

1972 Dalton Dist

HISTORY

of

NEWNAN SPRINGS METHODIST CHURCH

155

A
HISTORY

OF

NEWMAN SPRINGS METHODIST CHURCH

JUNE, 1950

EARLY HISTORY OF CHURCH AND BUILDINGS

In the shadow of one of the beautiful hills of North Georgia overlooking the large springs which formed the head of Spring Creek, a devout group of Christians met at McAfee's Chapel, later to be known as Newman Springs Methodist Church. McAfee's Chapel, named after a prominent settler in this section was located in the western part of what is now Catoosa County, Georgia. The site of the present church building is approximately 100 yards and within sight of that first church. Although the church is located in Georgia near the city of Rossville, people from nearby Chattanooga, Tennessee and other Tennessee cities have worshiped here.

It is probable that if the first church were organized before the Indians left this region in 1838, they attended the worship services with the early settlers. That these early settlers should think of their religious needs and give expression to their thoughts by erecting and organizing a church is an index to their character.

The first church was constructed of logs which was the customary way of building houses in this community at that time and it was the place of worship for the people until the War Between The States was brought in all its fury to this very region. The nearby Battle of Chickamauga was fought in September 1863 and General Sherman left Chattanooga in May 1864 on his march to the sea, so it is to be reasoned that about this time the congregation was scattered, the church building was used as a bakery and also about this time, the building was destroyed by fire.

Then followed the years of reconstruction after the war and there was no organized church here.

In 1868 the church was reorganized with 16 members all of whom the records show as "restored" so we reason that they must have been members of the first congregation. The McAfee family fled as refugees during the war and settled permanently some distance away. A member of the McAfee family made the trip back on horseback to take part in the reorganization and to express the willingness of his family for the name of the church to be changed. The church was organized this time as the Newman Springs M. E. Church, South. The name, Newman, was given in honor of General Newman, a veteran of the War of 1812, whose body is buried in the nearby cemetery. A monument honoring General Newman also was erected and still stands just south of the present church.

The location of this second church was on a knoll approximately 50 yards west of the first building. This new building was constructed of rough sawed pine boards and was about 24 feet wide and about 30 feet long with doors in the front only. There were three windows on either side which furnished light for day services and kerosene lamps hung on the wall furnished light at night. Warmth in winter was obtained from a wood burning heater in the center of the room. Repairs were probably made to this building in accordance with the report from the Church Conference of September 25, 1872. "It was agreed by the members of the church that our proportion of the funds arising from the sale of the camp ground property be applied to repairs on our church building." A committee was appointed "to ascertain what further repairs or improvements were necessary on our church building, after the expenditure of the camp ground money and to endeavor to collect whatever deficit may be needed for said repairs or improvements, and to superintend the disbursement thereof when collected."

This building was moved in 1890 to a new location on what is now known as Cloud Springs Road and was used until 1916 as a school building for the children in this section of Catoosa County. It was then converted into a dwelling and was used as such until a short time before the time of this writing in 1950.

Those early years 1868 to 1890 were indeed great and noble ones as can be noted from these excerpts from early church records:

October 27, 1872. Pastor reported revivals in every church and about 100 professions.

November 29, 1873. Pastor reported during year he has preached 183 sermons, made 515 pastoral visits, rode 3350 miles, 68 have joined the church.

April 19, 1879. Pastor reported about 200 pastoral visits, found very few family altars.

May 19, 1889. Roll was called and several members were charged with continued absence from church. A committee was appointed to see them and ascertain why they had not been to church.

July 4, 1885. 8 received on application, 10 received by certificate, 3 restored, 6 removed by certificate, 1 dropped, 3 died, 1 expelled, 1 suspended.

July 2, 1887. We rejoice in the peace and fellowship of this church, express our profound gratitude to God for His presence and blessing in all the past and for our faith in the opening future.

On March 19, 1887, the following resolution was made at the quarterly conference. "Resolved that in view of the peculiar surroundings of church property at Newman Springs, trustees of said property are hereby authorized to sell and deed said property at such times and on such terms as they may judge for the best interest of the church and to invest proceeds in the building of another house of worship at said place for the benefit of said M. E. Church, South." Again, on September 22, 1888 the following business was transacted: "We the trustees of the Newman Springs Church property of the M. E. Church, South submit the following of acts: We had a deed to two acres around the present church building. The grounds around it have been recently sold but the church lot reserved. Valuation of the church building, \$300.00."

Thus, in 1890, the third church building was erected. It was indeed a credit to its designers and builders. It was a building of beauty and quality far ahead of the average building of this section at that time. It was erected and for many years stood about 200 feet north of where the second building had stood. With its beautifully constructed windows, its high arched ceiling and its tall bell tower, it became a sanctuary indeed to many who worshiped there.

Shortly after World War I, this building was remodeled at a cost of about \$3000. It was greatly improved by the addition of Sunday School rooms and the choir loft, which was made possible by lengthening the sanctuary. This building was again remodeled in 1935 during the pastorate of Rev. J. B. Smith, and it was also moved to a new location approximately 250 feet east and the church was turned to face west. This gave a most beautiful setting to this now time-worn landmark. In this new location a basement was excavated to furnish space for more Sunday School rooms and a new furnace, and a vestibule was built to the front. The church was painted throughout which improved the appearance greatly and shrubbery was planted which added much to the beauty.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. Frank Crawley that he preached his famous "\$2000 sermon" that began the building fund for a new church building. Approximately \$2000 was put into government bonds at this time and during the pastorates of Rev. Scwell Dixon and Rev. Harry L. Mitcham, special building fund projects were carried on. A building fund committee worked faithfully. At last, it seemed that the dream of a beautiful new church was going to become a reality. A new church building was greatly needed since, for several years, the old one had not furnished enough space.

It was on Homecoming Day, August 11, 1947, that the ground-breaking service was conducted which marked the beginning of this new church building. A special guest for this service was Rev. Peter Manning, the new district superintendent, who made his first visit to Newman Springs Church on this day. Many people expressed the opinion that this Homecoming Day marked the largest attendance in the history of the church to that date.

The site for the fourth church building was secured in 1935 at the time the parsonage property was secured and is approximately 25 yards north of the third building.

The new Newman Springs Methodist Church building is certainly a beautiful building and upon entering the sanctuary, one feels at once a peace and quiet that enables him to worship God in spirit and in truth.

This new building is a beautiful brick structure of colonial architecture, 80 feet long and 45 feet wide with a full daylight basement. The sanctuary was built to seat 350 people comfortably, and is designed with the divided chancel. There is on the basement floor a modern kitchen well-furnished, a large room 40 feet by 25 feet which is being used alternately as an assembly room, a dining room and a recreation room, a pastor's study, a church office, five class rooms and adequate bath facilities. The building is equipped with a modern steam heating system and is appraised at \$125,000. A member of our church, Mr. H. C. Harris, was the contractor for the new building. In the words of Rev. Harry L. Mitcham, "This building is the evidence of a confident faith in Christ, a fervent spirit in serving the Lord, and a tremendous amount of hard work."

On January 2, 1949, the dream of a new church building was indeed a reality. The Newman Springs Methodist Church congregation worshiped in the new building for the first time. The honor guest and speaker for the day was Bishop Arthur J. Moore. It was mentioned by some who attended this great opening day that it marked the beginning of a new era in the life of our beloved Newman Springs Methodist Church.

PARSONAGE

Newman Springs M. E. Church, South as reorganized in 1868 was placed on the Rock Springs Circuit but was transferred to the Ringgold Circuit as explained at the quarterly conference July 24, 1873: "The first of the year Rev. J. T. Lupt was appointed by the bishop pastor of Rock Springs Circuit. Bro. R. W. Bigham, P. E., transferred Bro. Lupt to the Calhoun Circuit whereupon the Rock Springs Circuit was absorbed May 3 and Newman Springs fell into Ringgold Circuit."

While the Newman Springs Church was on the Ringgold Charge, our pastor lived at Ringgold, Georgia. Again, we refer to excerpts from early records to tell the story of progress: April 4, 1885. "Resolved that the Trustees of the Parsonage property at Ringgold are hereby authorized by this quarterly conference to sell the parsonage and buy other property or to exchange the property for other property for parsonage purposed for the Ringgold Circuit, if in their judgment it is best."

159

July 4, 1885. "Trustees of church property at Ringgold are authorized to exchange deeds to town lots in Ringgold with E. Harris and Joe Dent of Newnan, Ga."

July 2, 1887. "On motion of the pastor the trustees of church property in Ringgold were authorized to sell the parsonage in said town and after paying all indebtedness on said property to invest balance of proceeds in the purchase of a more suitable house as a parsonage for the use of the circuit." January 7, 1888.

"Ringgold stewards report that preparations are being made to repair the parsonage immediately and that it will soon be ready for occupancy."

It is probable that this parsonage served the Ringgold Charge including Newnan Springs Church until 1935, during the ministry of Rev. J. B. Smith. The pastor's family then moved to a home near Newnan Springs which was owned by one of the church members and construction of a new parsonage was begun. The site for the pastor's home was secured through an exchange of property with Mrs. Minette Dixon.

The parsonage is a beautiful stone structure, modern in design, with six rooms, bath and a full size basement.

The next year Newnan Springs was made a station with some financial aid from the conference on the pastor's salary. In 1939 all financial aid was withdrawn by the conference. During the pastorate of Rev. Frank Crawley, the parsonage debt was paid and on July 27, 1941, the parsonage was dedicated at the evening worship service. Special guests for this occasion were Bishop Arthur J. Moore and Rev. J. S. Thraikill, district superintendent.

Since 1941, the parsonage has been redecorated several times and necessary repairs made.

CHURCH SCHOOL

It is probable that the first church school was organized in 1868 when the church was reorganized after the war but these first years were evidently struggling ones for we find this information in the records: August 17, 1874. "Sunday School Superintendent reported the Sabbath school has closed for want of attendance of scholars," but the early church members and pastors realized the importance of the church school because we find this entry in the church records: October 9, 1886. "There is little hope for a successful church or prosperous community where the religious training of the children is neglected."

It is not known just how soon after 1874 the church school was reorganized but a Mr. Brummett was the first superintendent and the first obtainable records in 1893 have shown the following officers: Mr. B. D. Dailey, the Superintendent, Mr. John Schmitt, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. W. C. Ward, Treasurer, Mr. L. A. Dailey, Secretary and Mr. W. H. Kinsey, Librarian. Some of these names are familiar to us now in 1950 and these people have meant much to the Newnan Springs Methodist Church. According to the records for February 26, 1893, there were "32 scholars present, 5 officers and teachers." The offering was 20¢. On April 9, 1950, there was reported a total enrollment in the church school of 317 with an attendance of 205 and the offering was \$19.51.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The first Woman's Society of Christian Service (then Woman's Missionary Society) of Newman Springs Church was organized between the years of 1922 and 1925 during the ministry of Rev. J. H. Couch. It was organized by Mrs. Pierce Harris who was visiting in Chickamauga at the time and Mrs. W. Mack Smith, who was a loyal and faithful member of the Newman Springs Church. Mrs. Smith was the first president of this organization and her daughter, Mrs. A. E. Miles, Sr. was the first treasurer, which position she is still faithfully and capably filling. There was a period in 1929 when this organization was divided into two circles but during most of its history the women have worked together in one group. There were approximately 12 members of the first Woman's Missionary Society and the present enrollment is 31 members.

It was between the years of 1934 and 1937 that the first Wesleyan Service Guild (then Business Woman's Circle) was organized by Mrs. J. B. Smith, wife of the pastor at that time, and Miss Ella Dailoy was elected the first president.

Both these organizations have done a marvelous work for God and they have continued to grow in numbers and spiritual interest and enthusiasm during the years.

YOUTH ORGANIZATION

There was a youth group organized at Newman Springs Church early in its history but it was not known as the Epworth League or Methodist Youth Fellowship. The meetings were not held at night as in these latter organizations because the young people either walked or traveled by "horse and buggy" so it is probable they had picnics after the morning services at the church and presented their programs in the afternoon. The exact date this group was organized is not known but Mrs. G. M. Corbly (then Miss Mary Kinsey) was the first president. Mrs. Corbly is still an active member of our church.

It is probable that there was an Epworth League organized between the years 1914 and 1916. It is definitely known that an Epworth League was organized in 1920 when Rev. R. E. Rutland was the pastor and Mr. J. Rhea Williams was elected the president. Many young people who have attended the youth organization of our church through the years are still members of Newman Springs and are serving in the church and church school and their children are now in the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Three present members of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, Waynette Blaylock, Dorothy Hays and Randy Hodges, have dedicated their lives to full-time Christian service.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

There have been many great and inspiring services in the history of Newman Springs Methodist Church. Some of these have already been mentioned; others probably will not be related here but will be remembered in the thoughts of many members of the church.

A special day looked forward to each year is Senior Day, when the graduates of Lakeview High School and the graduates of our church attending other schools have been guests. This service was first held in 1942 and Rev. Frank Crawley delivered a sermon "Live As I Have Taught You To Run, Boy," which enriched the lives of the adults present and surely has been remembered by the honor guests. This custom continued until 1949 and 1950 when the Baccalaureate Service for Lakeview High School was held in our church.

Since Newman Springs is near Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, during World War II, chaplains were frequent visitors and shared their experiences with us. During the pastorate of Rev. Sewall Dixon, on December 17, 1944, a beautiful candle light service honoring our members of the armed forces was held which spiritually enriched the lives of all present. None of our men and women who served their country was called upon to make the supreme sacrifice, and for this we are exceedingly grateful. Many returned to this community to take their places in their home church.

A special service many will recall was the Easter service in 1946, during the pastorate of Rev. Harry L. Mitcham, when 60 new members were received into the church.

There have been great musical programs which inspired the congregation in their worship to God. Another step forward was made in September 1946 when a salaried choir director was secured. While the new church building was under construction, plans were made to purchase a new organ. On Homecoming Day in 1948, a memorial service was presented to honor former members and war veterans. The offering presented at this time was the beginning of a fund to purchase the organ which was erected as a memorial to peace. Several projects were carried out which added to this fund and on opening day in January 1949, the congregation worshiped God through the beautiful organ music. This Wurlitzer organ was dedicated on March 6, 1949 with a musical program presented by the organist, choir and visiting soloists.

Several recent services during the ministry of our present pastor, Rev. M. M. Whittemore, will be remembered: Palm Sunday 1950, 14 new members were received, Easter Sunday, 1950, the sanctuary was filled with people worshipping God, through the Easter message and music. Beautiful Easter lilies were placed on the altar in memory or honor of loved ones and friends which added to the beauty of the service. On May 7, 8 new members were received and 4 new members were received on Mother's Day. A special Mother's Day service was presented by the ladies of the church, an inspiring message being given by the pastor's wife.

Many great revival services have been held at Newman Springs. There have been sermons delivered at these meetings by the pastors of our church and we have been privileged to hear visiting ministers but all of these services have left their imprint in the history of the church as is evidenced by the increase in membership through the years. From those 16 members "restored" in 1868, Newman Springs Methodist Church now reports this year, 1950, 474 members (358 active, 116 inactive)

On May 25, 1872, there was reported at the quarterly church conference "\$15.00 collected for the support of the gospel, with \$30.00 more to be raised during the year." At the close of the conference year in 1950 there was reported \$3460.00 for the salary of the minister for the year, and a total of \$12,212 for all other expenses.

Many people through the years have worshiped and found their spiritual needs fulfilled at this church. They have made this history; yes, in the words of one of our members, "Newman Springs has had a great and noble past, but its greatest and noblest days lie ahead."

Since 1868, 52 ministers have served Newman Springs Methodist Church. Through the faithful and devout service of these pastors, the church has progressed through the years. The names of these pastors are listed below. We are listing several of the district superintendents' names but we regret that a complete list is not available.

PASTORS AND DATES OF SERVICE

W. D. Hoath	1868-1870	Walter Millican	1899-1900
R. A. Giddons	1870-1871	J. E. Russell	1900-1901
Sanford Leake	1871-1872	E. A. Ware	1901-1902
D. J. Wooms	1872-1873	John R. Jones	1902-1904
J. B. McFarland	1873-1874	T. M. Elliott	1904-1905
J. P. Richardson	1874-1875	J. H. Bailey	1905-1907
G. W. Thomas	1875-1876	A. M. Sprayberry	1907-1909
W. L. Wooten	1876-1877	N. A. Parsons	1909-1910
M. L. Underwood	1877-1878	M. L. Harris	1910-1911
G. W. Duvall	1878-1879	J. H. Little	1911-1913
N. Z. Gleen	1879-1880	R. A. Cliett	1913-1914
W. T. Laine	1880-1882	D. P. Johnston	1914-1916
Eli Smith	1882-1884	Lucian Roper	1916-1917
A. J. Hughes	1884-1885	J. S. Hill	1917-1918
T. G. Morgan	1885-1886	H. T. Smith	1918-1920
W. D. Shea	1886-1887	R. E. Rutland	1920-1922
B. F. Payne	1887-1888	J. H. Couch	1922-1925
M. A. Phillips	1888-1889	M. B. Sams	1925-1927
J. R. Spock	1889-1890	W. A. Woodruff	1927-1929
Eli Smith	1890-1891	J. L. Hall	1929-1934
R. R. Johnson	1891-1892	J. B. Smith v	1934-1937
W. G. Hanson	1892-1894	J. K. Brown	1937-1939
Clayton Quillian	1894-1895	R. Frank Crawloy v	1939-1943
J. W. Gober	1895-1897	Sowell Dixon	1943-1945
J. O. A. Trogan	1897-1898	Harry L. Mitcham v	1945-1949
H. M. Smith	1898-1899	M. M. Whittemore	1949-

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS AND DATES OF SERVICE

Wm. J. Scott	1872	Frank Quillian	1926-1930
Robt. W. Bigham	1873-1874	J. R. Turner	1930-1934
W. F. Quillian	1885-1887	A. M. Pierce	1934-1938
J. M. Lowery	1888	J. S. Thrailkill	1938-1941
J. F. Yarbrough	1919-1922	C. M. Lipham	1941-1947
S. A. Harris	1922-1926	N. Peter Manning	1947-

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. J. E. Stone	for	Early Record Books
Mrs. A. E. Miles, Sr.	for	Record Books
Mr. T. Belton Williams	for	A History Written in 1947

Many other people who have been members of Newman Springs Methodist Church for a number of years and have so graciously given information.

Mrs. E. E. Dickert, Church Historian