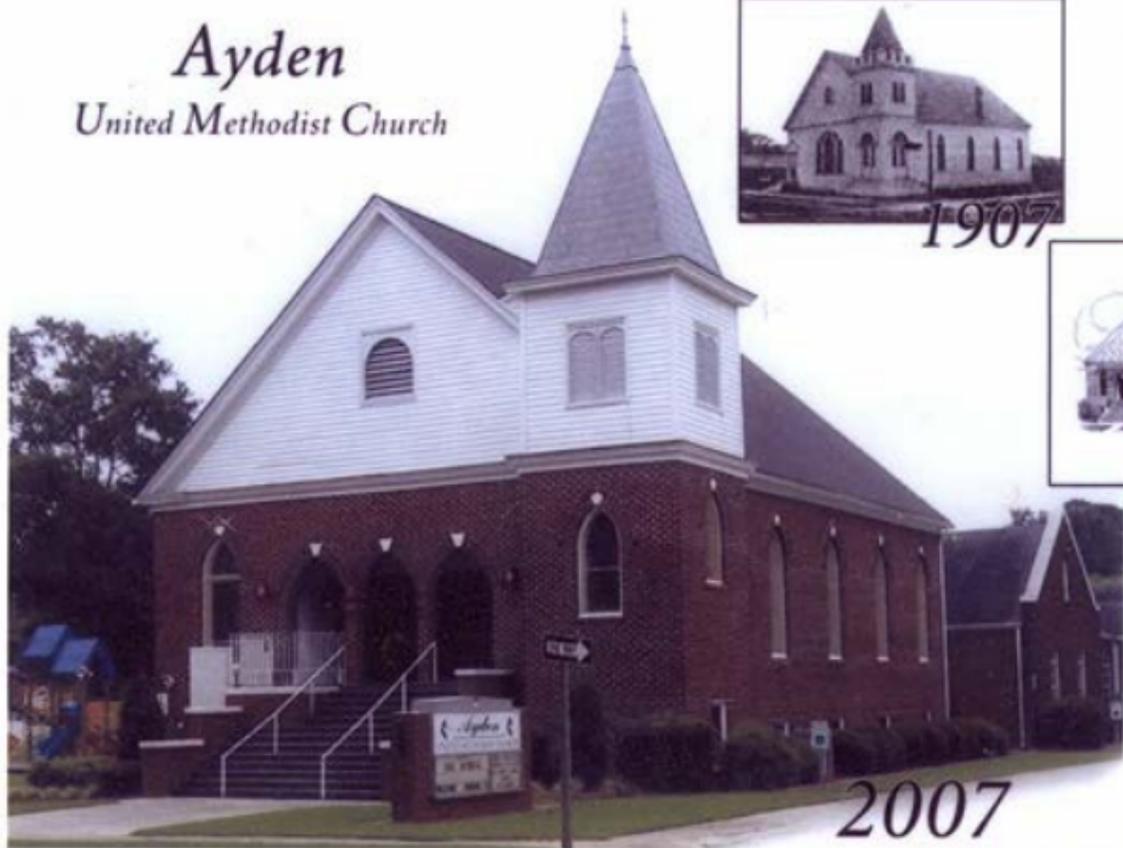


# Ayden

United Methodist Church



1907



1961

2007

## AYDEN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Methodism in Ayden is 115 years old. Its beginning was part of a 19<sup>th</sup> century resurgence of the Methodist faith that swept the country. Ayden's first appointment began in 1885 at the Spring Branch school house located about one and a half miles from the Atlantic Coastline railroad station. In 1890, the Reverend Frank Taylor organized the church and moved it into Ayden. The church building was placed on the lot occupied later by the residence of Mr. J. H. S. Hodges on 410 East Third Street. There was then only a small number of Methodists in southern Pitt County and the newly organized church did not have more than fifteen or twenty members. The leaders of the infant organization were John Ross, Joseph Aldridge and Henry Harris. (See Article 148 Pitt County Chronicles)

In 1907, during the pastorate of The Reverend H. E. Tripp, a new location for the church was selected on the corner of Third and Lee Streets on the west side of the railroad. The old church building was sold to Mr. Elias Turnage and the lot to his son, Mr. J. R. Turnage. Among the leaders in the movement for a new house of worship were J. J. Edwards, C. E. Spear, W. M. Edwards, Elias Turnage, Josephus Gaskins and Herbert Ormond.

The 1920's commercial boom in America touched the Ayden business community, primarily on the west side of the railroad. As the economy surged, the growing need for more commercial space caused the relocation of several non-commercial buildings located near the center of the commercial district, including the Methodist Church. The church property was sold in 1926 for \$10,000 to the Standard Oil

Company in order that a gas station (ESSO) could be built on its site. The church building was moved to its present location at 460 Third Street. With the money from Standard Oil and about \$3500 raised by the congregation, the church was completely remodeled in the Tudor Revival style, a style not commonly used for religious architecture in small rural communities. The building was elevated a half story to provide Sunday School facilities at basement level. Renovations included the addition of brick veneer over the original weatherboard siding with stucco and half-timbering on the gable ends. First services in the new facility were held on November 7, 1926, conducted by the Reverend R. H. Broom.

Between 1934 and 1936, an oil heating plant, new carpet, new pews, baptismal font and other furniture and fixtures were installed. In 1945, beautiful memorial stained glass windows depicting events in the life of Christ were placed in the sanctuary, enhancing the spiritually inspiring aura of the church.

The late 1940s and early 1950s brought industrial expansion to the area. The resulting increase in membership and attendance brought about a need for larger educational facilities. The first service was held in the separate, new brick building on Easter 1956 and it was officially dedicated on February 19, 1961. Great strides forward were made during the years of the pastorate of the Reverend J. M. "Jack Fogleman. In addition to the new educational building, church membership increased by over one hundred.

Major renovations and repairs have been made in the last few years to our church, carefully and tediously preserving the historic nature of an almost 100 year-old church building. In 2003, a new ceiling was added using the same tongue and groove style that

was original to the sanctuary preserving the excellent acoustics. An electronic sound system was also put in place. Choir loft expansion, choir room renovations, carpeting in the balcony, and sanctuary replastering and painting were completed. To continue giving easier access to the sanctuary, a new exterior elevator replaced the one installed in 1985. Recent memorial gifts and donations given to the Glory of God and in memory of loved ones include an enclosed children's playground and a grand piano.

The Ayden United Methodist Church has a present membership of 315 with total assets in buildings and furnishings of \$1.2 million. Forty-three ministers have served the church since its inception. Remarkably, from this small church, nine men have entered the ministry and three women have entered full-time Christian service. (See Article 148

#### **PITT COUNTY CHRONICLES**

The Ayden United Methodist Women have played a very active and supportive role throughout our history. Organized in 1917 under the leadership of its first president Mrs. W. M. Edwards and later Mrs. O. C. Stroud, Sr., the AUMW continues to provide support for all our church's vital programs. The Ayden United Methodist Women provide resources and opportunities for women within 3 circles to enrich their spiritual life and increase their knowledge and understanding of the needs of the world. The AUMW have received the Special Mission Award from the Women's Division of General Board of Global Ministries of United Methodist Church for the last 5 years.

The Ayden United Methodist Men, organized October 22, 1954, are known for their service projects to church members including building ramps for the handicapped, hosting a Sweethearts Dinner, and helping with the church's major fundraiser the "Chicken-On-A-Mission" dinner.

Other vital and active organizations and groups include an active, energetic youth ministry for ages 8-18, a strong music ministry, and an outreach ministry that has included sponsorship of a refugee family from Croatia. By creating opportunities to intensely study the Bible with Discipleship classes, and providing mission studies, a prayer support group, and a shepherd ministry our church strives to serve the needs of a growing church family.

Helping us to meet the challenges and opportunities of a strongly traditional Methodist Church continues to be the goal of Reverend Dennis P. Levin. He has served us eleven years, the longest tenure in our church history.

Andrea Norris  
 4254 Wildwood Drive  
 Ayden, N.C. 28513  
~~ahnorris@com.net~~ ahnorris@suddenlink.v  
 252-746-4209

Sources:

**THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF PITT COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

**PITT COUNTY CHRONICLES Volume 1**

**THE AYDEN DISPATCH (Thursday, February 25, 1937), Twentieth Anniversary Edition**

**Members of the Ayden United Methodist Church**

2004

Al Hocutt - new minister