



*Oleander United Methodist Church*

1957-1987

5810 Oleander Drive  
Wilmington, North Carolina 28403

THE EMBLEM

The emblem for the United Methodist Church combines the Cross and a Flame, symbolizing the Holy Spirit.

The Cross and Flame are ancient symbols of the Church, dating back to the days of Christ and Pentecost. Each evokes images of sacrifice, witness and service. Both remind us of the opportunity and obligations of discipleship. Keep in mind, always, Paul's words to Timothy -- "I now remind you to stir into flame the gift of God, which is within you."

The Cross, the Flame and the individual with his or her abilities are all elements of a 20th Century movement for the United Methodist Church.

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MINISTERS SERVING  
OLEANDER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Jack L. Newsome  
Rev. R. C. Hamilton (deceased)  
Rev. Belton Joyner, Jr.  
Rev. Lee Phillips  
Rev. Al Morris  
Rev. Donnie Davis  
Rev. Donald Sledge  
Rev. C. Reginald Johnson  
Rev. Kenneth Hall  
Rev. Arthur Wesley  
Rev. Leon Brock  
Rev. Clayton Price  
Rev. L. M. (Billy) Peele  
Rev. Bruce E. Stanley

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As we commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Oleander United Methodist Church, let us review some of it's historical background and the origin of Methodism in the Seagate area.

In the early part of 1900, a small group of dedicated Christians met for worship services in a one room, frame house located in a wooded section between Oleander Drive and Park Avenue, near Giles Avenue.

After a small parcel of land, less than a half acre on Vann Avenue, was donated by Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Higgins in 1921, they had the opportunity to purchase from St. Andrews Episcopal Church, a small wooden chapel known as the Greenville Chapel, located on Wrightsville Sound. The small chapel was moved in sections to the Segate area and rebuilt in it's original design on the donated land and became known as the Seagate Methodist Church.

During the latter part of Rev. Ernest Smotherman's ministry at the Seagate Church in 1956, he saw the need for a larger church, more centrally located, with a view to expansion in the years to come as well as more parking facilities. It was because of his faith, enthusiasm and untiring efforts, that wheels were set in motion for it to become reality.

He was instrumental in having a lot donated by the late Mrs. Lizzie Rogers, as well as securing a second one from her at a very reasonable price. Application was made and approved for financial assistance from the Conference's Board of Missions, as a \$10.00 Club Church, and plans were submitted and approved by Conference to

start construction, and the new church was completed in 1957 at a cost of \$27,000.00. With Oleander becoming an outgrowth of the Seagate Methodist Church, the Seagate congregation was disbanded.

Furnishings for the new church--the lovely curved altar rail, pulpit and the two pulpit chairs--were transferred from the Seagate Church to the sanctuary of Oleander. The brass altar pieces--the Cross, vases, candle holders and offering plates, as well as some hymnals--were donated by various members. Also, contributions were made to purchase pews, to be given in memory or honor of loved ones. These pews have an inscribed bronze plate showing the donors.

The lovely picture, The Head of Christ, by Sallman, was given by Rev. and Mrs. Ernest Smotherman. The other lovely painting in the "over-flow" area was painted and presented to the church by the well-known, local artist, the late Miss Emma Lossen.

The Baptismal Font in the front of the sanctuary was given in memory of Mrs. Ruth Sisk by relatives and friends, while the Christian and American flags were presented to the church by the Woodmen of the World through the MYF.

The first organ, which was blond in color and matched the present pews, was purchased with small but steady pledges from faithful members. Mrs. Barbara Hines Benson, the first organist and choir director, served so capably and faithfully for many years, or until the time of our present organist, Mrs. Myra Miller Porter. Both fine ladies have proven indispensable at Oleander.

Over the years, the Oleander United Methodist Women and Men and UMYF groups have contributed in every way with Christian service to Oleander's growth by participating in every phase

(5) or undertaking of the church.

The first, or opening service in the Oleander Methodist Church, was held on September 8, 1957 with Rev. Jack Newsome, it's first minister and Bishop Paul L. Garber officiating, and Dr. J. E. Garlington, the District Superintendent, delivering the sermon.

What a red letter day it was for Oleander, when in December 1964, after the final payment on the \$27,000.00, it became debt free and was dedicated. Rev. Belton Joyner was the minister at the time and Bishop Garber gave the address. Rev. Clyde C. Boggs, the District Superintendent, and Rev. LeFon Vereen, Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions, attended the ceremony.

A Few Pertinent Facts:

Oleander has had four sister churches since it's inception. First, it was on a charge with Harbor Island Methodist Church and Epworth Methodist. After Harbor Island was able to go station in 1957, Oleander and Epworth continued as sister churches. When Epworth went station, Oleander was aligned with the newly formed church, Pine Valley Methodist in 1961. By 1970, Pine Valley felt it was in a position to go station, and Oleander followed suit by doing likewise in 1971, when the Rev. Donnie Davis was pastor. Negative circumstance brought us to partnership again, this time with Devon Park Methodist, which is now our sister church.

The first parsonage for the Harbor Island, Epworth and Oleander churches was located at 110 Ridgeway Drive, Wilmington, NC. Some time after this parsonage was sold, Oleander built it's first parsonage at 5711 Wisteria Lane, on a lot which had been donated some years before by the late John R. Hines and family.

The first new member was Mrs. Lois B. Reed by profession of faith.

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The first baptism was that of Mrs. John Bliss, nee Frances Woodcock, granddaughter of Mrs. Fannie Benson and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Woodcock, Jr.

The first marriage was on June 21, 1958-- that of Carolyn Hess and Ronald Suggs. Mrs. Suggs is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Johnson, Jr.

### In Memory of Miss Mamie Miller

As we look back over the years and history of the Seagate and Oleander churches, it is only proper and fitting that we pay tribute to the memory of one of the most beloved members, the late Miss Mamie Miller, a Charter Trustee of the original Seagate Methodist Church, who died in 1969.

Her entire life was spent serving her Lord in service, words and deeds. She was loved by all and especially little children with whom she devoted much of her time with Christian love in her home, Sunday School, the nursery and the school where she worked. She was a living example of how Christ would have each of us live.

No task was ever too hard or menial for her, and when the Seagate Church existed and had no modern conveniences, she would arise early each cold, Sunday morning, haul wood from her home and build a fire in the little heater there, so those who came to worship would be warm and comfortable

She served in many capacities--a Trustee, Communion Steward, Committee on Worship, Records and History, Commission of Membership and Evangelism, Welfare Committee and a leader of the Youth Fellowship. She never refused to serve where needed. I am sure the Master said of her when she departed this life: "well done my good and faithful servant."

As we look toward the future of the Oleander United Methodist Church, let us be ever mindful of the words so aptly expressed in the Collect for the Dedication Service thirty years ago:

"Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally, by Thy mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

AMEN

The history of the Oleander United Methodist Church was compiled from information obtained in old records, minutes of Official Board Meetings, bulletins and church publications and first-hand from present members.