

CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Calvary United Methodist Church is located in Halifax County approximately four miles east of Littleton. It was founded in 1852, the year the Roanoke Conference was organized by Dr. Robert Oswald Burton. In those days the Roanoke Valley was populated with planters and small farmers. Because of the importance of the area, the Roanoke River terminal of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad (the second oldest railroad in North Carolina) was built. Calvary Methodist Church was the only one in the area and was probably founded under the direct supervision of Bishop Francis Asbury. It is known that he traveled on horseback through this region and preached to congregations on the eastern seaboard.

The original church deed shows the property was purchased on October 16, 1852. Five dollars was the price paid for approximately one acre of land. Joshua Wilson of Halifax County sold the property to the trustees of the church: M. A. Allen, Thomas W. Harris, John King, Sanford Jenkins and Charles Skinner.

For a long time, the congregation was without a church building and they met in the homes of members, some convenient building or bush arbor. In 1854, Sanford Jenkins donated an acre of land and a bush arbor was erected.

Later a log cabin was erected and was located on the land purchased from Josh Wilson. This church was used about 17 years.

The second church building, a white frame structure was built in 1871 and was located to the right of the road leading to the present church in a forest of original pines and faced the railroad. The land for this building was donated by Mark Allen and Josh Wilson. After using this building for 52 years, it was torn down in 1923 and sold for \$100.

In 1922, a third white framed church building was started during the pastorate of Rev. N. M. Wright and was built on the site of the present church. It was finished in 1923 and used until November 9, 1943 when it burned to the ground.

In the spring of 1944, under the pastorate of Rev. H. L. Davis, the construction of the present brick structure was begun. The congregation drew up plans for the building. Many church suppers were served over a period of year to help raise money for the new church. Sometimes these suppers were served in private homes, the first being in the home of John House. Some were served in the basement of the Littleton Methodist Church. The present church building was dedicated by Bishop Peele in 1950.

The Calvary Charge with four churches - Calvary, Weavers, Corinth and Vaughn - was designated by the Rocky Mount District in the 1956 Annual Conference. It is very befitting that Calvary was selected for its name since Calvary Church is known as the mother church of Methodism in the area having been organized 26 years before the Littleton Methodist Church.

The Calvary Homemakers Club organized in 1921 played a vital role in the community. For over 30 years club members met in private homes and the public school located next to Calvary Methodist Church. The Club members educated the community in the use of improved

technology for the home. They also led landscape projects and donated and planted shrubbery for the beautification of homes, school and church grounds. Members dreamed of being able to build a clubhouse for meeting use and to benefit the community. Mrs. Dora Myrick Mitchell gave land for the building site next to the Church grounds. Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Johnston (Mrs. Addie) gave land for the well, septic tank and picnic area. On August 25, 1954, dreams became reality for the groundbreaking of the concrete block clubhouse structure. Finally on June 14, 1964, the building was dedicated after 10 years of dinners and fundraising projects for its cost.

The Homemakers Club and Calvary Church have always been knitted closely together. Over the years many activities have been enjoyed in the clubhouse such as reunions., receptions, showers, Country Christmas, MYF, Methodist Men's breakfasts, and church functions. In 1992, club members decided to offer the club building to the Church. The Administrative Board voted to accept the building with the understanding that the Homemaker's Club would continue to use it in the future. By deed dated December 6, 1992, the club building was conveyed to Calvary United Methodist Church. In 1993, the E.A. "Zeke" Godard Memorial Pavilion was erected on the picnic grounds for the enjoyment of outdoor church functions, fellowship dinners and homecomings.

From the Calvary congregation, two young men have gone into the ministry: W. B. (Bill) Bobbitt, Jr. and Johnny Aycock.

Among the ministers who have served in the life of the church over the years are: Herman Goodchild, H. A. Humble, William Towe, G. B. Perry, Leon Draper, J. T. Draper, Rufus Bradley, William Lane, N. M. Wright, Julian Midgette, W. C. Wilson, W. J. Watson, W. T. Phipps, L. B. Pattishall, Sidney J. Epperson, Harvey L. Davis, Marvin Y. Self, Kelly Wilson, Arthur W. Winstead, Clarence R. Breedin, Jr., Johnny H. Branch, Francis Daniel, C. Dubois Schutt, W. Arthur Warren, Jr., Kevin Stiles and Luis F. Reinoso, Hunter Preston; Jim Pearson.

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