NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY

Locust Grove Charge
The Griffin District

New Hope Methodist Church received two and three-fourth acres of land September 8, 1835 from Elizabeth Allen to Thomas W. Harris, Peter Wolf, David Holley, Claibone Trussell, David Grant, Joseph Wolf and James Findley, trustees of the Church. The Church is located in Henry County, seven miles northeast of Locust Grove, Georgia. On October 29, 1902, the church property was added to by a lot of one acre, given by J. A. C. Wynn, to the trustees of New Hope Church.

During recent years New Hope Church bought an additional acre of land to be used for cemetery from Mr. W. T. Kelley, paying one hundred dollars ($100.00) for same.

Nothing definite is known about the Church from the time of its beginning until 1889. None of the charter members are living, but some of the older members tell us that the earliest place of worship was a brush arbor.

At the present time New Hope Church is in the Griffin District, Locust Grove Charge, but according to old records and minutes the church was in the South Atlanta District in 1895. The Official roll of the church at that time was: R. F. Burford, Trustee, and Steward; J. A. C. Wynn, Trustee; J. S. Rape Trustee; L. B. Garr, Trustee, S. A. Tolleson, Steward; J. R. Wilkins, Steward; J. R. Cowan, Church Secretary. According to records the pastors for the South Atlanta District were as follows: 1889 - 1890, Rev. M. H. Dillard, 1890 - 1892, Rev. E. A. Eakes, 1893 - 1894, - 1895, Rev. J. S. Askey.

On November 2, 1896, the fourth quarterly conference of the Jenkinsburg Charge was held at Worthville Church in Butts County. At this time New Hope Church was in the Jenkinsburg Charge. The following amounts were contributed at this conference: Jenkinsburg, $25.75, Stark, $82.25, New Hope, $34.30, Worthville, $22.70. The pastors for the Jenkinsburg Charge were: 1896 - 1898, Rev. B. Sanders, Rev. J. W. Hunt 1899, Rev. J. M. Myers, part of 1900, Rev. L. H. Green.

From past records, we find New Hope Church was put on the Locust Grove Charge during the year 1900, and the pastor of the Charge was Rev. J. M. Fowler, who served in 1900 and 1901.

So far as is known, New Hope congregations have only worshipped in two church buildings. The present building was build during the summer of 1902. It is built of wood and is a one room structure with a seating capacity of 300. R. F. Burford, one of the stewards of the Church, gave the timber to make the lumber. The total cost of the building, according to one of the older members, was around fifty ($50.00). The members of the church contributed free labor. The value of our church building today, is three thousand dollars ($3,000.00).

The inside of the auditorium was remodeled in 1960. The value of the remodeling is approximately three thousand dollars. ($3,000.00)
With the passing of time and the changes being made in one's life, the need for an education building came to our attention. In July, 1954, the first money for this building was deposited. The Quarterly Conference at Mount Bethel, in either August or September, 1954, gave the church permission to build, and today, September 30, 1956, we have the building completed and it will show for itself. It is a concrete block building size 34 by 50 feet, and contains four class rooms, a kitchen and recreational room. The approximate cost of the building was three thousand dollars ($3000.00), with quite a bit of material and paint being donated. The cost of this building would have been more, but the greater part of the labor was contributed by the members.

We now have water in the kitchen of the Education Building and a new sink. These improvements and conveniences have cost two hundred ninety-one dollars and forty-six cents ($291.46), plus cost of the roof on the pump house, and many hours of free labor contributed by members of the church.

In 1950 we put a floor in our church and a new roof on one side of the building. Since the church had quite a few trees on its property, they were cut, sawed, and used. The labor was contributed by members of the church and community. In 1954 it was decided to put gas heat in our church and now we have four gas heaters for the auditorium.

In 1968 we made the following improvements to the church central heat ($450.00), new Pews ($2000.00), and Carpet on the floor.

Those of us who have been privileged to attend Sunday School for the past fifteen years or more, we can say that we are spending more for literature, now in 1957, than at any time during this span. Our offerings in Sunday School have increased, and we are having as many in attendance as at any time recently.

In 1948 the four churches of the Charge, under the capable leadership of Rev. J. B. Ward, built an eight room brick parsonage located in Locust Grove, Georgia. The lot for this parsonage was donated by C. D. Lindsey, a member of Locust Grove Church. The parsonage was dedicated by Bishop Arthur J. Moore in May 1949. The value of the building and grounds is $15,000.00.

For the past several years the four churches on the Charge have had a Charge Layman's Day. At these meetings we have had several church layman meet with us, among them being P. Y. Luther and G. Avon Gaston.

We have no record when the first Sunday School was organized. According to minutes in 1895, there was a Sunday School and G. G. LeGuin was the Superintendent. We know he held this office continuously from this date until November 1941, when he resigned to turn the reins over to a younger man. Harold Cowan was then elected Superintendent and held the office until December 1942, when he was inducted into the Army. During this time he was in service, Jesse Ray Thompson served. In 1944, Harold Cowan was again elected Superintendent and served until 1949, when he asked to be relieved of the office. At this time Royce O. Miller was elected, and he served until 1960, at which time he asked to be relieved of the office.
At that time Crawford James was elected and served until 1962. Upon being relieved of the office he was replaced by J. E. Holder, who served from 1962 until 1965. We also have an assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Robert W. Thompson 1960 – J. L. Thompson was elected church school superintendent for 1965 – 1968, E. L. Lynn 1968 –.

No record has been kept of the enrollment of the Sunday School, but we know that during the years we have increased in the amounts paid to all causes. Some of the oldest living members tell us that our community is not as thickly populated as in years past and we do not have a great attendance today as we did then.

The first missionary society of New Hope was organized in 1939. Mrs. G. G. LeGuin was the first president. We do not know how much the first society paid, but we do know that each member contributed at least ten cents per month. The first Society had a short life, for it only lived one year. In 1947, under the leadership of Rev. & Mrs. E. Drinkard, we organized a W. S. C. S. In 1952 we had on roll fourteen members, and we gave to all causes one hundred one dollars and sixteen cents ($101.16). In 1956, we had twenty-five members in our society. The president in 1962 is Miss Lois Holder.

The Youth of New Hope have been organized for several years, even back in the days of The Epworth League. Today the Sunday evening meetings are known as the Sunday Evening Fellowship, and we are striving to get every member of the church to attend and take part in the meetings. In November of 1962, the church started an adult class on Sunday Evening Fellowship.

No record has been accurately kept of our church membership during the early beginning of the church, but as nearly as we can ascertain the church membership about 1895 was 166. In September 1956, it was 146, a goodly number of this total is non-resident members. The membership in November of 1962 is approximately 140.

At the fourth Quarterly Conference held at New Hope on May 26, 1957, a change was made in the Locust Grove Charge. Mount Bethel saw fit to withdraw from the charge and become a half-time church. She and Turner's Church formed a new Charge, the Mount Bethel-Turner's Charge. So at the Annual North Georgia Conference in June, 1957, the first pastor, Rev. Grant Hinshaw, came to the Mount Bethel - Turner's Charge, and we now have only three churches on the Locust Grove Charge, Locust Grove, New Hope, and Philadelphia.

Also, at this fourth Quarterly Conference in 1957, New Hope was made to feel that we had reached another milestone, for at this time, Rev. Hoke Sewell, the District Superintendent, dedicated our Education Building.

During the church year, July 1956 to July 1957, New Hope paid to the pastor and all other causes two hundred twenty-five dollars and sixty-two cents ($225.62) per quarter. This does not include anything for incidentals, cemetery cleaning, nor any other local expenses. The well on the church property was cleaned out at this time and a pump has been installed; also a pump house has been built.

The New Hope road has recently been paved from highway 81 to beyond the church. This has greatly boosted attendance.
Suring the years, New Hope has been privileged to send out four Preachers, name, Rev. J. W. O. McKibben, Rev. J. R. Thompson, and Rev. J. W. Miller, which are serving in the North Georgia Conference, and Rev. Charles R. McKibben, serving in the South Georgia Conference.

We have now added bathrooms to the Education Building.

In 1956, we organized different committees to take care of the business of the church. We also have have a committee to set up a budget in the spring for the next conference year, with all the askings for the year on it. We now have over a Four thousand dollar budget set up for 1966.

On the first Sunday night in October of 1962, our associate pastor, Rev. Chuck Hunter preaches for us. He also preaches on fourth Sunday morning. Our Pastor, Rev. Juel Sealey preaches on first Sunday morning at 10:00, second Sunday at 7:00, third Sunday morning 11:00, fourth Sunday night at 7:00.

As times change so does the church, in 1957 we started having associate pastors to preach and to work with the young people of the church. Here is a list of the associate pastors: Rev. Leo Rape, Rev. Ronald Ballard, Rev. Buddy Howard, Rev. Chuck Bancuff, Rev. Chuck Hunter, Rev. Robert Alston, and Rev. Robert Anthony, Pierce Norman.


We have painted the church and educational building in 1965.

For reasons unknown to any of us today, New Hope Church re‐appeared on the Jenkinsburg Charge during the year 1903, and the pastor at this time was Rev. J. O. Brand. The Pastors during 1904 - 1905 were Walter Millican, and in 1906, Rev. W. R. Stilwell.

In 1907, New Hope Church was dropped from the Jenkinsburg Charge and again came on the Locust Grove Charge, Griffin District, with four churches, namely, Locust Grove, Mount Bethel, Philadelphia and New Hope. The Presiding Elder at this time was Rev. J. T. Davis, and the Preacher of the charge was Rev. C. V. Weathers.

New hope had an associate Pastor for three months, because the Pastor was sick and unable to preach. Eddie Foy was the name of the associate. We can count him as being from that church to go into the ministry.

About one-half of the old part of the cemetery is of graves of men, and boys, and slaves killed during the Civil War. These men made a stand there against some of Sherman's men about the middle of the summer of 1864. Some of the men were buried immediately after Sherman's men marched on toward Jackson, Ga. and Savannah.