



THE HISTORY OF ASBURY METHODIST CHURCH
FROM THE 1700's TO 1968

More than 200 years ago, the people in a small rural community in lower Chatham County felt the need to worship together. For a long period during the summer months, worship services were held under a brush arbor. Later, a man by the name of Burns gave his house to be used for community worship. These meetings led to the building of a church.

There is no record of the names of these first meeting houses until sometime late in the 1700's. At that time, a young Methodist convert from England, Francis Asbury came through this section preaching and holding prayer services. So influential was he, that the people decided to name their church Asbury after this great "Father of Methodism."

Today, Asbury Church stands on a knoll in a grove of large oak trees one-half mile west of Highway 15-501 between Pittsboro and Sanford, N. C.

There is a record of four churches having been built on this property. The first two were of logs and one is known to have burned. The present building, originally frame, was built nearly 68 years ago with 238 people giving money, material, and labor to help. Much remodeling has been done since that time. In 1942, new elevated floors and pews were installed. In 1951 the church was brick veneered and four Sunday School rooms and kitchen were built. With continued growth in Sunday School attendance, more room was needed. In 1957, work was started to raise funds. In 1958, the recreation room and kitchen plus bathrooms were completed. The building which joins the main church building by a small breezeway serves as Sunday School rooms and has also been very beneficial as a community building.

The people of the Asbury community who love the church are continually working for the upkeep and betterment of their buildings. In 1957, the congregation, with encouragement from Reverend Vernon Tyson bought a new organ for the church. In 1961, friends and loved ones of Dan Marsh Johnson presented a new piano to the church in his memory. In 1964, the women of the church refinished the oak floors in the sanctuary and had tile laid in the four older Sunday School rooms. The same year, the congregation installed new carpet in the sanctuary.

The women of Asbury Church are very active now, as they have been throughout the years. The first organized group of women was known as the "Ladies Aid" and was formed in 1932 with the help of Mrs. M. D. McLamb, the pastor's wife. This group two years later became the "Eugenia Bright" Missionary Society, being named for Mrs. Eugenia Pugh Bright, the oldest member at that time. With the uniting of the Methodist churches in 1939, the Missionary Society became the "Woman's Society of Christian Service" (W. S. C. S.) and now, with further uniting of the churches in 1968, the "Women's Society of Christian Service."

With Mrs. Palmer Knight as President, the women of Asbury Church strive to live up to their purpose of "enlisting workers and securing funds for the fulfillment of their responsibility in the mission of the church at home and overseas."

Music has always been an important factor in the program of Asbury Church. Song leaders for the past 80-90 years or so have been Carson Johnson, J. R. Bright, Edgar Wicker, M. B. Johnson, W. J. Johnson, O. S. Johnson, Jack W. Johnson, Dan Marsh Johnson, Catherine Johnson Blackwelder, and Lyda Wicker Tyson. Much credit is due also to the many members who have given of their time and talent to sing in the choir and to serve as pianist and organist.

We have a record of preachers who have served at Asbury Church that dates back to 1872. The list follows:

Philip Greening	1872-1876
W. T. Cutchin	1876-1880
J. D. Carpenter	1880-1884
W. S. Chaffin	1884-1888
D. C. Geddie	1888-1890
A. D. Betts	1890-1891
H. M. Jackson	1891-1894
H. G. Stamey	1894-1896
B. B. Holder	1896-1898
B. H. Black	1898-July, 1898

In November 1898, the church was changed to the Goldston Charge. In 1968, it is still on the Goldston Charge.

J. H. Frizel	1898-1900
J. C. Humble	1900-1904
C. O. Curant	1904-1907
J. W. Hoyle	1907-1910
M. D. Hix	1910-1912
M. C. Giles	1912-1916
N. M. McDonald	1916-1919
E. C. Marness	1919-1920
S. Salyer	1920-1922
E. C. Sell	1922-1923
L. Witten	1923-1924
S. H. Biggs	1924-1926
L. M. Chaffin	1926-1930
M. D. McLamb	1930-1934
W. J. Underwood	1934-1945
N. B. Strickland	1945-1946
G. C. Kinlaw	1946-1948
C. K. Wright	1948-1950
E. G. Cowan	1950-1954
B. W. Bingham	1954-1955

J. C. Shores	1955-1956
Vernon C. Tyson	1956-1958
James Banks	1958-1960
Howard Porter	1960-1961
Z. V. Cowan	1961-1962
Charles E. Vale	1962-1966
John R. Crew, Jr.	1966- _____

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There are at least two days of "reunion" and "dinner on the grounds" each year at Asbury Church. Homecoming is always the third Sunday in August with revival services each evening the following week. The Johnson Clan always meet with a large group of friends and relatives, this year the date being the second Sunday in October.

Very near the building of Asbury Church is the large cemetery where many of the founders of this historic church rest. We owe a great deal to these, our forefathers and ancestors, who held fast to their faith. May it be our aim, with God's help, to keep Asbury Church alive and alert, a strengthening force for future generations.