

*New Hope*  
*United Methodist Church*



*100th Anniversary*

*1883 - 1983*

*April 3, 1983*

*New Hope Drive*

*Clayton County, Ga.*

## HISTORY OF NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 1983

Due to the lack of historical records concerning New Hope United Methodist Church, the following history has been compiled by recollections from descendants of some of the founding families. Following the church's history, is a list of approximately 35 founding family names, and also, a list of all preachers from 1884 to present date. Many descendants of early founders are members today.

New Hope United Methodist Church sits on approximately four and one-fourth acres located on New Hope Drive in Clayton County, Georgia, and is on the Hampton-New Hope Charge, of the Griffin District in the North Georgia Conference.

New Hope Church was founded in 1883, by members of the old Asbury Church. Asbury Church was located off of what is now known as McDonough Road and on the back side of Hastings' property. Asbury Church was damaged during the Civil War, and due to the deteriorated state and lack of repairs over the years, members felt a new Church was needed. It was decided that this new Church be built in the New Hope Community. An acre of land was given by Mr. A. F. Guice. The original Church building was built by the early members, who volunteered their time. This building, also, served as the community school and was located on what is now the cemetery.

In August, 1893, Mary Emma Guice was the first person to be buried in the cemetery. In the following years, lots were sold for \$10.00 each to raise money to erect a fence around the cemetery. In 1941, due to lack of space, Ben Hill Guice was the first person to be buried outside of the cemetery fence. Shortly after, a decision was made to extend the fence, and has since been extended twice.

In 1902, the Rev. B.E.L. Timmons started all day singing with dinner on the grounds, held on the second Sunday in May. This practice continued until World War I, at which time it was discontinued. Brush Arbor meetings were held on the land where the Fincher home is now located. This spot was, also, known as the 'Hitching Post'.

In 1907, another half acre was given by the A. F. Guice family, for the erecting of a new Church building. Members once again donated their time and labor to build the present Sanctuary.

Mr. J. S. (Bud) Dickson sawed and dressed timber from his own farm, giving lumber to build the new Church. A team of oxen and a wagon were used to bring the lumber to the building site. Although Mr. Dickson attended services regularly and was a faithful supporter of the Church, he never became a member.

This new Sanctuary was heated by a pot-bellied stove, and Alladdin Kerosene Lamps hanging from the ceiling served as the lighting of the Church. These lamps were used until the late 1940's when electricity was installed. The hooks on which these lamps hung are still visible in the Church ceiling today. (With the help of some of our neighbors, we have managed to find, for our Centennial celebration, examples of these old lamps and have hung them up to give an effect of olden times.) Gas heaters replaced the old pot-bellied stove in the 1950's.

As far as we can determine, there have been 3 sets of pews used. The present pews were donated in memory of loved ones, or by individuals through love and devotion to the Church. These pews along with the furniture in the pulpit were installed in 1973. The earliest pews were made of slatted wood. Solid wood ones were given by the Jonesboro Methodist Church some years later. We are still using

a few of both sets in our fellowship hall and Sunday School rooms.

In 1956, approximately one and one-half acres of land was donated to New Hope by Mrs. J. K. Kelley, and an additional 1.9 acres was donated by Mr. Hill Evans.

Sunday School classes were held in the church every Sunday with preaching once a month. Sometime after 1946, Mrs. Sidney (Jewel) Betsill became Sunday School Superintendent, seeing the need for more space a building fund was established in order to build future Sunday School rooms. In the 1950's, using the building fund to buy supplies and with some of the work hired, members once again donated their time building the structure that is our fellowship hall and Sunday School building. A lot of the work was done by Grady Smith, who gave of his time and talent in laying blocks and doing most of the carpentry work. Buford Dixon donated and installed all the plumbing and fixtures. Completion of this structure took a little over a year. A few years later one of the Sunday School rooms was converted into a kitchen with Mr. Ed McCook doing most of this work as well as trim work throughout the fellowship hall.

At one time, during the Church's history, Stewards of the Church would go around from home to home collecting money in order to pay the preachers and quarterly conference dues. If enough money was not collected the Treasurer, Mr. R. L. (Bud) Dixon would make up the difference.

We do not know if New Hope was on Brooks Station Circuit or on Fayetteville Circuit in 1883. The Inman Circuit (Fayette Co.), of which New Hope became a part was established in 1890.

New Hope, being on the border of the district lines, it changed districts many times. Thus, over the years New Hope found itself on the Inman-Brooks Circuit, the Noah's Ark Circuit, and the Ebenezer Circuit. (A Circuit being more than one Church sharing a preacher).

The majority of Ministers were students or retired Supply preachers. In 1970, the Rev. J.K. Kelley (Retired Supply) volunteered to take the Ebenezer-New Hope Circuit. Rev. Kelley served us until his death on October 5, 1971. After Rev. Kelley's death, the Rev. Charles Crenshaw became the full time pastor of New Hope Church serving until 1976, at which time we were placed with the Hampton Church and made a part of the Hampton Charge, with Rev. Charles Handley serving until 1979, and from 1979 to present (1983) the Rev. J. Ray Melear.

During the past few years, many changes have taken place at New Hope. Even though it is a small membership Church, \$15,000 on improvements have been made. With fund raisings, dedicated work and love this has been possible. Some of the improvements include a new roof, new vinyl siding, new windows, and complete renovation to the inside of the Sunday School building.

Out of love and dedication to her Church, the late Annie Mae Darden made it possible to have central heating and central air installed in December, 1980.

New Hope United Methodist Church was host to a session of the United Methodist Rural Life Fellowship during its national meeting in Atlanta. The leaders decided they wanted to have some of the sessions outside the city in a rural atmosphere and New Hope was chosen. On the night of

December 4, 1980, New Hope hosted this session with a southern barbecue dinner, and night meeting of town and country church leaders from some 20 states.

We would, also, like to mention that Jonesboro has had two Mayors from descendants of New Hope Church. Mr. Clarence Lamb, descendant of Mr. J. J. Lamb (Grandfather), served from 1950 to 1952 at which time Mr. Hugh Dickson became Mayor and still serves in that position. Mr. Dickson's Grandfather was Mr. W. W. Dickson. Also, Mr. P. K. Dixon, Grandson of founding Member Mr. Robert D. Dixon, served for many years as Chairman of Commissioners and Clerk of Court.

We want to welcome Bishop Joel McDavid to our celebration. This is indeed an honor; and to our knowledge, the first time a Bishop has visited our Church.

Today (1983), New Hope United Methodist Church has a membership of approximately 53 members. Though many changes have taken place, New Hope still stands on the same foundation on which it was built - - Jesus Christ. We are proud of, and grateful for our christian heritage and for those members, both past and present, who have given their untiring devotion to carrying on the Lord's work.

Without sufficient historical information, many dedicated people who have contributed much to the development and on-going program of New Hope Church have not been properly given credit, but we are grateful for their devotion in making this 100th celebration possible.

We want to thank, Miss Carrie Conkle, Mrs. Essie Kelley, Mrs. Mary Bailey, Mr. P. K. Dixon, Mr. & Mrs. Ed McCook, Mr. Clarence Lamb, Mrs. Murdie Lewis, and Mrs. Sidney Betsill for sharing their memories. Without their help and the help of many more, too numerous to name, writing this history would have been an impossible task. Our appreciation and love to each of you.

History Compiled by:  
Mrs. David (Martha) Fincher  
Mrs. Leonard (Norma) Nunnally  
-1983-

## FOUNDING FAMILY NAMES

G. B. Betsill, Sr.  
 A. F. Guice  
 J. B. Edwards  
 Joseph Pledger  
 J. J. Lamb  
 W. P. Dixon  
 W. V. Dixon  
 J. M. Lamb  
 J. M. Guice  
 R. D. Guice  
 J. A. Lamb  
 J. H. Conkle  
 Rufus Betsill  
 Cue Betsill  
 William S. Guice  
 G. B. Betsill, Jr.  
 J. F. Lamb  
 T. J. Lamb  
 C. F. Edwards  
 W. E. Edwards  
 Joseph G. Betsill  
 Monroe Cater  
 James O. Cater  
 L. T. Betsill  
 L. O. Cater  
 Robert Cater  
 W. W. Dickson  
 William Moody  
 William V. Cater  
 James Cater  
 H. O. Belcher  
 John H. Stanfield  
 William P. Stanfield  
 J. M. Stanfield  
 J. T. Stanfield  
 Robert L. Dixon  
 Henry Stanfield

## PASTORS 1884 - 1983

In 1884 Rev. Britton Sanders was pastor of the Brooks Station Circuit, 1884 - 1886.  
 Rev. Gibson C. Andrews was at Fayetteville Circuit 1884.  
 Rev. T.S.L. Harrell (or Harwell) was on the Fayetteville Circuit 1885.  
 Rev. J. R. Smith was on the Fayetteville Circuit 1886 - 1887.  
 Rev. G. W. Thomas was on the Fayetteville Circuit 1888 - 1889.

We do not know if New Hope was on Brooks Station Circuit or Fayetteville Circuit in 1883. The Inman Circuit was established in 1890 of which New Hope became a part.

|                     |                   |         |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Rev. C. M. Verdell  | 1890 - 1891       | 2 years |
| Rev. Casper Wright  | 1892 - 1893       | 2 years |
| Rev. J. A. Reynolds | 1894 - 1895       | 1 year  |
| Rev. G. W. Thomas   | 1895 - 1896       | 1 year  |
| Rev. J. Lane Ware   | 1896 - 1897       | 1 year  |
| Rev. W. C. Davis    | 1897 - 1899       | 2 years |
| Rev. N. E. McBrayer | 1900 - 1902       | 3 years |
| Rev. B.E.L. Timmons | 1902 - 1905       | 3 years |
| Rev. J. W. Bailey   | 1905 - 1909       | 4 years |
| Rev. J. S. Askew    | 1909 - 1913       | 4 years |
| Rev. A. E. Scott    | 1913 - 1915       | 2 years |
| Rev. R. P. Tatum    | 1915 - 1916       | 1 year  |
| Rev. J. S. Hill     | 1916 - 1917       | 1 year  |
| Rev. C. D. Reid     | 1917 - 1918       | 1 year  |
| Rev. J. R. Jones    | 1918 - 1920       | 2 years |
| Rev. A. W. Conway   | 1920 - 1921       | 1 year  |
| Rev. W. E. Brown    | 1921 - 1922       | 1 year  |
| Rev. Z. Speer       | 1922 - 1923       | 1 year  |
| Rev. Jesse Terrell  | 1923 - 1924       | 1 year  |
| Rev. J. S. Askew    | 1924 - 1928       | 4 years |
| Rev. W. R. Williams | Only a short time |         |
| Rev. J. C. Callaway | 1928 - 1931       | 3 years |
| Rev. V. O. Gentry   | 1931 - 1934       | 3 years |
| Rev. L. P. Huckaby  | 1934 - 1935       | 1 year  |

|                               |  |          |
|-------------------------------|--|----------|
| Rev. George H. Stone          | 1936 - 1937  | 2 years  |
| Rev. Z. V. Hawks              | 1937 - 1938  | 1 year   |
| Rev. T. M. Holbrook           | 1938 - 1940  | 2 years  |
| Rev. H. G. Garrett            | 1940 - 1942  | 2 years  |
| Rev. Lamar Cherry             | 1942-Part of 1944  | 1 year   |
| Rev. Dickens                  | 1944   | 1/2 year |
| Rev. J. W. Graham             | Nov. 1944  | 2/3 year |
| Rev. Jacob Lackey             | Aug. 1945  | 1/3 year |
| Rev. R. E. Whatley            | Dec. 1945 - 1947   | 2 years  |
| Rev. Fred Stinson (S)         | 1947 - 1949  | 2 years  |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)               |          |
| Rev. J. R. Thompson           | 1949 - 1951  | 2 years  |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)               |          |
| Rev. C. E. Speir              | 1951 - 1953  | 2 years  |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope,<br>County Line. (Griffin District) |          |
| Rev. Roy Fiske (S)            | 1953 - 1955  | 2½ years |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope,<br>County Line. (Griffin District) |          |
| Rev. Gerald McCray (S)        | 1955 - 1958  | 3 years  |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope,<br>County Line. (Griffin District) |          |
| Rev. E. R. Casebier (S)       | 1958 - 1960  | 2 years  |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope,<br>County Line. (Griffin District) |          |
| Rev. Darold Storm (S)         | 1960 - 1961  | 1 year   |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope,<br>County Line. (Griffin District) |          |
| Rev. Joe Wagner (S)           | 1961 - 1962  | 1 year   |
|                               | Inman, Brooks, Union, New Hope,<br>County Line. (Griffin District) |          |
| Rev. Frank B. Segers, Jr. (S) | 1961 - 1962  | 1 year   |
|                               | Noah's Ark, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)                         |          |
| Rev. Gary Rowell (S)          | 1963 - 1964  | 1 year   |
|                               | Noah's Ark, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)                         |          |
| Rev. Robert M. Alston (S)     | 1964 - 1965  | 1 year   |
|                               | Noah's Ark, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)                         |          |

|                            |   |         |
|----------------------------|---|---------|
| Rev. Lawrence E. Grove (S) | 1965 - 1966                                       | 1 year  |
|                            | Noah's Ark, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)        |         |
| Rev. Wm. Jim Roberts (S)   | 1966 - 1968                                       | 2 years |
|                            | Noah's Ark, New Hope<br>(Griffin District)        |         |
| Rev. Tom Norton (S)        | 1968 - 1969                                       | 1 year  |
|                            | Noah's Ark, New Hope<br>(Atlanta-Southwest Dist.) |         |
| Rev. J. K. Kelley (RS)     | 1970 - Oct. 5, 1971                               | 1 year  |
|                            | New Hope, Ebenezer<br>(Atlanta-Southwest Dist.)   |         |
| Rev. Charles Crenshaw      | Nov. 1971 - 1976                                  | 5 years |
|                            | New Hope<br>(Griffin District)                    |         |
| Rev. Charles Handley       | 1976 - 1979                                       | 3 years |
|                            | Hampton - New Hope Charge<br>(Griffin District)   |         |
| Rev. J. Ray Melear         | 1979 -  |         |
|                            | Hampton, New Hope Charge<br>(Griffin District)    |         |