Bethany Methodist Church was located one mile north of the present site of Thomson and later its membership came into Thomson and changed the name of the Church to The Thomson Methodist Episcopal Church South, so this church will be included in the Thomson Church. The old site of Bethany on the Washington Road still has the old cemetery which is visible, though there are no markers to give any idea of whom were buried here or the dates.

THE THOMSON METHODIST CHURCH

The Thomson Methodist Episcopal Church South was formerly known as "Bethany" Church, at which time they owned a wooden building located on the Washington road about one mile north of the present site of Thomson.

Bethany Methodist Church was organized sometime prior to 1849 for on Columbia County records there is the deed to this church property, extracts from it as follows: From Felix G. Prior to Francis Perkins, Benjamin Watson, William Watson, Jr., Amos Johnson and Elias Lazenby, trustees - dated July 3, 1849 - to two and one-half acres of land more or less, "about one mile north of Thomson whereon Bethany meeting house now stands" -- "for the use alone of the Methodist Episcopal Church South", consideration five dollars.

No further information is available in regard this church when it was known as "Bethany", as the records are lost.

The Church became known as the Thomson Methodist Episcopal Church South and began its existence in the town of Thomson, it is said about 1853 or 1854 and the cemetery which was started after the church was moved here has a tone with the date of death of the person 1855, and some say this was not the first grave.

There is on McDuffie County records a deed from James R. Wilson to the trustees of the church.

Extracts as follows:
This indenture made this the 17th day of July 1871 between James R. Wilson and trustees of the M. E. Church south at Thomson: David Irving, John E. Smith, George P. Stovall, and James S. Jones. That for the sum of one hundred and twenty-five dollars in hand doth by these presents, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto said trustees and their successors in office all that tract of land situated in the town of Thomson, McDuffie County (formerly Columbia) on both sides of the Warrenton road whereon the church stands and cemetary (a part of said land was bought and paid for about the year 1856 but no deed given) containing four and one half acres, more or less, as a plat annexed will show.

Witnesses:  J. Truman Neal, J. B. Neal and Daniel Jenkins, J. P.

The property on the Washington road was disposed of; tradition says the Bethany Church property was exchanged with James R. Wilson for the town property.

A new house of worship was built on the lot in town, which site was some distance west of the present site of Methodist Church near where the present grammar school building is now. The Methodist bought the lot on which is situated the present church from John E. Smith. This first house of worship of the Methodist in Thomson was a wooden building and was used until 1902, when the present brick building was erected, the old building was disposed of and it was added to the school house. The present church building is very attractive in appearance and modern in equipment.

In 1926 the building was remodeled and Sunday School department added.

This Church stands as a memorial to Mr. John E. Smith's generosity and love for his church, he having contributed eight thousand dollars towards erection and furnishing it.

The church has four memorial windows; two very large ones, bearing likenesses of Mr. John E. Smith and his wife Mrs. V. J. Smith; one to Rev. A. B. Thrasher and one to Dr. James S. Jones.

This church was a factor in the movement for better schools in Thomson (see Thomson High School)

The church was made a station at the annual conference of 1896, at that time it had about two hundred and fifty members. Rev. J. M. Tumlin was the first pastor
after it became a station.

Before being made a station it was grouped with churches in Columbia and McDuffie Counties; for one or two years Thomson and Warrenton Churches were grouped together as a pastoral charge.

The church bought a parsonage March 27, 1869 from John T. Wright - consideration one thousand dollars. This home located on Church street is now the property of Miss Nellie Reese.

The church sold the parsonage property on Church street and purchased the home of Mr. and Mrs. Preston Johnson on Main street, which is now used as a parsonage.

Dr. John Wiley Quillian, member of this Church, joined the ministry and was licensed to preach in July 1890, he joined the North Georgia Conference in December 1890. The church built a home for occupancy of superannuated ministers, in 1924.

The lot was given by Mr. W. A. Watson and twenty-six hundred dollars, the amount for erection of the home, was raised one Sunday in the Sunday School. Mr. A. H. Curtis was chairman of the building committee and superintendent of the erection.

Pastors of this church have been:

During the War Between the States Rev. W. A. Florence and Rev. J. M. Dickey;

In 1871 - Felix Brown; 1872-1875 - Leonard Rush; 1875-1877 - W. T. Hamilton;
1883-1885 - C. C. Carey; 1885-1886 - R. W. Rogers; 1886-1889 - J. M. White;
1889-1890 - J. T. Richardson; 1890-1894 - A. W. Williams; 1894-1895 - R. F. Eakes;
December 1903 - November 1905 - H. L. Edmondson; December 1905 - November 1906 - A. W. Quillian; December 1906 - November 1907 - George D. Stone; December 1907 - November 1908 - F. S. Hudson; December 1908 - November 1910 - R. A. Edmondson;
December 1910 - November 1911 - H. C. Christian; December 1911 - November 1913 - Wallace Rogers; December 1913 - November 1916 - J. H. Mashburn; December 1915 -
November 1918 - Walton Williams; December 1918 - November 1921 - Olin King;
December 1921 - November 1922 - J. T. Eakes; December 1922 - November 1924 - J. T.
Rolins; December 1924 - November 1927 - J. M. Radford; December 1927 - November 1929 -
T. M. Williams; December 1929 - November 1934 - H. L. Byrd; December 1934 -
November 1936 - J. R. Turner; December 1936 - November 1939 - C. A. Hall;
December 1939 - November 1942 - A. L. Gilmore; December 1942 - November 1944 -
William H. Gardner; December 1944 - July 1948 - Charles L. Allen; August 1948 -
Y. A. Oliver.

Among these who have served as organist are:

Mrs. A. E. Thrasher, Mrs. Jordon E. White; Mrs. Herk Johnson and Mrs. E. C.
Hawes, all of whom served for a long number of years.

The Board of Stewards for 1934 were:

P. A. Bowden, J. E. Harrison, E. C. Hawes, W. E. Hobbs, R. J. Johnson,
P. S. Knox, Jr., L. S. Lockett, G. W. Lokey, C. E. Lokey, A. B. Morris, H. C.
McCorkle, J. H. Morrison, H. S. Norris, H. L. Turner, Jr., R. E. Wall, J. T. Watson,
W. A. Watson, J. E. Wilson, C. V. Curtis and J. T. Neal (honorary)

The Church now has over five hundred members.

The Sunday School which has an enrollment of four hundred sixty five with T. R.
Burnside, Superintendent, has been served by the following as Superintendents in the
past:

W. C. Worrill, in 1877 D. F. Irving; 1878 L. C. Smith, (served 16 years);
in 1894 P. B. Johnson, W. A. Watson, J. B. Boyd, E. C. Hawes, J. T. Pate, E. C.
Hawes (after Mr. Pate's death).