

## THE SAXAPAHAW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

### A BRIEF HISTORY

In the early 1880's, Joe Bacon and William "Bill" Straughan attended a revival service at Salem Church, a few miles to the northeast of Saxapahaw. Both men were converted at the service. Soon after this experience, they joined Samuel E. Woody in starting a Sunday School in Saxapahaw.

The first meetings of the Sunday School were held on the northeast side of Saxapahaw in a house known as the John Davis place. In the beginning, the Sunday School's membership was composed largely of Quakers and Presbyterians, but gradually members of various Methodist groups as well as some Baptists joined.

This interdenominational group thrived in its Sunday School work, and plans were made to organize a union church and build a sanctuary. A small, one-room building was completed in 1890, and was known as the Saxapahaw Union Church.

By 1910, the congregation had outgrown its original building. The first major addition was completed in that year, primarily an enlargement of the sanctuary to its present dimensions. Before this was done, however, the building was moved. A road change had put the road to the back of the church; so the building was moved several feet up the hill and turned to face the new road.

The church continued to grow, and the need for larger facilities increased. In 1913, the south wing was built to the church. In 1919, the north wing was added. In 1932, the last addition to the present structure was built. This was the present children's department. The church hut was built in 1935.

During the congregation's existence as a union church, the different denominations worshipped together, with pastors from each participating denomination coming at appointed times. Evidently this system was well accepted, as attendance did not seem to vary, regardless of which denomination's pastor was preaching.

The Quakers pulled out of the union as a group, around 1914. The Presbyterians gradually declined in number, and the few who were left became affiliated with surrounding Presbyterian churches. The two branches of the Methodists, the Methodist Protestant and the Methodist Episcopal, South, continued to worship as a union church until the unification of 1939, when the Methodist Protestant, Methodist Episcopal, and Methodist Episcopal Church, South, united to form The Methodist Church. The Saxapahaw Union Church then became the Saxapahaw Methodist Church.

At the time of the 1939 merger, the Saxapahaw Charge was created, consisting of Saxapahaw, Concord, Orange Chapel, and Clover Garden. The local church continued to be a part of that Charge until 1950, when the Saxapahaw church became a station.

In 1968, when the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church merged to form The United Methodist Church, the local church became Saxapahaw United Methodist Church.

We face the future in the hope that, wherever the Spirit of Christ may be leading us, we may be willing to follow.

*1970-1973 renovation of the Educational building.*