summer of 1952, conducted by Miss Bert Winters, District Rural Worker and assisted by Mrs. Walter Nix, Mrs. C.L. Young, Mrs. Frances Whilden and Mrs. C.A. Johnson. About thirty children were enrolled.

Brother Johnson was followed in 1953 by Rev. Jack Gorham. Bro. Gorham began printing a church bulletin for each Sunday's service,

and carrying on the good example set by Miss Winters with the Vacation Church school, and the organization of a Junior M Y F. At the end of March 1954, our Church membership totaled thirty-two, forty-two Church School members and thirteen W.S.C.S. members.

It should be noted here that throughout the preceeding three years, ministerial students from Young Harris College served our Church on the Sundays that we did not have a pastor. For these students and the Faculty members who helped us, we are deeply grateful.

During the closing months of our 1954-55 year, we began to consider being made a station Church. We found to our dismay, that to become a station Church, a minimum salary is required, with increases each succeeding year. We talked with District Supt. Zack C. Hayes, and he was convinced that we could work toward becoming a station. One of the requirements was a parsonage. We relinquished all rights to any part of the Circuit parsonage we held, rented a house and furnished it as best we could. What a wonderful feeling it was! To have a full time pastor, a place for him to live and the knowledge that our hard work, the generous help of our friends and our faith in God had brought us such happiness.

In June 1955, the Rev. Howard R. Staples moved into our parsonage with his wife and two sons.

With the coming of Rev. Staples, an official board was organized, a regular system of contributing was established, a Bible study course was held on Wednesday nights, a parish paper was published by Rev. Staples, our Sanctuary was completed and our first service was held in it on August 8, 1955. During Rev. Staples stay, seventeen new members, coming by transfer, profession of faith, and other

denominations, were received into our membership. This was the year of the first wedding in our Church and two infant baptisms. Our Church School attendance and M Y F group attendance continued to grow.

In July 1956, the Rev. Marcus R. Martin, his wife and two children were sent to Hiawassee. For Bro. Martin, this was home, since he had attended Young Harris College and met his wife there. Bro. Martin served with the Alumni Board at the College as well as our Church and was always extremely busy. He loved to visit, made friends with all the towns people and received forty-one members into the Church membership. The Spiritual Life of the Church improved and we continued to move forward.

The Rev. John Ozley and his family came to us in July 1958. Rev. Ozley served on the Faculty of Young Harris College and was loved by all who knew him. He was active in worthwhile community projects as well as in his Church duties. Mrs. Ozley served as organist, with Miss Linda Manship playing for evening services after our organ was purchased and dedicated in 1958. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Warmenhoven spearheaded the organ drive and raised most of the funds with which it was purchased. Twenty-six members were added to the Church rolls under Mr. Ozley

Rev. and Mrs. Dean Head came to Hiawassee in July 1960. Mr. Head serves on the Faculty of Young Harris College. Ten new members have been added to the Church rolls. Our rolls record eighty-four members. Of this number, twenty-seven have moved away or have otherwise remained inactive. The Church was presented for Dedication on July 9, 1961 by Mr. W.O. Sparks, and Dedicated by Bishop John Owen Smith. Miss Linda Manship is our organist, with Mrs. Head serving as her assistant.

A choir has been formed during the past year by Mrs. Head, and a landscaping project started. Those assisting in the latter have been Dr. and Mrs. Perrin Andrews, Mr. and Mrs. B.H. Abbott, Jr., Bro. and Mrs. Head, and Mrs. Roy Sparks. Bro. Gilbert, pastor of the McConnell Memorial Baptist Church, and Mrs. Hattie Kimsey also assisted.

OFFICIAL BOARD

Until July, 1955, the official board did not hold regular meetings. There is no record of any earlier meeting to be found.

Under the direction of the Rev. Howard R. Staples, a meeting was held on July 1, 1955, to organize a board and elect the officials. The following attended the first meeting. Rev. Staples, Mrs. Gus Franks, Miss Lee Bond, Miss Mary Setzer, Mrs. L.M. Brown, B.H. Abbott, Jr., Mrs. B.H. Abbott, Jr., Harrison Barrett, W.O. Sparks, C.L. Young, H.C. Hoodenpyle, Mrs. H.C. Hoodenpyle and Mrs. Roy Sparks.

Mr. H.C. Hoodenpyle was elected chairman; Mrs. Gus Franks, Vice-Chairman, Mrs. B.H. Abbott, Jr., Treasurer--serving in this capacity for seven consecutive years; Mrs. Roy Sparks, Recording Secretary, also serving seven consecutive years. Mr. B.H. Abbott Jr., was the next chairman of the Board. Others serving in this capacity have been Mr. C.L. Young and Mr. Walton McNeal.

The fourth Monday evening in each month was selected as the official meeting night and remained so until the November 26, 1956 meeting, when it was voted to change it to the first Monday night, beginning with the December meeting. It remains so today.

Average attendance for the meetings is six.

This above information was taken from the minutes of the board meetings, and may be found in the care of Mrs. Roy Sparks

Hiawassee Methodist Sunday School

The Sunday School was the second organization of our Church. It was organized in July 1952 under the Rev. C.A. Johnson. Mr. C.L. Young was elected as Superintendent. Teachers were elected as follows: Adults, Mr. W.B. Neal; Intermediates, Miss Lee Bond; Juniors, Mrs. C.L. Young; Beginners, Mrs. Roy Sparks. At the end of March 1954, our Sunday School membership totaled forty-two. By the end of 1958 our membership had increased to sixty-seven, with an average attendance of forty.

Superintendents have been: Mr. C.L. Young, Mr. B.H. Abbott, Jr., Miss Lee Bond and Mr. Oscar Adams.

The Sunday School teachers follow up the Pastor's visits to those who are ill, bringing their lessons to them. Attendance awards are given quarterly, workers attend the Daily Vacation Church School Institute and otherwise participate in the Church School program.

In addition to the approved literature, the Church School has purchased song books, chairs and other equipment for the Church. Flowers are sent to hospitalized members. COME TO CHURCH signs have been placed in motels and Tourist cottages in the area.

In the May 3, 1959 pastor's report to the Quarterly Conference, the total Church School membership was eighty-three, with an average attendance of fifty-four. Forty pupils enrolled in Vacation Church School. At present, our membership is seventy-four, with an average attendance of forty.

The above information taken from Church history, quarterly conference records, and pastor's yearly reports. In custody of Mrs. Roy Sparks

Woman's Society of Christian Service

The Hiawassee Woman's Society of Christian Service was the first organization of our Church to be established.

On January 4, 1950, the first group of ladies composed of Mesdames C.L. Young, Frank Lee, Hugh Hoodenpyle, Bill Walker, Ralph Mabry, Woodrow Neal, J.H. Webb, Miss Evelyn Medders and the pastor, Rev. Ralph Mabry, met to discuss further plans for organization and to elect a roster of officers. Bro. Mabry served as chairman until the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. C.L. Young; Vice President, Miss Evelyn Medders; Treasurer, Mrs. Bill Walker and Secretary, Mrs. Ralph Mabry.

Serving as President during the past twelve years have been: Mrs. C.L. Young, Mrs. E.V. Garraux, Mrs. W.B. Neal, Mrs. Roy Sparks, Mrs. Gus Franks, Mrs. Jim Lankford and Miss Lee Bond.

On October 11, 1950, new officers were elected. At the end of the first year, the membership totaled nine--an increase of one. By the end of the second year, our membership stood at eleven, later dropping to six, since some of our families moved away. Our present membership is nineteen and remains fairly stable. Average attendance at general meetings now is ten. Our meetings are held on the 2nd Monday evening of each month.

Some of the activities over the years have been taking baskets of fruit and garden flowers to shut-ins; special Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets of food to needy families; choosing a child from a needy family as "our Child" and buying clothes, toys, etc., each year; furnishing school lunches to needy children; and after our local hospital was built, we placed Bibles in the patients rooms. Members of our group have patched linens for the hospital. We sponsored rummage sales during Court week, concession stands at the Georgia Mountain Fair, and suppers to help raise money for our Building Fund.

We give a tenth of all our income from these special projects to Missions, and do our best to fulfill the regular program of the Society as a whole.

Note: This information taken from the records of the W.S.C.S. and are on file at the Church.

METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The M Y F was organized on March 28, 1954, under the leadership of the Rev. Jack Gorham, who served as director until June. The group included ages ranging from seven to fifteen, so we named our M Y F a junior group. Officers were duly elected, with regular meetings held on Sunday evenings before the Church hour.

Mrs. Mercer Brown, Mrs. Roy Sparks and Miss Lee Bond have served as Directors, assisting the pastors in this work. Students from Young Harris College were most helpful in working with this group. Under their leadership, a Youth Choir was formed, and a Youth Revival was one of the highlights of their activities.

Presidents of the M Y F have been Dale Thurman, Miss Sue Wheeler and Miss Mary Beth Neal, who also served as pianist. This group was very active and enthusiastic in their work, with projects which included beautifying the Church yard and keeping the grass mowed. They have been active in attending the Sub-District meetings, District Youth Camp at Glisson and made a gift to the new building at Camp Glisson. In 1959, there were fourteen members in the regular M Y F and seven in the Junior M Y F. Directors for both groups, with separate programs for each group kept attendance at regular meetings high. Average attendance was eighteen.

Mrs. Curtis Amerson organized and directed a Craft Class on Thursday afternoons for members of this group and it was well attended.

During the past year, the M Y F has been discontinued.

Most of the above information recalled by members and directors, since records are misplaced at this time.

Prepared by Committee on Church History:

Mrs. Roy Sparks

Mrs. Roy Sparks, Chairman

Miss Lee Bond

Miss Lee Bond, Co-Chairman

May 18, 1962