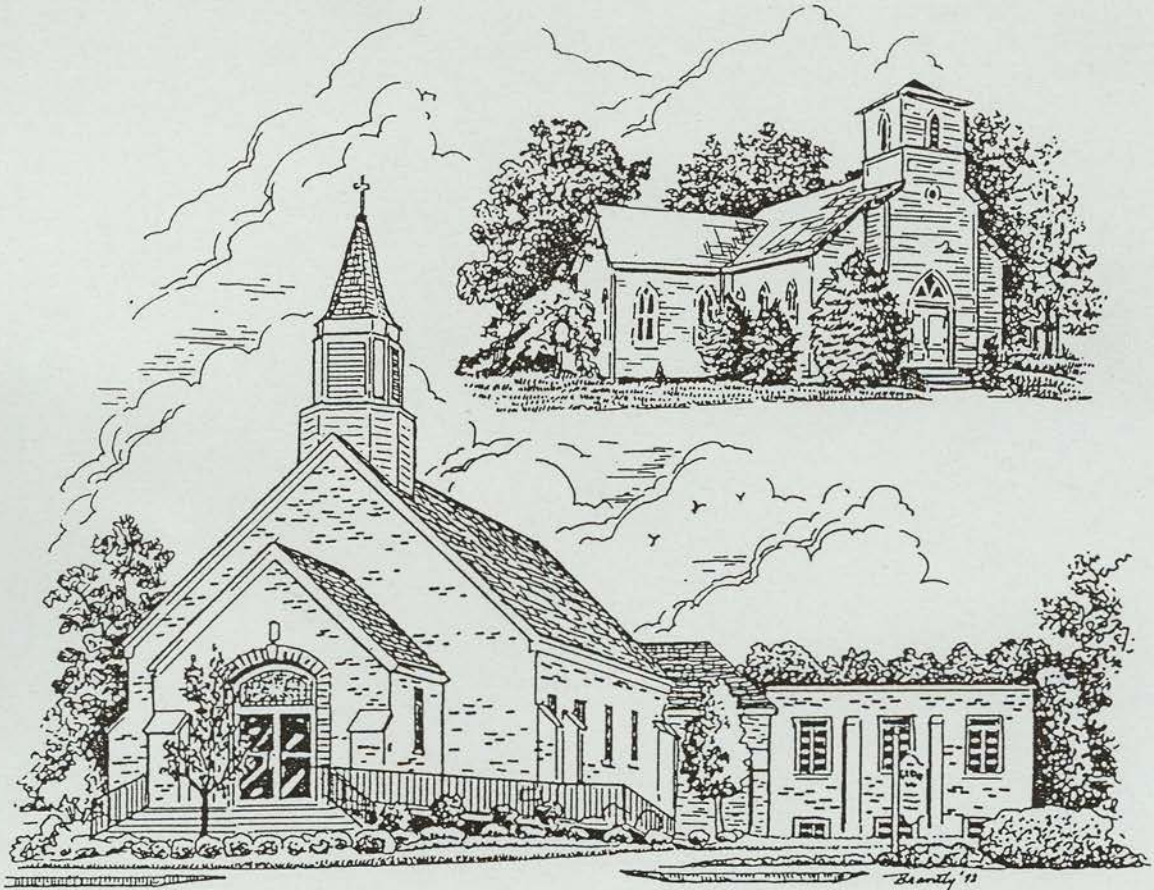




1892 - 1992

HISTORY

Established 1892



*Bethany United Methodist Church
Durham, North Carolina*

1892 - 1992

HISTORY

Compiled by
Frank & Lois Evans

Included are Histories by
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Histories presented each month in 1992 as follows

January	Dan Portaro	1892-1902
February	Dan Portaro	1903-1910
March	Dan Roberts	1911-1922
April	Cheryle Takacs	1923-1931
May	Bob Fischer	1931-1940
June	Ada Foster	1941-1951
July	Sue Lindsey	1952-1963
August	Pat Crispell	1963-1974
September	Mary Sharpe	1974-1983
October	Larry Travis	1983-1992

Acknowledgements:

This publication is prepared in love, dedication and many hours of research so you may enjoy the history of Bethany United Methodist Church.

To all who had a part in the production of this book, we say "Thank you!"

Bethany Historical Committee: Mrs. Janet Ashe, Miss Lizzie Grey Chandler, Miss Minnie Chandler, Frank & Lois Evans, and Dan Portaro

Ministers that have served at Bethany 1892-1992

Main Street:	1892-1894	*Frank A. Bishop
	1895-1896	*William Doub
	1897-1899	*George A. Oglesby
	1899-1903	No Church
Mission Charge:	1903	*Charles M. Lance
	1904-1907	*Enoch Marvin Hoyle
	1908	*John Watson Autry
	1909	*Kirby Formy Duval
	1910	*Bernard T. Hurley
	1911-1912	*Harry Cleveland Smith
	1913	*Baxter Boone Slaughter
Durham Circuit	1914-1915	*Leon McGowan Hall
	1916-1918	*Harry Cleveland Smith
	1919-1922	*John Compton Humble
	1923-1926	*Wesley Frank Craven
	1927-1929	*Harris Lindsay Hendricks
	1930-1931	*Benjamin E. Stanfield
	1931-1935	*Benson Harrison Black
	1936-1937	*Chancie DeShield Barclift
	1938-1940	*Francis Boyd Peele
	1941-1944	*Shirley Judge Starnes
	Duke Students	1945-1948
1949-1951		Tommy Tyson
1951-1952		James L. Beaty
Station	1952-1957	John Maxwell Cline
	1957-1963	James Eugene Sponenberg
	1963-1966	Brooks Patten
	1966-1969	*Ralph Eugene Fowlkes, Jr.
	1969-1974	Ralph Lang Fleming, Jr.
	1974-1980	Roger Vernon Elliott
	1980-1983	Wallace Martin Ellis
	1982-1988	Lovell Roy Aills
1988	Rex Eugene Brooks	

*Deceased

Duke Student Interns serving with the Senior Minister:

Harvey Sellers	1960-62	Jeffrey Butcher	1977-1978
David Dubose	1962	Gordan G. Geison	1978-1979
John Walker	1969-70	Jonathan R. Reese	1979-1981
Howard Bakacs	1970-71	Steven R. Alspach	1981-1982
Phil Emerson	1971-72	Jerry W. Cribb	1982-1984
George Curtis	1972-73	Kevin R. Armstrong	1984-1985
Ken Chalker	1973-74	Timothy Burchill	1985-1987
Gregory B. Iverson	1974-75	Mark Mangum	1987-1988
Lonnie Slider	1975	David Bonney	1990-1991
Louise McCaskill	1976	Frank VanAllen	1991
Christian L. Kraatz	1976-1977		

Early Beginnings and the First "10" Years

- *1892-1894 Frank A. Bishop
- *1895-1896 William B. Doub
- *1897-1899 George A. Oglesby
- *1899-1902 No Church

To understand the beginning of our church, Bethany, we need to know a little about the beginning of Methodism and its movement in the area.

It was on June 16 of 1780 when Frances Asbury, the Circuit preacher who brought the religious zeal of the Wesleys to the American colonies, crossed the state line of Virginia. By June 21st he and his horse had reached the home of Mr. Taylor Duke. A home which was center of Methodism and where 30 some people listened to Asbury deliver his sermon that day in Bahama. It was here also where Taylor's sons, young William 'Billie' Duke grew in spiritual fervor and where younger son, Washington, possibly dreamed of how he would one day make their tobacco crops the foundation of the Duke fortunes.

It was older brother, Billie Duke, however, who married young Sara Roberts and made his home south of Bahama in 1825. Billie Duke spent many hours traveling the local countryside preaching the Methodist Gospel; only then he called it exhorting, as he was not an ordained preacher as such. He had to continue his farming, so he decided to erect an arbor by throwing leaf covered boughs over a framework of poles nearer to his home. From beneath the Bush Arbor, Billie Duke (affectionately known as "Uncle Billie") would preach to the people of this area.

After meeting beneath the Bush Arbor for several summers, the congregation realized the need for better facilities. In 1840 the Roberts family (Captain Albert, his wife, and four daughters and two sons, Tom and John Roberts) along with the Williams, Harden, Guess (for whom Guess Road was named due to the fact that he was Doctor and very well to do), Garrard, Rogers, Woods and Horton families with others decided to build a church to replace the Bush Arbor so they could meet year round. The church would be called Mt. Hebron. Washington Duke moved his membership from Mt. Bethel to Mt. Hebron to be closer to his older brother, Billie (now 38 years old) and also because his homestead, then on Chapel Hill Road, was not far from the little church. The total cost of building the first Mt. Hebron Church was \$100.00. Young Washington Duke is reported to have said, "That a heap of money to put into religion," as he and his brother Billie looked at the new thirty by thirty-foot (30' x 35') log structure.

In the middle of the century, the slavery issue had divided the Methodists in the area. Washington Duke, as well as four other members of Mt. Hebron joined the Confederate Army. This caused a burden on the small rural churches of the south. During the war torn years, Billie, being too old at 57 years, stayed home and carried a large portion of the ministry to keep the church alive. Members of the Mt. Hebron Church sent to the Conference in 1872 included: the Dukes, Woods, Stagg, Captain Albert Roberts and family, the Guess family and others.

After Billie Duke's death in 1883, the remaining leadership wanted to build a new church and suggested moving the church to the land of Samuel Roberts. Others objected to the location because there was no good public road to the site. Captain Roberts offered to donate the building materials and put it on the grounds if the church would be built on the same site as the present church. But in 1885 Captain Roberts died at age 53. There was much division over the issue of location, so the members who did not want the change withdrew and joined other churches in the immediate area. With the change in location also came the change in name. For the inspired leadership of "Uncle Billie" in the early years, the church was named Duke's Chapel. This church is still in existence and is located on Old Oxford Highway which was then known as Fish Dam Road.

For some years several of these families who were not in favor of the relocations met for Sunday School in one of Washington Duke's warehouses. The factory church members called themselves Bethany.

In 1892 a meeting of this group, hoping to build themselves a new church, was held in the small

Chalk Level School (now Hillandale School). Mr. Jim Warren donated some land of Guess Road to build the church. On July 21, 1892 at the 26th Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Reverend Frank Bishop of Durham's Main Street Methodist (now Duke Memorial) reported that a new church would be built on Guess Road. During this same year, a white wooden building originally known as Warren Chapel, was built on these grounds for \$1,300.00 worth of materials donated by the Washington Duke family. This donation from the Duke family was largely the result of the efforts of Mrs. Cornelia Elizabeth Roberts, wife of Captain Albert Roberts and grandmother of Mrs. Eunice Riley. She was a neighbor of the Duke family and one of the driving forces in organizing the Sunday School and church.

On the fifth Sunday of October 1892 at 3:00 o'clock, the Doctor Erwin A. Yates, presiding Elder of the Durham District of the Methodist Episcopal Church South preached the sermon. Doctor Yates closed the service by saying "the church name is Bethany." The first beginning was rough going. Preaching was held once a month at 3:00 p.m.; yet Sunday School tried meeting every Sunday. The church wasn't even mentioned at the 1893 or 1894 Conferences. Things seemed to improve a little around 1895 when, the Reverend William Doub came to Main Street Methodist Church and managed to help by preaching at Bethany about three times a month. But in August of 1896, Reverend Doub died. Many events took place to hinder the progress of the church. Harsh conditions and muddy roads often closed Sunday School. The charge pastors could not always make the service; the bigger churches seemed to prevail over small Bethany. When the pastor would not show, the small congregation would often hang around the front of the church and eventually go back home. Then when the pastor would show up often there would be no congregation. So at the 1897 Quarterly Conference a report was given on the Bethany mission (supposably the mission of Duke Memorial Church); someone reported that there was no mission there any longer, "The church is closed."

An old owl soon made its home in the church, vandals broke in and camped there. Bethany stood silent by the narrow muddy road for several years.

The Second Ten Years - The Second Beginning

*1903	Charles M. Lance	*1909	Kirby Formy Duval
*1904-1907	Enoch Marvin Hoyle	*1910	Bernard T. Hurley
*1908	John Watson Autry		

During the years 1897 and 1903, the six year period that the church had closed it's doors, Tom Roberts, who lived across the road from the church, took care of the church and the grounds. The late Albert Roberts once wrote, I quote, "Once as a small boy playing around the church, I managed to get the front door open and went in and on the pulpit was a big horned owl. I sat down to listen to the sermon, but the owl never said a word. His message seemed to say I don't give a hoot, keep your eyes and ears open and if you have nothing to say just keep you mouth shut."

Well, it was a summer afternoon near sunset in 1903 when a young divinity student knocked on the door of Tom Roberts' home. He introduced himself as Charles Martin Lance, a ministerial student at Trinity College. He had stopped to inquire about the church; he wanted to open it again. Tom invited Rev. Lance in for the night and they talked about opening the church. He told Tom how the other students had laughed at him and said he'd be wasting his time. Rev. Lance began announcing to the community that preaching service would be at Bethany on Sunday. A revival followed and twelve people were received and became the charter members of Bethany.

They were:	Bertha & Blance Almond	A.T. Roberts
	Maggie, Annie, and Mamie Horton	Mrs. Everette L. Roberts
	W.C. Horton	Mrs. Ada Williams
	Miss Ada Riggsbee	J.M. Williams
	John Roberts	

Reverend Lance told the group that near conference time he would graduate and must move on. He told the group that "if each of you will loyally do his best, the church will grow." He arranged for his brother, H.E. Lance, also a ministerial student at Trinity College, to be the new Sunday School superintendent. Another Buncombe county divinity student, Rev. Frazier Starnes came with him and

taught the Adult Bible Class. Bertha & Blanche Almond walked from Watts Street to teach classes each Sunday. Regardless of how bad the weather was, Sunday School was held and the classes grew.

The Conference took notice and sent the first student pastor from Trinity College, the Reverend Enoch Marvin Hoyle. Bethany was placed on the Board of Missions. Rev. Hoyle was young, energetic and gifted. Under his ministry many who had rarely darkened the door of any church came again and again to listen to Rev. Hoyle. During his first revival, the church was filled each evening. Those in attendance, however, were not accepting the invitation. So one night he said, "we've been here a week; you've shown me no definite interest. Now, I have this to say: if you are going to wade through every prayer, exhortation, invitation, and song and still go down to blazes anyhow - then God bless you, go to it!" He asked if anyone wanted the revival to continue. Several in the church encouraged him to continue one more night. The next night about fifteen (15) young adults offered themselves for membership.

1911-1922

*1811-1912	Harry Cleveland Smith	*1917-1918	Harry Cleveland Smith
*1913	Baxter Boone Slaughter, Sr.	*1919-1922	John Compton Humble
*1914-16	Leon McGowan Hall		

When Reverend Hicks E. Lance was the Sunday School Superintendent he had the first Children's Day Program in the summer of 1904. It continued to bring excitement to the children at Bethany through out the period from 1911-1922.

"The high point of the education program was Children's Day (similar to our present day Bible School). The leaders of the Children's Day at Bethany were: Mrs. Mabel Proctor Cole (known as "Aunt Mabel," who was listed as the 24th person to become a member), Mrs. Lula Proctor (the 61st member in 1916), Mrs. Eunice Williams Riley (the 27th member in 1911); and Mrs. Everette "Mother" Roberts (charter member in 1903). Mrs. Proctor would borrow her father's horse and wagon to pick up the children of the community. She'd pick up so many that some had to stand on the axles. This took place during the summer so that children were able to rehearse every two weeks. On the day of the program, everyone on the circuit showed up. Usually the program would open with the children marching in and carrying a daisy chain. The program continued with the reciting of scripture, singing, and acting out skits. All this was followed by a giant picnic.

Trinity College continued to supply student ministers under the Board of Missions through 1916. From 1911-1916 the three students that served were: Reverend Harry C. Smith (1911-1912); Reverend Baxter B. Slaughter, Sr. (1913); Reverend Leon M. Hall (1914-16). Reverend Slaughter added nine new members by baptism and four by certificate. Rev. Hall added 21 new members by baptism and 15 by certificate.

In 1917 Bethany had grown large enough to be placed on the Durham Circuit with Duke's Chapel, Fletcher's Chapel, McMannen and Pleasant Green. The first minister to serve on the Circuit was Reverend Harry C. Smith (1917-18), who had been a student pastor (1911-12). Reverend Smith was so proud of Bethany's Epworth League that he began his final Quarterly Conference report on November 28, 1918 in this manner:

"Our Epworth League at Bethany is doing good work. It has made leaders of many of our young people and helped them to become interested in church work. The preachers' salary has been raised 100% in two years and the Epworth League has had much to do in raising it."

The next pastor to Bethany, Reverend John C. Humble (1919-22) was a different type preacher from Reverend Smith. Reverend Smith preached with a soft voice, but Rev. Humble was loud and blasting. He added 35 members to the church.

This little country church had no electric lights therefore light was provided by oil lamps. It was heated by a wood stove that didn't really heat the building. Members would furnish the wood and cut it

to fit the stove. Others would trim the oil lamps, sweep and dust the church.

The Sunday School classes were held in different sections of the sanctuary. In 1922 the Sunday School had seven officers and teachers and five classes. On January 22, 1922, the membership was 89 and on December 31, 1922 it was 108. The average attendance for the year was 62 and the average Sunday School collection was \$3.50.

1923 - 1931

*1923-1926	Wesley Frank Craven
*1927-1928	Harris Lindsay Hendricks
*1929-1931	Benjamin E. Stanfield

The Durham Circuit was served by the Reverend Wesley Frank Craven from 1923-1926. He had at least 31 revivals in the five churches. Bethany added 18 members (five on Profession of Faith, thirteen by transfer and lost three by transfer). In May 1923, Bethany had a rummage sale which earned \$20.23. In October of 1923, we have the first record of a Brunswick Stew sale which earned \$39.28. From this amount a stove was purchased for \$27.30 and the remaining amount was applied to the parsonage fund. In December 1924, a janitor was paid \$2.00 a month and by December 1925 it was increased to \$4.00 a month.

Members of the church bought additional lamps and lanterns to help light the church. Someone placed a lantern on the stand next to the pulpit so that Rev. Craven could read the scripture. After reading the scripture, he said "let us pray" and as he bent forward to pray, he knocked over the lantern. A man on the front row leaped over the railing, grasped the lantern and tossed it out an open window before it could explode. Finally, he cleared his throat and said, "now we will pray!"

With some assistance from the N.C. Methodist Episcopal Church South Conference, two educational wings were added. The Women's Home Demonstration Club of the community donated the money to pay for the electric lights. No longer did Bethany have to depend on lamps and lanterns for light.

Reverend Harris L. Hendricks was next to serve the Durham Circuit from 1927-28. In 1927 Duke's Chapel dropped from the Durham Circuit which left four churches and this increased each church's part of the budget. The parsonage (that was bought by the Circuit in 1928 for \$3,500.00) was sold for \$4,500.00. Bethany donated some land so that the new parsonage could be built next door to the church. The Epworth League ceased to function. At the First Quarterly Conference of his second year, Rev. Hendricks wrote "the people have given their pastor a very cordial welcome back again. The people of the church haven't given us a rather severe pounding, but it was the kind that is always pleasant that leaves no bruises to be healed." This kind of pounding meant that the people of the church brought all types of food, fruits, vegetables, etc.

Reverend Benjamin E. Stanfield served from 1929-31. In 1929 the Stock Market crashed and this began the great depression. It was very difficult for the churches to meet their budget. Reverend Stanfield raised hogs which upset some of the members. The total membership for the church at the end of 1931 was 106 members.

1931-1940

*1931-1935	Benson Harrison Black
*1935-1937	Chancie DeShield Barclift
*1938-1940	Francis Boyd Peele

Reverend Benson H. Black arrived at the height of the depression to serve the four churches in the Durham District. At the end of the first year he wrote, "The general state of the churches is rather low in these days of depression." In recognition of the times he accepted a salary cut to \$1,725.37. Bethany's share was \$500.00, but still were unable to give that amount. Bethany raised \$375.00 in 1932; \$409.00 in 1933 and \$439.00 in 1935.

Reverend Black revived the Epworth League and had a group of young people meeting every Sunday night. These young people planned and volunteered everything for an ice cream supper. Harvey Black, who was one of the minister's sons, said that he would bring a cake. When he told his mother that he volunteered a cake, he thought she would make it, but she told him that he would have to make it. Harvey doubled the recipe and made two cakes; one for the ice cream supper and one to be auctioned at the ice cream supper.

Reverend Black gave scholarly interpretations of the Bible and used many Biblical illustrations while delivering his sermons. While at Bethany he performed six marriages:

Wesley Roberts and Yetta Sorrells
Wallace Bowling and Louise Bowling
Marvin Williams and Mary Katherine Beasley
David E. Woods and Hope Sorrells
Ray Yount and Lola Mae Scoggins
Hubert Bailey and Nora Hunt

The Fourth Quarterly Conference report of 1935 showed that during the summer an outbreak of Polio affected the attendance of Sunday School and Epworth League. A resolution signed by all the members of the Board was made at the Quarterly Conference regarding Reverend Black's four years. Excerpts from that report:

1. Reverend Black has shown four years of devotion, loyalty and love for the church and all its activities.
2. Reverend Black has been kind and considerate in times of trouble, sorrow, and death. We could have had no better friend.
3. Mrs. Black has shown a great interest in promoting the work of the Missionary Society.
4. Reverend Black loved the Bethany people and community. When he retired he moved into the Bethany community.

Reverend Chancie DeShield Barclift served the Durham Charge from 1935-1937. He was blessed with a heavy voice and a love for poetry. As much as two-thirds of a sermon would be devoted to his reciting poetry. In the Quarterly reports, he often wrote, "The pastor is interested in the children and their relationships to the Kingdom and tries to manifest their interest in many helpful ways."

Reverend Francis Boyd Peele served the Durham District from 1939-1940. In 1939, all Methodist Episcopal Churches which involved Bethany would no longer be called Northern and Southern Methodist.

At a Quarterly Conference on March 12, 1939, Reverend Peele wrote, "Bethany church has had a little trouble finding rooms, benches and chairs for their Sunday School. We have overcome that situation and much needed room has been provided." The membership increased from 132 to 187 and Sunday School from 136-228. From a Quarterly Conference held on October 15, 1939, Reverend Peele wrote, "A canvas in the community of McMannen and Bethany has been made, and the membership of Bethany has followed the canvas in great ways."

1941-1951

*1941-1944	Shirley Judge Starnes
1945-1948	J. Leslie Hartz
1949-1951	Tommy Tyson

These ten years, 1941-1951 brought about many changes at Bethany Church and in the world. During this time World War II (the great war) happened. Bethany became a station, and the present sanctuary was completed.

Reverend Shirley Judge Starnes served the Durham Circuit from 1941-1944. He started this ministry with a membership of 198 and at the end of his four years it was 274. During his first month, he made 130 pastoral calls into the homes of the members of the Durham Circuit. And during the next two months he had made a total of 270 visits.

The women of the Circuit furnished the parsonage with a new living room suit, an electric stove for the kitchen and installed linoleum in the dining room and kitchen. A building fund was started in 1942 to build a new church, because Bethany had out grown the old wooden church.

World War II started in September 1939. The United States as well as Bethany felt the effect of December 7, 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States entered the war. Nineteen members of Bethany served in the armed forces:

Thomas Ball	Leslie Foster
Benson H. Black	Robert D. Millar
Harvey B. Black	*James O'Briant
Ira Wesley Browning	Oscar M. Overby
Paul K. Browning	Carlyle Peele
Amos Bullock	Thomas Lynwood Roberts
*Daniel Bullock	James E. Shook
*Wallace M. Bullock	Henry S. Thompson
Walter R. Gattis, Jr.	William W. Woods, Jr.
Edwin Earnhardt	

Three members gave their lives: James O'Briant, father of Claribel, Ernestine, Leonard and Wallace O'Briant; and Daniel and Wallace Bullock, brother of Nellie B. O'Briant. A plaque was placed in the church honoring the nineteen men who served their country.

During the four years that Reverend Starnes served Bethany our membership increased by 87, many of whom were by Baptism and Profession of Faith. At the end of his ministry, Bethany became a station. This meant that it would have its own minister. The parsonage was purchased from the Durham Circuit for \$6,290.00.

From 1945-1948, Reverend J. Leslie Hartz (who now lives in St. Joseph, Missouri), a Duke Divinity student, was the first full time minister to serve Bethany. The membership continued to grow and the building fund continued to increase. Fund raising projects such as a Halloween Carnival in the old gymnasium at Hillandale School, Brunswick stew and suppers were a help toward this. The ladies would make desserts and Nannette Shaw (deceased) always made at least 8 pies for these suppers. Reverend Hartz started a morning and evening service every Sunday and had summer programs for the children and youth at Hillandale School. The evening service was canceled due to the lack of attendance. The end of World War II came in the first year of Reverend Hartz's ministry. Germany surrendered May 5, 1945 and Japan surrendered September 2, 1945.

From 1949-1951, Reverend Tommy Tyson, another Duke Divinity student, was assigned to Bethany. A ground breaking ceremony was held in July 1949 for the new church sanctuary. Mrs. Everette Roberts read the church history (which was placed in the corner stone) and Reverend Leon Hall, a former minister, laid the corner stone. The new sanctuary and fellowship hall was completed by January 1951 at a cost of approximately \$54,650.00. The old building was then used for Sunday School Classes.

A Scout Troop was organized under the leadership of Robert Hester. Our Bible School and Children's Day program continued.

A charismatic group sought to involve itself with other churches in the northern area of Durham and Bethany was one of them. The church became divided over this issue and attendance dwindled as well as monetary giving.

After reading this account of the years 1941-1951 and ending on this negative note, please be sure to read the next ten years, because the "best is yet to come!"

1951-June 1963

November 1951-November 1952
1952-1957
1957-63

James L. Beaty
John Maxwell Cline
James E. Sponenberg

Reverend James L. Beaty in November 1951 became our third and last Duke Divinity student to become the minister of Bethany after it became a station. Reverend Beaty's studies prevented him from helping solve the problem of the Charismatic group that caused the division in the church. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Administrative Board met with the District Superintendent from 9:00 p.m. till midnight to express their desire for a full time minister. The women's circles agreed to clean up the church and take the \$600.00 from the janitorial fund and add it to the pastor's salary. This amount would meet the Conference requirement and then the District Superintendent could then appoint a full time minister.

In 1953, Reverend John M. Cline took a \$500.00 cut in salary to become Bethany's first full time minister. In a quiet, soft spoken manner, he healed the division. Louise Bowling stated that when Reverend Cline came it was like love had returned to our church. Bethany owed \$23,089.00 on the new church that cost \$54,650.00 when completed in January 1951. The women of the church sponsored periodic suppers at the church with the money earned going to the building fund, and cash contributions were made by the members. So successful were these endeavors that on Christmas Day 1955, the final special offering was taken and the debt was completely erased. The Durham Newspaper published an article regarding our accomplishment. On February 26, 1956, a formal dedication service was held with guest speaker District Superintendent W.L. Clegg. During the next year a fund for an educational wing was established. The church membership grew from 307 to 440 and the Sunday School increased from 281-409 during Reverend Cline's five years.

Reverend James Eugene Sponenberg was assigned June 27, 1957. With the increase in Sunday School, the old wooden church building was over crowded. This encouraged the congregation to build an educational wing to the new church which was completed in January 1960 - for approximately \$70,000.00. The old wooden church was removed by January 1960. The M.Y.F. sold souvenir nails from the old church. In 1961 the church sanctuary was air conditioned for \$2,700.00. At the April 27, 1961 Administrative Board meeting, O'Neil Sharpe reported from the Trustees that the parsonage needed: an up stairs bath, remodel down stairs bath, a new roof, to decorate several rooms, and install storm doors and windows for the cost of \$3,000.00. James Gooch, a member and plumber, did all the labor at night and refused any pay.

Reverend Sponenberg was very successful during his six years at Bethany. The church membership grew from 440 to 581 and the indebtedness of the Educational Building was reduced to \$18,000.00

July 1963-1974

1963-October 1966 Brooks Patten
*October 1966-1969 Ralph Eugene Fowlkes, Jr.
1969-1974 Ralph Lang Fleming, Jr.

Duke Students:	1969-1970	John Walker	1972-1973	George Curtis
	1970-1971	Howard Bakacs	1973-1974	Ken Chalker
	1971-1972	Phil Emerson		

Reverend Brooks Patten began his third year of ministry in July 1963 and during this time membership continued to grow. From the Pastor's report dated March 10, 1954, quote: "A Boy Scout Cub Pack has been organized with 27 members. With this addition of an Explorer Post Advisor, our church is now fully organized with a Pack, Troop and Post." The Sunday School had 40 officers and teachers with an average attendance of 182.

In the fall of 1965, "Operation Big Push" was started in order to pay the remaining debt for the

Education Building which was complete in 1959 at the cost of \$70,000.00. The campaign was successful and the mortgage was paid in December 1965.

A formal dedication service for the Educational Building was held on Sunday, May 1, 1966 with Bishop Paul N. Garber presiding. Elmer Johnson gave the welcoming address. Other ministers who took part in the program were Reverend Brooks Patten, Reverend James E. Sponenberg, and District Superintendent, Reverend O.L. Hathaway. Another important event was the employment of Mrs. Ila Mae Poe as church secretary on September 11, 1966.

In 1967 the New Adult Literature Class was formed and in February 1968 the name was changed to the Heritage Class and Lizzie Grey Chandler was asked to be interim teacher, a post she held until 1990.

Due to a death in the Conference, Reverend Patten was moved and Reverend Ralph E. Fowlkes was appointed in October 1966 rather than the usual June. In February 1967, the Trustees recommended that a search committee be formed to find a new parsonage. A special call Board meeting was held on April 16, 1967 to look at a house at 1712 Kirkwood Drive. A special call Church Conference was held on April 30 to approve the recommendation of the Administrative Board to buy the house and the two acre lot for \$35,000.00. Also approval was made to spend \$5,000.00 for furnishings and \$2,500.00 to connect all utilities. The pastor and his family occupied the parsonage on August 15, 1967.

The old parsonage on Guess road was rented for \$75.00 a month until February 1968. It was later used by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Sunday School classes and a Youth Coffee House.

Reverend Ralph E. Fleming ministered to Bethany from July 1969-June 1974. At the September Board meeting, he recommended that a Memorial Fund be established for money given in memory of loved ones. This was approved in November 1969. An air conditioning system and a new furnace for the Educational Building was completed by the spring of 1970.

The Youth under the direction of John Walker, Duke Intern, organized a Coffee House, known as the Harbor, in the old parsonage in May of 1970. This was to be used as a gathering place for the young people in the community. In May of the following year, it was closed and the Trustees recommended that the parsonage be removed. The house was removed by W.T. Proctor and the space was used for parking.

On October 25, 1970, Mrs. Everette Roberts a charter member and church historian, died. Her church history was placed in the corner stone of the Sanctuary on April 8, 1951.

In 1972, the chancel area of the sanctuary was renovated and new altar furnishings were given as memorials at the cost of \$3,000.00. The fellowship hall was renovated and paneled at the cost of approximately \$4,000.00 in 1973. The handicap ramp was completed in 1974 and the front steps rebuilt. Also approval was given for a loan not to exceed \$16,000.00 for purchasing a new organ and to pave the parking lot.

1974-1983

1974-1980 Roger Vernon Elliott

1980-1982 Wallace Martin Ellis

Duke Student:	1974-1975	George Iverson	1978-1979	Gordan Geison
	1975-1976	Lonnie Slider	1979-1981	Jonathan Reese
	1976-1977	Chris Kraatz	1981-1982	Steve Alspach
	1977-1978	Jeffery Butcher	1982-1983	Jerry Cribb

Reverend Roger Vernon Elliott came to Bethany July 1974 and served until June 1980, completing six years.

During his first year, it was found that there was a conflict of the listed number of members in the N.C. Conference Journal and the actual names we had on roll. With the help of the Membership Secretary, Mrs. Lilas Vickers, and the Church Secretary, Mrs. Ila Mae Poe, they only found 563 names listed as members. Therefore a request to remove 183 in number from the 746 listed in the Journal was approved by Bishop Robert M. Blackburn.

Many new programs were started during his first year: a food pantry was established; four young people (Sabrina Williams, Sara Wilson, Greg Rhodes, and Currie Tilley) volunteered to serve as Acolytes; tape ministry for those unable to attend service and the Dial-A-Devotion ministry which involved many of our members.

A Laity Care Program was started in an effort for members to be in contact with other members and especially in their time of needs. The Cornelia Sunday School class completed their pew cushion project for the sanctuary at the cost of \$2,282.18. A red velvet dossal curtain was placed behind the altar area to cover the present picture that was becoming very deteriorated. A fund for World Hunger became a part of our budget. Bibles were bought for the pews. Mrs. Virginia Barrett became a very vital part of our ministry as Choir Director on May 6, 1976.

Reverend Elliott requested permission from the Board to take part in a Doctor of Ministry program offered by Drew University. The program was so designed not to interfere with his normal church ministry routine. This request was granted and he received his Doctoral Degree while at Bethany.

Other things that were done included: a building fund for new additions or land acquisition was established; the roofs of the Educational Building and sanctuary were repaired for about \$3,000.00; \$1,000.00 was put in the budget for the support of a missionary; the church steeple was covered with aluminum siding and handbells were purchased for \$3,000.00.

Words of praise were written about Roger by Ed Osteen requesting that he return for his sixth year. "His presence would be beneficial because of the established rapport which now exists between the minister and the congregation and because he is a minister in whom the congregation already has total confidence."

In January 1979, Reverend Elliott stated that "Bethany is growing and a question to come up later - can we relocate in the future or should be add to the present building?" Three committees and three subcommittees made a thorough study and reported their findings to the board and later to a Church Conference on January 7, 1980. A special call Church Charge Conference was held on February 24, 1980 in order to vote on relocation of the church. The vote on relocation was voted down by 145 to 103.

In June 1980, Reverend Wallace Martin Ellis began his ministry. During this time here the parking lot and organ loan was paid in full on September 1980 and the parsonage loan was paid in January 1981. On May 27, 1981 the organ and parsonage was dedicated in a service led by District Superintendent Dr. Charles H. Mercer.

The church was very proud to recommend Phil Ryals and Powell Osteen as candidates for the ministry.

On January 19, 1981 the church purchased the house and lot at 2616 Omah Street for \$18,984.51. In November 1981, the church purchased a good used Xerox copier for \$1,500.00. In March, protective windows were installed over the stained glass windows of the sanctuary for \$1,230.00. A 1979 Ford van was purchased in January 1983 for \$8,500.00.

1983-1988 Lovell Roy Aills
1988 - Rex Eugene Brooks

Duke Students: 1984-85 Kevin Armstrong
 1985-87 Tim Burchill
 1987-88 Mark Mangum
 1990-91 David Boney
 1991 Frank VanAllen

Reverend Lovell Roy Aills served Bethany five years, 1983-1988. At the first board meeting held on July 10, 1983, he announced that his role as our new minister was as follows: To be a resource person, to motivate inactive members to become active and initiate new programs. On July 21, 1983 Reverend Aills and his wife, Barbara, were in a serious automobile accident. He wrote in his pastor's report November 23, 1983, "We regret that we have not been able to contribute the time and effort we would desire. Your patient, understanding and Christian love had been greatly appreciated."

The 1982 budget has an excess of \$4,411.94. Part of this money was used to remodel the house of Omah Street (\$2,500.00) and \$1,500.00 for the Van Fund. A brass cross (6' x 3'9") donated by Mrs. Lela Mae Long in memory of her daughter, Pat Sutherlin, was installed over the dossal curtain in the chancel area. New sanctuary light fixtures were installed in memory of Elmer Johnson, who had given so much of his time and life to Bethany. A chandelier in the stairwell at the north entrance of the education building was given in memory of "Chuck" Johnson by his parents, Charles & Sybil Johnson.

The church supported Lisa Aills, daughter of pastor Aills, on a mission trip to Mexico.

The Dial-a-Devotion phone ministry was discontinued.

In January 1985 a study on the feasibility of a Multi-purpose Building began. On July 13, 1986 it was reported that this would be a \$300,000.00 project. On January 12, 1987, Ashton Properties, Inc. of Raleigh, N.C. offered Bethany an exchange of our present site for relocation and building a church of equal footage to present buildings at no cost to Bethany members. The multi-purpose building was put on hold. At a special Charge Conference the Trustees were authorized by a vote of 159 to accept the option fee of \$5,000.00 from Ashton Properties, Inc. The church received \$12,000.00 for property bought by the state for right of way for the widening of Guess Road.

Barbara Aills' ministry with the children and Children's Church was of great value to our children and attendance increased. Our church grew by 120 new members during Reverend Aill's ministry.

In 1987, Barbara Roberts retired as our church organist after thirty years of service.

Reverend Rex Eugene Brooks has served Bethany since July 1988. One of his first tasks was the N.C. Conference Capital Fund drive to raise \$8,000,000.00 for Church extension and camping ministries. The Administrative Board voted to accept the challenge to raise \$41,292.00 over the next three years for Capital Funds. Stated in the pastor's report that a goal that will begin January 1, 1989 will be to double in a three year period the attendance of the Sunday Worship Service. The motto for this endeavor will be "Every family win a family."

Christmas of 1988, the Youth and a project for Danny Rudd's Eagle Scout award, a life size Nativity Scene was used on the front lawn.

In August 1989, Ashton Properties, Inc. could not complete their plans for the use of our property, therefore their option was dropped.

In the fall of 1989, the N.C. Conference offered a Vitalization Project. Twenty-five members of Bethany studied the "Twelve Keys to an Effective Church" which reflects the strength and weakness of a church. The result of this study showed that Bethany could improve in several areas.

The Methodist Men started a scholarship program and named it in memory of one of their members, Jake M. Bauer. This \$500 scholarship is awarded each year to one of our young people attending college. In addition to Children's Church, a Children's sermon is included in the morning worship.

A computer was purchased for the church office. The new edition of the Methodist Hymnal was placed in our sanctuary in October 1989. The New International Version of the Bible given in memory of Mrs. Eunice Williams Riley was placed in the pews in August of 1992. The sound system in the sanctuary was updated with multi-directional microphones and hard of hearing individual head sets. The parking lot was repaired. The cook house was rebuilt and the first stew cooked there was April 7, 1990.

In June 1990, a beautiful stained glass window was placed over the main entrance to the church. This was given in memory of Mr. & Mrs. John Westmoreland and Mr. & Mrs. Fred A. Johnson by their respective families, Charlie & Joyce Bumpass and Charles & Sybil Johnson.

Fall of 1990, the church took on a new look with the beautiful landscaping and the addition of curb and gutter on Guess Road. A new brick sign was built as an Eagle Scout project by Charles Knight. The prayer garden at the north side of the church was given in memory of David E. Woods and in honor of Hope S. Woods.

On Sunday, May 31, 1992 the Educational Building was named the Chandler Building in honor of Lizzie Grey & Minnie Chandler. A plaque was placed at the north entrance of the church.

On August 2, 1992 the stained glass panels at the north entrance of the Chandler Building were dedicated in memory of Oscar Norman White.

During 1992, the church has been making preparations for our Centennial Celebration, October 11, 1992. A quilt depicting this event is displayed in the stairwell of the Chandler Building.

HISTORY OF BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Bethany Church was built in the summer of 1892 on a parcel of land donated by Mr. J.B. Warren. The cost of the building was \$1,300.00 and was first known as Warren Chapel. On the fifth Sunday of October in 1892 the small chapel was dedicated to the worship of God and the saying, "The church's name is Bethany." Bethany was the mission of the Main Street Methodist Church, now known as Duke Memorial. While under the care of the Main Street Methodist Church, the Reverend Frank Bishop attempted to hold services at both Main Street and Bethany. The task was too great for Pastor Bishop to handle with all his other duties and responsibilities, so the little Bethany Church was often neglected. It had only a few members and soon they too began to lose interest. Finally the doors were closed and the church called Bethany stood silent for several years.

In 1903, Reverend Charles M. Lance, a student from Trinity College, walked to the Bethany community and asked to spend the night in the home of Mr. Tom Roberts so he could survey the community the next day on the possibility of reopening Bethany Church. After canvassing the area, Reverend Lance held a revival, reorganized the church and established a Sunday School Class which grew rapidly. When Reverend Lance had completed his work at Trinity College, it was time to move on, so he asked his brother, Reverend Hicks E. Lance, also a college student, to be the Superintendent of the Sunday School. The care of the church thus lay in the hands of its charter members:

Bertha & Blanche Almond
W.C. Horton
John Roberts
Mrs. Everette L. Roberts
J.M. Williams

Maggie, Annie, and Mamie Horton
Miss Ada Riggsbee
A.T. Roberts
Mrs. Ada Williams

Bethany was placed on the Board of Missions of the Conference with Mangum Street Church (now Calvary), Pearl Mill Church and Massey's Chapel. Trinity College would become the source of pastoral leadership for Bethany with the Reverend E. Marvin Hoyle becoming the very first student pastor.

The ground breaking service for the new church was held July 1949 by Reverend Tommy Tyson and the District Superintendent, Dr. E.L. Hillman. Mrs. Everette Roberts read the church history. The new church was completed in January 1951 at the cost of approximately \$54,650.00. The first homecoming service was held in the new building on April 8, 1951 with the laying of the cornerstone by Reverend Leon M. Hall and followed by an old fashioned dinner and the beginning of revival services. The bell in the church steeple is the same bell that rang out the welcome to God's word from the former little white church.

The Reverend John Maxwell Cline led Bethany forward from the years 1952-57. Many new members were added and additional property adjacent to the church was purchased to expand the church facilities. A building fund was started for an educational building with plans for construction during the conference year 1957-58. The people responded and the church school moved into the new building on the third Sunday of June 1959. Bishop Garber and the Reverend O.L. Hathaway assisted Reverend Brooks Patten and Reverend James L. Sponenberg in the dedication of the building on May 2, 1966. Twenty-six years alter on May 31, 1992, the same building was dedicated and named the Chandler Education Building in honor of Lizzie Grey and Minnie Chandler.

In 1961 the sanctuary was air conditioned and in 1967 a new parsonage was purchased. In 1972 the chancel and altar area was renovated to include a new pulpit and altar furnishings, which were made possible by the Bethany Memorial Gift Fund. Bishop Robert Blackburn of the Raleigh Area; Dr. C. D. Barclift, Durham District Superintendent; Reverend Ralph L. Fleming, Jr., pastor; and John Kirkland, Church Lay Leader, led the dedication service on November 26, 1972. During 1972 the Fellowship Hall was renovated, new front steps were added, the parking lot was paved, and a church organ was purchased.

Reverend Roger V. Elliott came to Bethany and served six years. He brought a spiritual awakening to the church during his ministry with his youth exuberance and compelling and emotional moving sermons, as well as growth in membership. A survey was made regarding the relocation of Bethany to a more rural area north of Guess road, but the membership voted against this move. The decision not to relocate was a very emotional time for the church.

Reverend Wallace M. Ellis began his ministry in June 1980. During this time the parking lot, organ and parsonage loans were paid in full. On May 27, 1981 the organ and parsonage were dedicated in a service led by District Superintendent Dr. Charles H. Mercer.

The church was very proud to recommend Phil Ryals and Powell Osteen as candidates for the ministry.

Reverend Lovell R. Aills served Bethany from 1983-1988 bringing a new awareness in Sunday School and the Children's Program. He was able to awaken the spiritually complacent Bethany.

In June 1988 Reverend Rex E. Brooks began his ministry and is our current pastor. Since his arrival, Bethany again experienced an option to relocate by a large developer, but again these plans did not materialize. It was time now to act on the needs of the church and its congregation. Our church was selected to participate in the Conference Vitalization Study. The results of this study showed us the areas which needed improvements and some of these have already been implemented. There is a renewed enthusiasm in the church with respect to all the improvements made to the buildings and with excitement of our 100th Birthday Celebration on Sunday, October 11, 1992.

BETHANY CHURCH

The actual beginning of Bethany Church was an idea in the mind of Mrs. Cornelia Paul Roberts. She and Albert Clark Roberts were my grandparents. Their plantation was bounded on the west by Old Chapel Hill Road (now Duke Homestead); on the south by Guess Road; on the east by Ellerbee Creek; and on the north by the Washington Duke plantation. Cornelia thought that her eight children and other children in the neighborhood should have a Sunday School, so she persuaded Mr. Ben Duke to finance a little chapel. This was built on the south side of Guess Road in 1892.

Years before this, she had demonstrated her powers of persuasion in an incident in the Civil War. She had been left to take care of the farm while her husband was in the Confederate Army. One day she saw a group of foraging northern soldiers approaching. She quickly hid her money under the baby. This baby was Albert Thomas Roberts who was to become my father. The soldiers went to the smokehouse and took all the hams. With tears in her eyes, she went to the leader and said, "Arn't you going to leave something for me and the children?" He swore a blue streak, damning all wars and the mean things they make us do. Then he gave an order, "Hang every ham back in the smokehouse." She thanked him and gave him a big ham.

Guess Road was named for Squire Guess who promoted its construction. It connected this area with Watts Street in Durham. It was built by farmers who contributed labor and horses to pull the scoops. Road tax money was very scarce. It was still a dirt road when Bethany was built; later it was macadamized with crushed stone. The Squire Guess home was on the west side of Guess Road at Horton Road. The daughter, Maggie Guess married Bill Horton. Their home on the east side of the road is still standing. Their 2 daughters and 3 sons were regular attendants of Bethany.

The original Bethany building was a pretty little white church which seated about 140 people. It was of Gothic design, that is the windows and the front entrance had pointed arches. This, with the steeple, gave it a very churchly look. The pews, chancel and other woodwork were of heart pine; well designed and varnished. The kerosene lamps were high on the walls; on brackets which held reflectors. My father, A.T. Roberts, could stand on the floor under them and blow them out. The heating plant was a wood stove in the center aisle. For water, there was a well on the east side of the church yard. It had pulley and chain but no "Old Oaken Bucket." The bucket was galvanized steel.

Once, as a small boy playing around the church, I managed to get the front door open and went in. I was amazed to see that the pulpit was occupied. Something with two big eyes stared out across the empty pews. It was about two feet high and it remained very still right to the center of the lectern. I sat down to listen to the sermon, but it never said a word. It was a big horned owl. His message seemed to be, "I don't give a hoot. Keep your eyes and ears open, but if you have nothing to say, keep your mouth shut!"

The church was closed a few years on account of the scarcity of preachers. Then it was reopened by Reverend C.M. Lance, a student from Trinity Divinity School (now Duke University). The six Sunday School classes met in groups among the pews. Every Sunday each child received a card about 2 1/2 by 3 with a colored Bible picture on it. At the bottom was the "Golden Text," a Bible verse. My collection of these cards has been lost for many years. Most of the children went to church barefooted. This was because we sometimes did not have any Sunday shoes, and anyway we liked to go barefooted.

People who lived within a mile or two walked to church. Others came in buggies, carriages, or wagons. The carriage was a six passenger buggy, two seats. The horses were tied to the oak trees, and they stood there for hours switching the flies away with their tails. when we had two services and a bountiful dinner on the grounds in between, the flies would leave the horses and come to dinner. The men took turns waving leafy branches over the table to shoo them away. After dinner, some women sat in the vehicles and nursed their babies.

Those were the "Good Old Days." Were they? Now, things are so much better that it seems the Kingdom of God has come. We ride to church in deluxe cars which are better than King Solomon's chariots. We have no flies, few mosquitoes, few horses, few bad roads. We have carpets on the church floors and cushions on the seats. We have central heat, air conditioning, running water, toilets, electric lights, and an electric organ. We have taken up many of our crosses and eliminated them.

Written by Mr. Albert O. Roberts
March 10, 1984

This is a copy of the history written by Mrs. Everette Latta Roberts read at the dedication service of the Sanctuary and placed in the corner stone.

HISTORY of BETHANY M.E. CHURCH, SOUTH DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

by
Mrs. Everette Latta Roberts

Bethany M.E. Church, South, was built in the summer of 1892. The building was situated on the southeast side of Guess Road, three miles from Durham. This first building was only a few feet to the left of the new building erected in 1950.

The land whereon the church was built was donated by Mr. J.B. Warren. Funds for the building, at the cost of \$1,300.00 were contributed by the Washington Duke Family together with small contributions by a few Methodist people. It was generally conceded that the Duke family gave the building in honor of an old esteemed neighbor, Mrs. Cornelia Elizabeth Roberts, who lived near by. Mrs. Roberts died in 1894.

The first Bethany was surrounded by virgin forest, mostly White Oak and Hickory trees. Guess Road at that time ran parallel to the front of the building, and was a narrow, unpaved road, very muddy in winter.

On the 5th Sunday of October, 1892, Bethany was dedicated to the worship of God. The dedicatory service took place at three o'clock in the afternoon. The Reverend Dr. Yates, a venerable preacher with snow-white hair, preached the dedicatory sermon, using as a text, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" I Corinthians 5:6

When Dr. Yates finished his sermon, he brought his hand down on the desk for emphasis and said, "The church's name is Bethany." Prior to the dedication, it had been nicknamed Warren Chapel.

Bethany was to be under the care of Main Street Methodist Church in Durham. Main Street Church later was moved to West Chapel Hill Street, and became Duke Memorial Church.

Reverend Frank Bishop was the first pastor of Bethany. Because of his other duties as pastor of Main Street Church, he could give only one service a month at Bethany, and that had to be on a Sunday afternoon, at three o'clock. Reverend Mr. Bishop was followed by Reverend Dr. Doub and then by Reverend Mr. Oglesby. Mr. Nat Lea of Caswell Heights, Durham, organized a Sunday School which also met on Sunday afternoons. Mr. Lea used his horse and buggy to come out to the church.

The first plans for church service at Bethany did not work well. Many events took place to hinder the progress of the work. Death came in a took away some of the greatest friends that the church had and muddy roads closed Sunday School some of the time. Added to this, the pastor in charge could not meet his monthly appointments promptly because of funerals and other emergencies. There were no telephones, so when the pastor failed to come, the congregation would loiter around the door a while and then go home. The next time for service the pastor would come and the congregation would be absent. Finally the door was locked.

For about ten years Bethany stood silent. The daubers and spiders took charge; vandals shot through the windows and campers broke locks off the door and spent the night inside.

About the year 1903, Reverend C.M. Lance of Buncombe County, North Carolina, who was then finishing his studies at Trinity College (now Duke University), walked out to Bethany community and asked to spend the night in one of the homes. He informed his host that the Methodist Conference had thoughts of selling the little church to the Primitive Baptist, but he wanted to see what prospects there might be of recognizing the Methodists in the community.

After canvassing on foot the whole area, Mr. Lance held a revival, reorganized the church and

organized a Sunday School which grew rapidly and continued to grow through the years that followed. Although Mr. Lance was laughed at by the skeptical in the community for trying to start the work, the Lord seemed to bless his efforts during his short stay.

When Mr. Lance completed his work at Trinity College, he told the little church group that he must move on, but he wanted to be sure that the Sunday School was left in good hands. He asked his brother, Reverend H.E. Lance, also a college student, to superintend the Sunday School and to bring out from the college a teacher for the adult class. He promised that Bethany would have his prayers and he admonished that every member stand steadfast, by loyal and never refuse to help in any way when called on. Thus the care of the church was left in the hands of the following few members:

Miss Blanche Almond	Mr. W.C. Horton	Mrs. Maggie Horton
Miss Annie Horton	Miss Mamie Horton	Miss Ida Riggsbee
Mr. John A.W. Roberts	Mr. A.T. Roberts	Mr. J.M. Williams
Mrs. Everette Latta Roberts	Mrs. Ada Roberts Williams	

Bethany was then placed on the Board of Missions, of the Conference, together with Mangum Street Church (now Calvary), Pearl Mill Church and Massey's Chapel. The work was to be supplied by Trinity College students as pastors.

Reverend E.M. Hoyle was the first student pastor. He was young, energetic, gifted and deeply interested in the work of the Lord. He seemed to be born for the ministry of the Gospel. Under his ministry many who had rarely darkened a door of any church came again and again to listen. He preached for his own revivals and was blessed with good results. Under his preaching the church was built up with new members, nearly all of them young people, and inspired to fight on regardless of all obstacles.

The following ministerial students served after Reverend Mr. Hoyle:

Reverend John Watson Autry
Reverend Kirby F. Duval
Reverend Bernard T. Hurley
Reverend H.C. Smith
Reverend B.B. Slaughter
Reverend Leon M. Hall, who served in 1914, 1915, 1916

At the Annual Conference in 1916, Bethany was transferred to the Durham Circuit, making four churches at that time: Bethany, Fletcher's Chapel, McMannen Chapel and Pleasant Green.

The following ministers served while Bethany was a member of the Durham Circuit:

(Dr. J.C. Wooten, Residing Elder for the Durham District)

Dr. H.C. Smith	2 years
Reverend W.F. Craven	4 years
Reverend H.L. Hendricks	
Reverend B.E. Stanfield	2 or 3 years
Reverend B.H. Black	4 years
Reverend Chancey D. Barclift	3 years
Reverend F.B. Peele	2 years
Reverend S.J. Starnes	4 years

After Bethany was transferred to the Durham Circuit, the parsonage of the Durham Circuit was moved from Jones Street to Trinity Heights, Second Street. A few years later it was moved to Bethany on Guess Road. When Bethany was made a station, the church purchased the parsonage from the Durham Circuit.

Following the ministry of Reverend S.J. Starnes, Bethany became a station, and every Sunday service was established. The Conference arranged for the church again to be supplied by students from Duke University. The first to take charge was Reverend J. Leslie Hartz of Missouri, who served four years. Although the members had twice enlarged the church building and built a parsonage, they found that more room was needed. In 1944 a church building fund was begun.

Reverend Tommy Tyson followed Reverend Hartz as pastor. Under his ministry, the spiritual life of the church was greatly revived. The membership took on a deeper interest in the building project and the plans materialized. A brick building was begun in 1949 and was complete in August, 1950.

In World War II, three of Bethany's men gave their lives overseas: Wallace Bullock, his brother, Dan Bullock and their brother-in-law, James O'Briant. The bodies of the Bullock brothers were brought back and funeral services were conducted at Bethany on September 23, 1948. Reverend J.L. Hartz, pastor, conducted the services, assisted by Reverend Mr. Sails and Reverend Mr. Price. Mr. O'Briant's body was never found, but a memorial service was held for him at Bethany on November 13, 1945.

According to the plaque in the church on which the enlisted men's names were placed, these members of Bethany Church and Sunday School served in World War II:

Thomas Bell	Leslie Foster
Benson H. Black	Robert D. Millar
Harvey B. Black	James O'Briant
Ira Wesley Browning	Oscar M. Overby
Paul K. Browning	Carlyle Peele
Amos Bullock	Thomas Lynwood Roberts
Daniel Bullock	James E. Shook
Wallace M. Bullock	Henry S. Thompson
Walter R. Gattis, Jr.	William W. Woods, Jr.
Edwin Earnhardt	

There is no record of those who served in World War I.

The first funeral ever to be held in Bethany Church was that of Mrs. Cornelia Elizabeth Roberts.

The first marriage to take place in Bethany was that of Mr. Hedrick Conklin and Miss Ida Jones. In later years, Mr. Conklin was superintendent of the Sunday School.

During the years from 1892-1950 Bethany Church underwent all the varied experiences and drawbacks which characterizes a small struggling church weak in financial support and in trained leadership. Nevertheless, the Lord has helped her in wonderful ways. He has never left her desolate. He has allowed her influence to spread all along the Atlantic states from New England to Florida and Alabama, and the Great Lakes. Many of her young people, who received their first knowledge of the joy of God's service in her Sunday School and young people's organizations, have become very active workers in the churches where they have founded their homes. Two of these have entered the ministry; some have married ministers and have gone to give their whole lives to the work of God's Kingdom. Many have worked as superintendents of Sunday Schools, as stewards, as deacons, as Sunday School teachers and as helpers in all other departments of church work.

Many true stories of sacrifice and sincere devotion to the cause of righteousness could be told concerning those who have borne the burden throughout the years. From such humble duties as furnishing and cutting the wood to make the fires, trimming and filling the oil lamps, sweeping and dusting the church, to the higher places of leadership as teachers and officers, those who carried on in His name were willing to be used to promote the work of God.

Outstanding among Bethany's active members was Mrs. Brooks Strayhorn Parker. Being a woman of unusual ability, she not only did all she could for her church, but also for the schools and county throughout. She lived such an unselfish life that she is remember as one of Durham County's most valuable citizens, and as a Christian whose work and love will ever be missed.

Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Cole were also numbered among Bethany's most active members. Mr. Cole was Sunday School superintendent for many years, and took a prominent part in all affairs of the church, giving of his means, his help and his prayers. Mrs. Cole was for many years teacher, organist and pianist, never refusing to share her time when her help was needed.

Reverend D.L. Earnhardt, an old soldier of the Cross, came to Bethany to spend his declining years. He taught the Men's Bible Class until a few days before his death. He was buried from Bethany.

Reverend H.E. Lance, who organized the first vibrant Sunday School, came back to Bethany when he retired from the ministry and established his home in sight of the church.

Reverend B.H. Black, a beloved minister, built his last earthly home near Bethany and was buried from this church where he had labored four years.

Mr. B.N. Duke gave the first organ for Bethany and Mrs. Ada Roberts Williams was the first organist. After her were: Mrs. W.L. Cole (then Miss Mabel Proctor), Miss Eula Latta Roberts, who was organist for eight years, then again, Mrs. W.L. Cole, followed by Mrs. John Proctor, Miss Lizzie Grey Chandler, Miss Reveline Gattis, Miss Peggy Overby and Miss Clara Belle O'Bryant.

A special work of commendation and appreciation is due the present pastor, Reverend Tommy Tyson. A young man, very sincere and spiritually minded, seeking the Master's will in all his dealings with the people and in the interpretation of God's word, he won the hearts and hands of the membership. Under his vital preaching the wise guidance the spiritual life of the church was greatly revived and the new church building was made possible. Surely the Lord continues to bless Bethany greatly through the leadership of this humble young servant of His.

Although Bethany has struggled through many financial difficulties, she has been the recipient of many blessings through the years. Assistance in both service and gifts has come from unexpected sources. She has had and still has a mission to fulfill, and her help is coming from the Lord.

Written August 10, 1950
placed in the corner stone of the new church 1951

HEBRON M.E. CHURCH Sequel to the History of Bethany Church

In the late seventies and the early eighties there were very few Methodist churches in and around Durham. Trinity was the only one in Durham, and it occupied an unpainted wooden house which stood on the lot where the present Trinity Church building now stands. Pleasant Green and McMannen Chapel were the country churches of the Methodist denomination.

About 1880 a Methodist congregation built what is known as a brush-arbor on the east side of Roxboro Road and began holding worship services there. This brush-arbor was built where the old Duke Homestead Road (then known as Chapel Hill Road) came into Roxboro Road. Soon a small church house was acquired. It was built of wood, was never painted and was heated by a wide old-fashioned fireplace.

For some unknown reason, the church was called Old Hebron. (Negroes now have a church there called "Mill Grove.") Among the active promoters of Hebron Church were: William Duke, who was called "Uncle Billie," Samuel Rogers, Captain A.C. Roberts, Samuel Garrard and others. Mr. Washington Duke worshipped there before moving to Durham. It seems that "Uncle Billie" Duke was very evangelical in his religious attitude. He would come to Hebron, carrying two children who were too young to walk that far. He would go to the churches of any denomination when revivals were in progress and take an active part. He would exhort, pray, sing and seemed very happy as he walked up and down the aisles clapping his hands and singing "The Old Ship of Zion." He would sing (there were no organs) until nearly the whole congregation joined in the singing.

"Uncle Billie" was a slender man, clean-shaven, and wore a colonial haircut. Captain Roberts was known for his reverence, piety and loyalty to the church.

Interest in the work at Hebron seemed to grow. A better and larger house was needed so much that in or about the year 1884 a movement was begun to build on the old site. It seems that expenses were to be borne by the members as much as possible, and the building was to be of wood. Captain Roberts donated the framing and weather boarding of the best Pine lumber, hauled and placed in on the grounds. And then on New Year's Day, 1885, Captain Roberts died. After his death the promoters decided to build the new church on the land of Mr. Samuel Rogers and they changed the name of the church to "Duke's Chapel" in honor of Mr. Billie Duke.

Because the church was thus moved so far from her family, the widow, Mrs. Cornelia Elizabeth Roberts, sent her team and had her lumber hauled back home, for about this time the Washington Dukes, who had been her next door neighbors, organized a Sunday School in their factory and named it Bethany. Since it was more convenient, thither the Roberts family went. And when Bethany Sunday School became Main Street Methodist Church (now Duke Memorial), the Roberts family placed their memberships there until Bethany on Guess Road was built. Then they moved their membership to Bethany.

When Duke's Chapel was ready for a new building, Reverend W.F. Craven, who was their pastor then, wanted to build it out on Roxboro Road, but because of the cemetery, the older members did not want to move; so we can readily see that this left opportunity for the St. Paul M.E. Church of today.

Bethany Church is built on land donated by Mr. J.B. Warren who once owned much of the land lying on the west side of Guess Road. Mr. Ben Duke was heard to say: "Jim got after us to build a church out there on his land." But many old timers claimed that it was really built in honor of their old neighbor, Mrs. Cornelia Roberts. Anyway, Bethany was built in 1892. Unfortunately, Mrs. Roberts died in 1894.

Other accounts of the history of Bethany Church written by Mrs. Everette Latta Roberts in 1955. This could be called the sequel to the history of Bethany M.C. Church, built in the year 1892.

On a Sunday afternoon a meeting was called at Chalk Level schoolhouse (now Hillandale) to launch the project of building a new Methodist Church on Guess Road. To this meeting came people from three communities: the local, Rose of Sharon, and Duke's Chapel. The then small schoolhouse was filled. After singing and prayers the purpose of the meeting was announced, and contributions were taken. The collection of \$60.00, was given mostly by Methodists from Main Street Church (now Memorial) and Duke's Chapel. In fact, the small collection taken was donated largely by the family of the "widow Roberts." We must bear in mind that \$1.00 at that time was worth about \$10.00 now - 1955.

None of the Washington Duke family were present at the meeting, but it was understood that the Duke interests might build the church and that J.B. Warren would donate the land. On the site of the present Bethany, a well was dug, the little church was built, painted white and trimmed with brown. Pews were put in; everything was in readiness for the dedication of Bethany, which took place on the 5th Sunday of October 1892.

But where would a preacher be had? Reverend Frank Bishop, pastor of Main Street Church, promised to come one a month at three o'clock in the afternoon; and Mr. Nat Lee, of Caswell Heights, organized a Sunday School which also met in the afternoon.

In the beginning, a good bit of interest on the part of the people was shown, but it began to wane when so often the preacher failed to come. When the Reverend Mr. Bishop had a funeral or a wedding or other important meetings that kept him away, the congregation soon dwindled to nothing. Mr. Lee moved away, Mr. Bishop was moved, and Mrs. Cornelia Roberts died. Bethany closed its doors for ten years.

It would be hard to imagine a more desolate and forlorn-looking house. As it stood by the narrow muddy road, surrounded by heavy woods, vandals broke in and camped. All these years the bucket hung in the well. One man, A.T. Roberts, took the task of trying to keep the doors closed and replacing broken locks. Conference hinted at trying to sell the building to the Primitive Baptists.

It was near sunset on a summer evening in 1903, when a young man walked into the back yard of A.T. Roberts' home. As he stood there with his black derby hat in his hand, it was easy to guess that he was a student from Trinity College. He asked if Tom Roberts lived there. The answer was "Yes." He then introduced himself as C.M. Lance, saying, "They call me 'Charlie' on the campus over here at Trinity; I finished at Trinity and I'm in the ministry. I want to try to find out something about this little church over there, and I've been told that perhaps I could secure a night's lodging with you people. I want to be here early in the morning in order to canvass the community.

The people in the Roberts' home, having been brought up on the doctrine of "Be not slow to entertain strangers, for you may entertain angels unawares," gave him a hearty welcome.

After the evening meal, Mr. Lance stated that he was laughed at on the campus when he made it known that he intended making an effort to reorganize Bethany Church. "You'll be wasting your time," they told him.

Next morning he started early on foot, announcing as he went that there would be preaching service at Bethany the next Sunday followed by revival. Both were well attended. At the close of the revival four women, all young, were received into the church. The church was reorganized with twelve members - four men and eight women.

With the N.C. Conference came Bethany's first trouble. Reverend C.M. Lance announced that he "must move on." In his announcement to the little group these are his words: "I'm sorry to have to go, but my prayers will be with you. If each one of you will loyally do his best, the church will grow. Before I go I will see that someone is sent who can be your Sunday School superintendent. What you need is a good Sunday School superintendent who loves children." Reverend C.M. Lance kept his promise. He got his brother, H.E. Lance, who also was a ministerial student, to take his place of superintendent.

Reverend H.E. Lance proved to be a loyal worker full of faith. He walked out to Bethany from East Campus (Trinity College) every Sunday afternoon, rain or shine. And that winter there was one country church which did not go into "winter quarters."

The Sunday School grew, Conference saw, took action and another young student was sent to preach. His name was Enoch Marvin Hoyle, who proved to be a most wonderful preacher. People came to listen; they filled the house.

Then Spring of 1904 - Children's Day was due. Reverend H.E. Lance thought by all means there must be a Children's Day observance. Reverend E.M. Hoyle said: "I utter a word of warning - better not have it than to have a failure."

When this was said, Reverend H.E. Lance rose to his feet and said: "If this church succeeds, each one must try to do his part and do it without hesitance or excuse. There are too few of us to leave out anyone who can help in any way. Is there anybody here who knows anything about Children's Day?" One little woman said that she did. "Then," said Mr. Lance, "I'll order literature." "All teachers who are willing to help, meet me after the service and we'll set a week-day afternoon for rehearsals."

The church worked: so co-operation was 100 per cent. The little children attended willingly, gladly. "A little child shall lead them." Those Bethany children were a blessing to the church, and the church was a blessing to them. They were so full of enthusiasm for their Children's Day exercises that they caused their parents to take interest. And when the "Day" came all the little folk were dressed in white - the girls were primped and curled until they looked like little fairies. Not one failed to do his or her part. Grown ups could not have done better. Reverend Mr. Hinohara told the children of the manners and customs of the people of Japan - an interesting talk. Few people around Durham had ever seen a Japanese. Many people from Durham and the surrounding communities attended on this Red

Letter Day. The house could not hold the congregation. And then the mothers brought the picnic baskets to the long table. Everybody took part in eating the scrumptious meal.

Reverend E.M. Hoyle and Reverend H.E. Lance proved to be earnest workers. They set the church on its feet. Mr. Lance brought many students out with him - walking from the college - and they helped in many parts of the work. One, Reverend S.J. Starnes, came each Sunday and taught the Adult Bible Class. The Misses Almond - Blanche and Bertha - walked out from Watts Street and taught classes. Miss Bertha did that for years.

Reverend Marvin Hoyle, who died young, served Bethany two years and was married during this time. His first revival was well attended and the congregation was largely made up of young people. They filled the house each evening, but they would not accept any invitation to confess Christ. One night he said: "We've been here a week, you've shown no definite interest: now I have this to say: If you are going to wade through every prayer I can offer and every exhortation I can make and every invitation I can give and every song we can sing and go down to hell anyhow, God bless you, go to it." There was a terrible stillness for quite an interval. Then very quietly he spoke. "Is there one person back there by the door who wants the meeting continued?" A young man held up his hand. Then the preacher said, "Come back tomorrow night, we'll be here all week." They came. About fifteen young adults offered themselves for membership during the week which followed. Among them was T.G. Vickers, who entered the ministry and worked in it until his death.

Continuation of this account will be found in "The History of Bethany Church." It seems safe to say that from the M.E. Church known as Old Hebron came Duke's Chapel, Saint Paul and Bethany Churches.