HISTORY OF LEBANON METHODIST CHURCH
1845 -- 1961

Hall_charge

Mrs. Lee Haynes
Historian
History of Lebanon Methodist Church

Lebanon Methodist Church was built in 1845 on the Holly Springs road ten miles from Gainesville. In the year 1865, the church was moved to the Camp Ground located one mile off the Gilsville highway and eight miles from Gainesville.

Howell McClesky was responsible for the church being moved to this location because it was more centrally located and convenient to the members of the church, which consisted of Eberhardts, McCleskys, Joneses, Langfords, Buffingtons, and Durhams. The descendents of these people are members of Lebanon Church at the present time.

Ezekiel Buffington sold, in the year 1846, for the sum of one dollar, 5 acres of land to the Methodist Episcopal Church trustees A. M. Evans, William Gilmer, A. C. Wright, E. J. Dunegan, William J. Durham, L. D. Wood, Robert C. Wood, J. J. McClesky, and Thomas A. McClesky, for the purpose of a camp meeting ground and known as Lebanon Camp Ground. The agreement being that at any time the camp meetings were disbanded the land, with the exception of improvements which were to belong to the tent holders, was to revert back to the estate of Ezekiel Buffington.

A church conference was held twice a year with reports given by Sunday School, local preachers, Missions, and Stewards.

The earliest record of church conference was held Jan. 24, 1892. At this time Lebanon was on the Belton Charge.
There were twelve churches on the charge. Rev. A. C. Cantrell was pastor at this time.

In 1909 the Belton Charge assessment was seven hundred dollars. The sum of two hundred and seventy-five dollars assumed by Lebanon Church.


Homer A. Langford was Secretary of the church. W. A. Thompson, M. F. Jones, T. N. Buffington, S. S. Cranford, and W. F. Wallis were the "Class Leaders" as they were called in the record book.

Prayer meeting was held at 3 p.m. every Sunday.

From the reports of these old church records the members were devout christians and the rules of the church very strict. There are records of several people being "turned out" of the church for various reasons. The male and female membership roll was kept separate. The men and women were not allowed to sit together in church.

Epworth League was organized in 1896. With meetings called for Sunday afternoon after Prayer Meeting.

Brother Joseph M. Jones, ninety years old, the oldest living member tells of the wonderful fellowship and Spiritual Meetings they had and the good that came out of what he called "Class Meeting" and Prayer Meetings held providing the weather permitted.

Brother Joe as he is known around Lebanon attended church
for the first time in 1871, carried there by his mother as an infant and baptised. He has been a minister of the Gospel since 1883. He preached his first sermon at Lebanon.

The revival services were held under the Arbor during Camp Meeting.

Back in the olden days Camp Meeting was held in October due to the fact that it was a slack time for farmers.

The Camp Ground is made up of four rows of tents forming a square with the arbor in the center. The meetings being held in October it was necessary to have fire for heat as well as cooking. The fires were built in back of each row of tents. The ladies gathered around these fires to cook their meals. A wonderful friendship as well as fellowship must have been formed and enjoyed during that time.

In the year 1895 the present church was built on land given by Berrian Buffington including the "graveyard". Written in the deed that at any time the Methodist Church sold said property, the "graveyard" lot was not to be included in the sale. Also, the tent holders were to have access to both springs on said property.

The Trustees at the time were W. A. Thompson, T. H. Jones, H. L. Langford, Virgil Thompson, and Berrian Buffington.

Later another track of land was given the Camp Ground. There was approximately ten acres of land known as Concord Presbyterian Church property. Westly Hancock gave this land in presence of members of the church providing the old cemetery at Concord was preserved and graves kept clean. If at any time
this agreement was not carried out the property was to revert back to the Hancock estate.

After the present church was built it was decided to hold Camp Meeting in August, beginning on Monday before the Second Sunday and closing Sunday night. Four services are conducted a day, beginning at 9 a.m.; 11 a.m.; 3 p.m.; and 8 p.m.

Only once in one hundred and five years has the meeting not been held. That was during the Civil War.

A new Arbor was completed and dedicated in 1945, celebrating the centennial of both Church and Camp Ground.

Brother Joseph M. Jones is not the only minister that has gone out from old Lebanon. Rev. Glenn Davis, Dr. Wills M. Jones, Rev. Tom Allen Jones, Rev. Baxter Thompson, Rev. Alvin Langford, and Rev. Winburn Eberhardt have been Ministers of the Gospel for a good many years.

The Ministers serving Lebanon Church as pastors are as follows:

Rev. Billy Parks
Rev. Britton Candess
Rev. M. H. Mikes
Rev. John Venible
Rev. J. L. Terryman
Rev. H. S. Braswell
Rev. A. A. Tilly
Rev. W. R. Williams
Rev. A. C. Cantrell
Rev. C. Verdell
Rev. Frank Quillian
Rev. W. E. Arnold
Rev. J. C. Atkinson
Rev. R. C. Heckler
Rev. W. R. Seaborn
Rev. A. C. Scott
Rev. John Little
Rev. Marvin Swilling
Rev. A. A. Sullivan
Rev. W. A. Mallery
Rev. Walter Robertson
Rev. J. L. Hall
Rev. D. C. Patterson
Rev. T. L. Rutledge
Rev. O. P. McDermit
Rev. Zack Hayes
Rev. George W. Barrett
Rev. Charles Grey
Rev. E. C. Swetnam
Rev. H. B. Landrum
Rev. Paul Smith
Rev. G. H. Smith

This brings the history of Lebanon Church up to the present year 1951.

Collections are being made for the purpose of building a new church which will be completed in the near future.