

A HISTORY OF CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

by

The Reverend Joseph H. Kinkle

Prepared and presented
to the glory of God
with Whom all things are possible!

Homecoming Day

October 27, 1968

PREFACE

On the following pages is a presentation of the history of Central United Methodist Church. This history represents many, many miles driven for research of records; many, many hours of hard work and diligent study; many, many conversations, and much prayer!

But most of all, this history represents much love for the Lord Jesus Christ and for his people at Central United Methodist Church. This work is an expression of my deep appreciation of and dedication to and admiration for the congregation of Central Church.

It is hereby presented as a tribute to the people of Central Church, past and present, but most of all to those of the present constituency, for their faith and works, which together again prove that WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!

For their invaluable assistance I am deeply indebted to: Miss Nancy Jones, Mary E. Sanford's history and Doris Maddox under whose custody it remains, Mr. Carlton Wilson, N.C. Conference Secretary, and many, many others who have given of their time and who have contributed information.

This history is not written from a "preacher-orientation," but rather from a congregational point of view, with reference to actual progress and historical perspectives. It is an impossibility to record herein all proceedings in the life of our church; therefore, only the significant highlights are lifted out in emphasis.

I am proud of our enriched Christian heritage as exemplified in and channeled through our little but dynamic church! I trust that each reader and hearer of this history will notice that the history moves positively forward and that each one will praise the living and loving Jesus Christ for this glorious history. Each member and friend shares in the present ministry of Central United Methodist Church; praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Respectfully submitted: Joseph H. Kinkle
October 27, 1968

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The birth of Methodism in Scotland County, North Carolina, was with the organization of Caledonia Church in 1835, only 19 years after the death of Bishop Francis Asbury, "The Father of American Methodism."

Until 1872, the Methodist Church in Scotland County belonged to the South Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. However, in that year, this area of the work was put in the North Carolina Conference, in the Wilmington District.

In 1910, "The Caledonia Charge" was formed from Caledonia Church from the Maxton Charge; Oak Grove Church from the Rowland Charge; and the "new mission in East Laurinburg," which later became Central Methodist Church. This new charge was created at the Conference of 1910 held at Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

The Methodist Church is a connectional system of church polity, and the relationships of Central Church are hereby set forth as a matter of record: In 1911 the church was organized as a part of the Caledonia Charge, in the Rockingham District, the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1916, Johns Church was added to the charge with the same connectional relationship. In 1933, Oak Grove Church dissolved, leaving only Caledonia, Central and Johns churches making up the Caledonia Charge. In 1934 our Charge was transferred to the Fayetteville District. In 1939, with the unification of Methodism, we, of course, became a part of "The Methodist Church." In 1964 the Sanford District was created with the Reverend V.E. Queen appointed as District Superintendent; our charge then fell automatically within the bounds of this new District. The 1965 Annual Conference designated the "Central-Johns Charge," composed of Central and Johns Churches, with Caledonia apart with her own Pastor and program. With the 1968 merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren, "The United Methodist Church" was born, and we are presently a proud constituent of that great body of Christendom, which is now, at this writing, the largest Protestant denomination in the world!

The first Pastor appointed to the work was the Reverend J.C. Humble, appointed by the Conference in 1911. A complete list of all Pastors and the dates embracing their terms of service is a part of this history as Appendix I.¹

In East Laurinburg, the church not yet organized, but still a "mission," the community had no organized church of any denomination. All of the folks attended the "Union Chapel," which served as an interdenominational place of worship for all people. Situated in the village near the present school-house, it was a central

gathering place of worship. Some of the Methodist people in East Laurinburg, making up the "mission", along with the inspiration and vision the Reverend J.C. Humble, the first charge Pastor, realized the need for their own church and program. Their new church would become the first church ever organized in East Laurinburg. This would not be easy however. In January of 1911, the Reverend Humble reported to the Quarterly Conference:

We have or are supposed to have the mission in East Laurinburg attached to the charge. We have no organization and no church building. I do not know how soon we will be able to organize...we shall be entirely dependent on outside help to build a church. The people are very poor...²

But with determination, capable leadership, and faithful lay people, the mission was organized and Brother Humble reported to the Presiding Elder, A. McCullen, "We organized a church in East Laurinburg the first of March [1911]...Recently we have held a meeting there which resulted in about 200 conversions with about 50 additions to our church and many to other churches."³ The following were the charter members of the newly organized church:⁴

William Bounds and wife	Addie Siler
Julia M. Beasley	Mae Siler
Elias Stutts and wife	R.H. Gibson
Charlie R. Sanford & wife	Julia M. Beasley
W.W. Sanford	H.L. Quick & wife
Ethel Sanford	Elizabeth Maddox
Cordelia Stutts	Annie Maddox
Amanda Stutts	Lillie Maddox
Sallie Norris	Carrie Maddox
Mrs. N.C. Teague	Mary Terry
W.W. Teague	Elizabeth Terry
Amanda Norris	Rosa Gibson
Mennie Norris	Ethel Ingram
S.J. Siler	Hattie Quick
Walter Maddox	C.J. Terry

M.A. Stutts

Still having access to only the Union Chapel for services, activities, etc., the Methodist people of East Laurinburg were in severe need of a church of their own. At the first Quarterly Conference held for the new church, in the Chapel, the first Board of Stewards was appointed: W.W. Sanford, S.J. Siler, and W.W. Teague.

With the fast growing interest and attendance increase upon the East Laurinburg Methodist services and activities, it was apparent that a Methodist church and church building was needed in the mill village to lead the way for new patterns

of growth and development.

II

The story of our church property begins with the first acquisition of land from the Scotland Cotton Mill, now Waverly Mills, Incorporated. The Superintendent of the Mill Company, Mr. J.P. McRae, and Secretary George F. Avinger, legalized this action on March 30, 1911:

That whereas the Methodist Episcopal South, desires to erect a church building in the village near the cotton mill plant of the Scotland Cotton Mills, and the said Scotland Cotton Mill is willing to donate to the said church a building lot for the purpose of erecting thereon a church building..⁵

Thus the Mill donated to the church the lot where the present Educational Building stands. The congregation accepted the lot with deep appreciation and gratitude. This contribution was initial, but also indicative of the fine spirit of cooperation which has existed ever since between the Mill and the church. The trustees who received the property were: E.L. Stutts, William Bounds, Charlie R. Sanford, Nelson Williams and B.L. Stewart.

Rebecca McFadyen, our oldest living member at the age of 94, recalls: "The Reverend J.C. Humble was himself a first-class carpenter and he drew the plans for the original church building in 1914. Ira Bristow, Ike Edwards and the preacher physically went to work on the project and many members also pitched in and participated in the actual construction of the church." On July 7, 1915 at the Quarterly Conference held in the new church, the Pastor, the Reverend J.B. Thompson, reported: "Church extension finds an expression in our worshipping in our new church in East Laurinburg."⁶ The people worked hard together to produce this quick effect. Although at the outset of this projected mission, in reference to the church building, it was reported that the people would be entirely dependent on outside help to build the church, the church was not only completed with rapidity, but the second Pastor, Reverend J.B. Thompson, was able to proudly report at the Quarterly Conference in 1917: "We have dedicated Johns and East Laurinburg churches free of debt [emphasis is the author's] this quarter!"⁷ The people, unified in a common task of work for their Lord, worked and prayed hard to make this effect. Brother W.W. Teague, a charter member now a resident of Charlotte, North Carolina, still with an alert mind and keen memory at the age of 83, recalled to this writer: "We near about built it on ice-cream. I sold ice-cream every Saturday night: for

Baptist

the Methodist one Saturday night and for the ~~Methodist~~ the next. The women would make cakes and other baked goods to be auctioned off there every Saturday night on the Mill yard. It was a big time for everyone in the community." With the fine leadership many rendered and with hard work and sacrifice on the part of most members, the church was completed and dedicated debt-free in just three years. Judge Walter Neal, who was one of the first teachers of the Men's Bible Class, donated \$700. on the new church personally and the Trustees were authorized by the Conference to borrow \$100. Very little outside help was received, as first thought. The aspirations and sacrificial service of the plain, poor people of the congregation built the church! It was a proud and happy day of rejoicing on October 22, 1917, when the new "Central Methodist Church" was dedicated by the Reverend J.H. Hall, Presiding Elder.

The following donations were made toward the furnishing of the church: D.A. McDougald gave the organ, S.J. Siler gave the Bible stand, C.M. Bristow contributed the Communion Table, W.W. Teague presented the pulpit chair and the Bible. These benefactors were an important part of the church-life and their gifts were given and received in Christian love.

The next significant building project and church property acquisition occurred in 1959 when Waverly Mills, Incorporated President, Halbert M. Jones, signed the deed of a parcel of land on which the present church sanctuary stands. The church trustees were: Ishmael W. Maddox, J. Calvin Williams, E.W. Chavis, Marry Ellen Spry Cooper and Carlene Gibson Hardee. The 100' x 100' lot was sold to the church for the amount of one-dollar (\$1.00).⁸ Another expression of the fine relationship existent between the Mill personnel and the Central Church officials and members.

As the discussion and interest concerning the new church sanctuary building project mounted, various opinions and judgments were voiced. There was a big important decision to be made: where should the new church sanctuary be located? It was a struggle. After much discussion, correspondence, prayer, deliberation, and verbal battle, the present location was decided upon. The other two alternative locations preferred by some were: lot #1 -- next to the East Laurinburg Community Building on the corner of 3rd street and highway 74; lot #2 -- beyond Norman Sanford's grocery on 5th street extension, owned by Lon T. Sanford. While the first lot was priced at \$12,500. and the second lot was somewhat removed from the preference, the present location won out with the majority of members satisfied. The Building Fund grew and grew and the members gave and gave.

At the Central Homecoming service in 1954, the Reverend J.W. Dimmette, former Pastor who preached the morning sermon for the occasion, called upon the congregation to "press forward in its goal of Christian living and to go forward in building a new church adequate to meet the needs of the community and membership." He presented a challenge that this be accomplished during the next two years. Calvin Williams, Building Fund Treasurer at the time, said, "The challenge of the preacher has already been accepted by the people in the pews!" The church bulletin for the following Sunday carried this announcement: "Members of Central Church are to be commended for their support of the Homecoming last Sunday when a total of \$762. was added to the building fund. This brings the donations this conference year to \$3,400."⁹ On the same Homecoming Day, the WSCS presented a memorial gift of \$243. Construction started in April of 1959 and was completed in October of 1959. The Building Committee labored hard along with each member of our small church. The Committee was composed of: Chairman Ishmael W. Maddox, Mrs. W.A. Cooper, Mrs. Wilbur Hardee, E.W. Chavis and Calvin Williams. The new sanctuary cost \$38,575.00 and again the members and friends of Central Church rallied together in Christian love and service so the Pastor, the Reverend B.P. Tyson, in May, 1961, could report: "There is a new sanctuary at Central which is debt free."¹⁰ Another dream was a realization!

Sam Snoddy, architect of the W.E. Matthews Company of Laurinburg, designed the structure, and the J.S. Stearns Construction Company was general contractor. Pews of modern construction were designed by Mr. Snoddy especially for the church.¹¹ The modern church building was designed with laminated wood arches imported from Oregon and features a facade of colored glass windows framing a Central Cross, symbolic of the Cross of Christ and the Christ of the Cross being central in the life of the church. The church pews, as well as other furniture, were given as memorials; they are labeled acknowledging with gratitude the contributors. An electric Hammond organ was given by Calvin Williams and family in memory of their son, "Buster."

In traditional and characteristic manner for our progressive church, soon after the new sanctuary was completed, debt-free, and dedicated, the members began looking ahead with a vision of a new Educational Building. With a growing church family and enthusiastic members, to use the old church building for Sunday School classrooms was incongruous. The old church had served its purpose well in the past and had been the scene of many high moments of inspiration and fellowship, but it

was destined to go. Room must be made for advance! A new educational building was next on the list; and, at a special Quarterly Conference on November 18, 1959, a motion was made by Calvin Williams and seconded by Mrs. Henry Rhye to employ an architect to draw the plans for an Educational Building to be erected adjacent to the new sanctuary. It was unanimously voted upon. The building was constructed, complete with all new furniture and central air-conditioning. It was completed in 1964 and a loan in the amount of \$25,000. was secured from State Capitol Insurance Company of Raleigh, North Carolina; the entire debt was financed. This lovely facility is adequate and most useful in the total program of the church, especially the educational emphases and social functions of fellowship.

Another episode in the chapter of church property and building projects is the story of our parsonages. The first parsonage was situated on the Caledonia Road just behind the present Junior High School. This original parsonage was secured during the first Pastor's term of service [sometime between 1911 and 1914] and it remained the Charge's parsonage until 1960, when the Caledonia Charge elected to build a new parsonage in the Caledonia community on highway 501, South. This new \$14,000. home for the minister was completed and welcomed an open house in May of 1960.¹²

With the 1965-1966 Annual Conference year and a new "Central-Johns Charge," the appointment had no Caledonia Church—but also no parsonage. It was a hurried decision that had to be made to secure a place of residence for the Pastor, the Reverend George A. Davis. The "Caison house" on Jackson Street was purchased from Mr. & Mrs. Henry "Kit" Caison. The total value of the property was \$6,000.

With the understanding that this parson's home was a temporary arrangement, thoughts began immediately to express themselves in terms of finding another more suitable parsonage. The Reverend Joseph ("J.K.") Kinkle led the Trustees, Official Board members and the entire congregation toward the realization of still another dream: a new parsonage! After lengthy consideration and prayerful deliberation concerning other possible alternatives (i.e. the purchase of another older house, the relocation of the present house, the purchase of a new ready-made home), the congregation decided to go all the way this time and to build a brand new brick home that would be adequate, spacious, and most desirable not only for the immediate needs of our batchelor pastor, but with the future pastors and their needs in mind. A resolution was adopted to purchase a lot of Myers Park, Laurinburg, a restricted building development on the West Side of highway 501 and 401 by-pass, just off the

Blue's Farm Road, Route 1, Laurinburg. The resolution was adopted July 6, 1967, with Calvin Williams making the motion and it was seconded by H. Grey Sewell.¹³

Lot #24 in Myers Park was purchased and paid for in cash in the amount of \$1200. The Building Committee, consisting of Calvin Williams, Chairman, E.C. Wright, Ruby McFadyen and Grey Sewell, served well and labored diligently. Mrs. Wilbur Hardee (Carlene) served well, too, as our Building Fund Treasurer and continues to serve proficiently in that capacity. The new parsonage project was a mission of Central Church solely, since Johns Church, our counter-part on the charge work, voted not to participate in this mission. There were no sharp divisions or strong discord at Johns, but just an agreement that they would not be able to help financially.

On April 17, 1968 a resolution was adopted approving the building plans and contract of Russell Oxendine, Indian workers of Pembroke, North Carolina, in the amount of \$24,400. Actual construction began in the unusually hot summer months of 1968. At this writing, the new parsonage home is within three weeks of completion, according to Mr. Oxendine, Contractor. It is hopeful that we can pay cash for the new parsonage. In addition to the giving of many members, the Pastor contributed \$200. himself and he solicited and received over \$3100. from outside agencies and friends. Among these gifts special acknowledgement is made to: The Board of Missions of the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church for \$500. as a donation; Mr. Halbert M. Jones, President of Waverly Mills, Incorporated, for \$750.; Mr. Edwin Morgan, Sr. of Morgan Mills, Incorporated, for \$500.; Caledonia Methodist Church for a \$600. rebate from the previous parsonage settlement. In addition, the MYF, our good young people, worked hard selling candy, and other money-raising projects were had to raise money to contribute a check for the new home in the amount of \$500.; this check was received on Sunday morning, August 25, 1968 by the Pastor with appreciation. A member, Burnie Evans, personally contributed \$500. as a gift from him and the employees of his service station, where they worked hard for many weeks serving plates to raise this amount. All of these personal donations, as well as many \$100. gifts from individual members, have been gratefully received as expressions of Christian love and appreciation for Central Church. Bishop Paul N. Garber, our distinguished, now retired, Episcopal Leader, contributed a personal check of \$100. The architectural services of Mr. Reg McVicar are gratefully recognized also. A few individual members from Johns Church independently contributed and their cheerful cooperation has been noted.

Current plans for the furnishings of the new home are incomplete at this time.

This latest phase of the building projects of our congregation will have to be completed at a later writing, as well as the full term of service for this author. But for the present information, the MYF our teenage youth group, plan to furnish the Pastor's study completely; the Women's Society of Christian Service plans to furnish to living room completely. The Men's Club will labor to beautify the grounds and to help the Pastor in the landscaping.

To date, \$16,792.00 has been collected toward the new parsonage building. It is hopeful that a successful BAR-B-Q will be held on November 9, 1968 and that much income will be derived from that effort. A large building fund offering on this Homecoming Day, October 27, 1968, is anticipated. Then with continued leadership, prayer, work, giving, sacrifice, obedience and stewardship responsibility, it is trusted that our parsonage will be paid for in cash during the next quarter. We are proud of our new parsonage. Our District Superintendent, the Reverend V.E. Queen, has already made a public statement at a ministers' meeting indicating that our parsonage site and building will be one of the most desirable in the entire District.

III

This chapter concerns itself with the history of the organizations within the church and their contributive activities and leaders insofar as this information is available.

A. The Sunday School was organized in March, 1911. The Pastor made this report concerning the new school: "On the fourth Sunday in March we organized a Methodist Sunday School in East Laurinburg with 97 scholars...This is a very enthusiastic school and promises splendid service in that community."¹⁴ The activities of the Sunday School and "the church" are inseparable chiefly, and so in this section only the highlights of the Sunday School can be emphasized. During the ministry of the Reverend G.M. Daniel [1919-1920] the Mill Company gave a four-room house from the Scotland Village to this church. The stewards had John L. Pate to move this house on rollers to the church location and it was built onto the church for the Primary Department and Junior Classes. The first Sunday School Superintendent appointed was Brother W.A. Siler in 1911. Miss Lillie Maddox was appointed organist and Charles R. Sanford was appointed Treasurer. Marvin Stutts, who was appointed Superintendent of the Sunday School in 1913, served well for several years. In 1918 Central Church organized a Wesley Adult

Bible Class. In the early 1920's there was an outstanding Men's Bible Class with 90 on roll and with an average attendance of 60! The Cradle Roll, Bible Class, and Young People's League were all doing good work at this time with Mrs. J.D. Worrell as teacher and leader. "Central Church was the first one in the Conference to get A.B. Standard Cradle Roll" while J.H. Shore, Presiding Elder of the District, served,¹⁵ which signified many mothers and their infant children were active in the Sunday School department with excellent attendance. Not only W.A. Siler, S.J. Siler, and Marvin Stutts were excellent Superintendents of our Sunday School, but in more recent years outstanding leaders in this capacity have been Claude W. Sanford and Calvin Williams. No complete record is available, but these above mentioned Superintendents seem to have been the most active and truly ardent.

In 1941, Mrs. Fannie Louis Neal Webb gave to the church the sum of \$500. for improvements; this amount was spent for a carpet, paint and labor on the Sunday School rooms. The gift was presented in memory of her father, Judge Walter Neal, who was one of the first teachers of the Men's Bible Class.¹⁶ The Church School continues today with good leadership in Christian Education and a commendable staff of teachers and workers under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Ransom, Commission on Education Chairman, and Superintendent Charles Whitehead.

B. The women of the church have always played an important role at Central. The first "Ladies Aid Society" was organized with Mrs. Ira Bristow as President and Mae Siler as Treasurer during the very first year the church was organized. Much work was done through this Society in financing the building of the first church. In addition to financial collections, the Ladies' Aid made a famous quilt. The quilt provided more money for the building of our first church. This quilt was finally given to the Reverend J.B. Thompson, the second Pastor and the one who served here when the first church building project was completed, as a wedding gift when he and Miss Bettie McDougald were married.

In 1927 the Missionary Society was organized and during the pastorate of the Reverend W.L. Dawson [1930-1934], the Missionary Society and the young people of the church gave several interesting and outstanding programs under the leadership of Mrs. Mary E. Sanford.

During the difficult depression days of the early 1930's, several women stand out in the minds of many for their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ

and to his Central Church. "Mrs. Marvin Beasley was a faithful choir member for many, many years. Mrs. Lillie Everette was noted for her zealous church work in the WSCS and in overall church activities. She was a good Sunday School teacher and very active in all church work. Molly Worrells lived on Dixon and she was a good Sunday School teacher," former Superintendent Claude W. Sanford recollected. "Mrs. Sally McCormick was a good Christian worker in the area of Christian Social Relations in the WSCS. She always presented her work well," past President of the WSCS Mary Cooper recalls.

Mrs. Mary E. Sanford, a brilliant leader, served as President of the Women's Society of Christian Service, as it came to be called. She served in this capacity for 10 years, and resigned on May 1, 1943 and moved to Jacksonville, Florida to make her future home.

Mrs. Inez Rhye was elected President then to succeed Mrs. Sanford. Inez Rhye, who was Miss. Inez Barber until 1925 when she and Mr. Henry Rhye were married at Central Church establishing the second marriage to be held in the church, served as President of the WSCS for 6 years and under her leadership the Society increased in membership and in financial and spiritual ways. Inez was a good President and a willing worker in the church-at-large and in the entire community.

Other Presidents of the WSCS remembered to have made substantial contributions in leadership and progress were Mrs. W.A. Cooper, who served several different terms of service, Priscilla Steger, Annie Ransom, Mrs. E.W. Chavis, and the present leader at this writing, Katherine Evans. Katherine is an outstanding church worker. Not only in the area of her immediate responsibility, the Women's Society of Christian Service President, where she is very effective, but also in many other areas of church work and witness. Especially with the children in the Sunday School is she effectual. This Pastor can truly speak with full assurance of representing nearly the entire congregation in saying that Katherine Evans is one of the very select, hard workers that the Lord Jesus Christ has planted in Central Church to promote His Kingdom! We honor her today!

Since the beginning of the Women's Society of Christian Service, 19 life memberships have been awarded; this is an honorable designation indicating that high achievement and service in the organization have been rendered. The recipients have been:

Mrs. Fodie Sanford
Mrs. Annie Ransom
Mrs. Katie Plott Cline

Miss Priscilla Steger
Mrs. Daisy Baker
Mrs. Grey Sewell

Mrs. Rufus Carlyle
 Mrs. Lillie Everette
 Mrs. Henry Penny
 Mrs. Mary E. Sanford
 Mrs. Vick Snipes
 Mrs. Inez Rhye

Miss Ruby McFadyen
 Mrs. Mary E. Cooper
 Mrs. Luke McCormick
 Mrs. Van Inman
 Mrs. Ethel Sanford
 Mrs. E.W. Chavis
 Mrs. Burnie Evans

May God continue to bless all of our good women in their precious work and service in our church.

C. The men in the church have contributed in various ways to the overall work and ministry of our church. During the depression days of the early 1930's, times were hard and the church also felt the impact of the times. But during those difficult years, several unusual Methodist laymen in the church made major contributions in witness and service. Claude W. Sanford remembered vividly: "Mr. Daniels," as he was always called [Mr. William Arthur Daniels] was about 70 years old at the time and he would walk down the railroad track from near his home, in the vicinity of the ice-plant in Laurinburg, to Central Church just about every Sunday with near perfect attendance! He was remembered as a very faithful attender! Mr. John Smith and his wife, Clara, were also remembered as dedicated and very faithful in church work and in attendance. Mr. Henry Caison came to Central from Brunswick County and he was noted for his attendance at church and for his faithfulness. Mr. W.H. Phipps, a blind man who made mattresses in East Laurinburg, Mrs. Henry Caison's father, was a good Christian man with a strong influence in his neighborhood and among his friends and church.

The Methodist Men, a newly re-organized group in our fellowship, work hard at the church in many ways unseen. The men serve often times "behind the scenes" in surveying needs, discussing ways and means of Christian service, and in more concrete ways, such as laying a sidewalk! The Men's Club was re-organized in May of 1967 and Melvin Sellers was elected President. In addition to excellent programs and good fellowship at the supper meetings held once each month, the Club does contribute to the overall work of the church. The sidewalk connecting the Educational Building with the church was laid by this club. An irrigation sprinkler system was installed fully covering all church grounds. This latter project was furnished under the Presidency of Wayne Freeman, who was elected in the Spring of 1968 and is currently serving. The Central Church Methodist Men's Club is a chartered organization of the United Methodist Church and "is always a

good and enjoyable place to go," as Marvin Caison, our oldest Club member at the age of 82 reports. The Men's Club continues to thrive and grow with a promise of a long future of dedicated service to the church.

During the pastorate of the Reverend Bob Tyson, [1959-1963], one outstanding activity of the men was the Men's Ball Team. The ball team not only served as an athletic opportunity for sportsmanship challenge, but it also served well as an adhesive element in the life of the men. It was a closely knit group. It was a large group. And as a direct result of the team, the Men's Sunday School Class was well attended every week.

There were other laymen in the church's past whose lives were indicative of their love for their Saviour and for their church. S.J. Siler was a vital Lay Leader in 1916 elected, and he was also one of the first Stewards elected. It was during his Sunday School Superintendency that the Pastor reported to the Quarterly Conference: "At East Laurinburg we have the largest Sunday School in the County."¹⁷ Other personalities that are commendable in their contributions to the church through service as Sunday School Superintendents, and Church Lay Leaders, are Claude W. Sanford and Calvin Williams. They are here again recognized as outstanding Christian workers and primary contributors to the life of our church.

D. The youth are always exciting! And there are exciting episodes in the history of this church involving youth. Neither time, nor space, nor past records lend themselves to a lengthy dissertation at this point; however, one segment of history is predominant! It is the conspicuous term of service by President Calvin Williams, Jr. He served as Methodist Youth Fellowship President from 1953 to 1955. The youth group under his proficient leadership, along with the able Counselor guidance of Mrs. E.W. "Polly" Chavis, made noteworthy advancement and contributions to the church life and program. Other Counselors who worked with this particular youth group were Calvin Williams (Sr.) and E.W. Chavis.

The group had an average attendance of 35! They organized a youth choir and purchased fine robes for the choir. The church bulletin on April 17, 1955 carried this item: "The Central Church is grateful to its young people for the robes worn by our [adult] choir today. The MYF has planned special projects in order to earn the money needed to make this gift to the church."¹⁸ The same robes are worn by the church choir today. The Christmas program of December 21, 1955 was a memorable service to many. The music in the pageant, called "One Silent Night," was under the direction of Calvin Williams, Jr. The inspirational pageant was rendered by

the young people of this same outstanding MYF. 'Folly' Chavis reports that the youth worked hard themselves and presented exceptionally good programs, worked at Christmas time on special projects such as toy-items for the needy, etc. Much credit goes to the parents who cooperated so nicely." Much credit was also due the unusual President, Calvin Williams, Jr. "Buster," as he was affectionately called by his many friends and peers, was a dedicated young Christian leader of the youth of Central Church, whose witness and service will never be forgotten. He also served as Subdistrict President of the MYF in the Walter Feele Subdistrict. This section of this history is presented as a memorial tribute to his young life: a faithful service to Central Church and to His Lord! Calvin Eugene Williams, [1936-1958].

Another segment of our MYF story that will have to wait to be fully told in a later edition of our church history, is the present group. Miss Brenda Smith is President. Counselors are J.B. Jackson, Louise Jackson, Calvin Williams and our Pastor who works closely with and with much interest in our youth. The young people sold much candy to raise money to present the church with a check of \$211. for one payment on the Educational Building in December, 1966. During the current Conference year the teenagers in the MYF presented another check in the amount of \$500. as a donation on the building of the new parsonage in Myers Park. Still another successful effort of the youth is the complete furnishing of the parsonage study with all new appropriate furniture. Their work continues. Their contributions must be fully assessed and reported in future years.

IV

In 1940 the North Carolina Conference sent to Central Church Miss Friscilla Steger, a Deaconess, who was to work through our church in helping the entire community of East Laurinburg. Her coming was at the request of the Mill Officials who felt that there was a great need for her services. Several churches were established in East Laurinburg by then, but none had pastors who lived in the community. The Discipline of the Methodist Church defines, in part, a Deaconess as: "...A woman who has been led by the Holy Spirit to devote herself to Christlike service under the direction of the Church..."¹⁹ Her presence and work in our church and beyond our church, reaching out persuasively into the entire community of East Laurinburg, was so influential and she was so much dearly loved by so many, that her ministry here merits a separate section of this history.

Miss Steger worked sacrificially in Central Church and all departments greatly benefited through her work and leadership. She labored well in the Sunday School. She served diligently with the WSCS, serving as President for a part of the time. In August 1953 her work was under the direct sponsorship of Waverly Mills, Incorporated. On August 14, 1954, Mr. Halbert M. Jones gave a special dinner in the community building which honored Miss Priscilla Steger for her selfless work and for the outstanding contribution she had made to our entire community. "Mr. Jones paid a high tribute to Miss Steger, but she responded in her usual gracious and eloquent manner. She was deeply appreciative of all the tributes paid to her. It was with great reluctance that the people of East Laurinburg, and especially the Methodists, came to the realization that Miss Priscilla Steger had reached the age of retirement and could no longer continue with us. She departed on Friday, August 20, 1954, with her nephew after fourteen years of commendable work in our midst."²⁰ Her attitude toward our church is succinctly reflected in a telegram she sent to the Pastor and members on the occasion of Homecoming Day, 1954: It read:

Thinking of Central Church and its loyal membership on your Homecoming Day. May the day be full of inspiration and fellowship with material and spiritual advancement. Deepest interest will abide in my heart for the future of Central Church. With love and joy that service with you has brought.
signed: Priscilla Steger.²¹

She served 14 years of such unselfish and dedicated service that the very mention of her name connotes real Christian service to everyone in the community. Her loyalty to the Methodist Church, her service to Central Methodist Church, and her compassionate work in the community will be eternally remembered and the impact of her life here is still prevalent.

V

It is impossible to measure the spiritual vitality of a church. It is likewise difficult to report statistical evidence of the progress of a church. Not all spiritual progress can be seen, but this section is an attempt to set forth some indications and manifestations of our vitality and progress.

From the beginning, with several churches on the charge, worship services have traditionally been irregular in schedule. In 1936 an effort was made to help this situation. The Quarterly Conference Record includes this report from the Pastor, the Reverend M.C. Ellerbe: "Caledonia and Johns Sunday Schools and

congregations have united at Caledonia making Caledonia a morning station and Central an evening station."²²

Since the Central-Johns Charge has been in existence, Central Church has had regular worship services every Sunday. At the present time the service is at 11:00 o'clock every Sunday morning. [Johns Church has an early morning service.]

A special worship service at Central was the Homecoming Day of 1954. The Reverend J.W. Dimmette, a former Pastor whose vision led the Central Church to initiate its building program, preached from Philippians, chapter 3, and called upon the congregation to press forward in the building program for a new church. This story is related in chapter two of this presentation.

The first marriage performed in Central Church was Miss Ethel Hogan and Mr. Zeno Pruitt. The Reverend Frank Culbreth, Pastor, officiated. [His term of service: 1920-1924].

The first Easter Sunrise Service was held in the church during the pastorate of the Reverend W.L. Dawson, Easter of 1933.

Special recognition is given to Doris Maddox, who was the faithful church pianist for nearly 20 years. She served laboriously and consistently in this capacity and meant a lot in the church worship and work.

On October 22, 1967, Homecoming Day, Bishop Paul N. Garber preached and spoke highly of Central Church and her progress and record. This was the first time a Methodist Bishop still in active service ever visited Central Church. For this special occasion the new Methodist Hymnals were dedicated and in use. They were given by members and friends as memorials and honoraries. The new hymnals continue to enhance our worship and facilitate our devotion.

Regarding the membership of Central Methodist Church, upon close examination of the past official records, one will learn that there have been fluctuations rather than steady increases. The primary reason for this, one will also learn, is due to the fact of the organization of other churches in East Laurinburg. For example, while Central was the first organized church in the community, many worshippers attended, not just the Methodist people. In 1914, the East Laurinburg Baptist Church was completed. They claimed some indigenous members. The East Laurinburg Church of God was organized in 1941. The Penecostal Holiness Church was begun here in 1933. A close study of the membership changes and

trends of this congregation would reflect some effect these additional places of worship had on our church. Our membership has varied somewhat throughout the past, but has been on a steady increase during the past decade. The current membership is 183 and the roll is presented as Appendix II.

Financially, Central Church has made much progress. In 1911, when plans were being viewed to build the first church building, it was reported: "We shall be entirely dependent on outside help to build a church. The people are very poor."²³ The members were poor. Still today there are no millionaires in our church; there are no wealthy people in our church to underwrite the budget. But there are good, common Christian people who love Jesus Christ and have pledged their allegiance to Him and His Kingdom and His Central Church! Not only with prayers, presence, and service, but with a regular tithe. Many are good stewards. This is a key fact which explains much of our financial progress. For example, in 1915 Central Church paid her preacher \$160.88 for the entire year's salary.²⁴ In this current Conference year, 1968-1969: \$4,000. The total budget today is \$10,541.72, with nearly \$2,000. being sent to the Conference Treasurer for World Service, missionary support, Orphanage support and other Conference Benevolences.²⁵ The total value of church property today is \$102,280.00 [including the new parsonage].²⁶

Central Church is presently on the Conference Honor Roll for having paid in full the college quota. According to the 1968 District Conference Report, our church was leading the District in the addition of new members by profession of faith.²⁷

There are other measurements and indications of growth and progress: financial, spiritual, numerical, etc., that are reflected throughout this history. Each chapter carries its own thrilling story.

Central United Methodist Church continues to be a faithful congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. May her future witness and service to God be as fruitful and effective as her glorious past, and may the Holy Spirit touch and bless each member and visitor who enters her influence in such a mighty way that his testimony will be this affirmation of faith: WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. Amen.

VI

The current organization of the Central United Methodist Church follows:

Pastor-----Reverend Joseph H. Kinkle
 District Superintendent-----Reverend V.E. Queen
 Presiding Bishop-----William R. Cannon

Church Trustees:

Dan McFadyen
 Burnie Evans
 Grey Sewell
 Levy Carlyle

Parsonage Trustees:

Calvin Williams
 E.C. Wright
 Grey Sewell
 Miss Ruby McFadyen

Stewards:

Victor Snipes
 Mrs. Inez Rhye
 Mrs. R.M. Carlyle
 Mrs. E.C. Wright
 Mrs. Grey Sewell
 John Peele
 Mrs. W.A. Cooper

Church Treasurer:

Mrs. Daisy Baker

Church Lay Leader:

Calvin Williams

Church Organist:

Mrs. Charles Whitehead

Church School Pianist:

Miss Liza Clark

Commission on Membership & Evangelism Chairman: Mrs. E.W. Chavis
 Commission on Stewardship & Finance Chairman: Mrs. J.B. Jackson
 Commission on Education Chairman: Mrs. Annie Ransom
 Commission on Missions Chairman: Mrs. Pleaz Clark
 Commission on Christian Social Concerns Chairman: Miss Ruby McFadyen
 Commission on Worship Chairman: Mrs. James McRae

The Church School Officers & Teachers:

Church School Superintendent: Charles Whitehead
 Assistant Church School Superintendent: Victor Snipes
 Church School Secretary: Brenda Smith
 Church School Teachers:
 Nursery Department: Cathy Evans, Linda Sturdivant, and Elizabeth Smith
 Kindergarten: Mrs. Grey Sewell, Mrs. John Peele
 Elementary I-III Class: Mrs. Burnie Evans, Miss Liza Clark
 Elementary IV-VI Class: Mrs. James McRae, Wilbur Outlaw

Youth Class:	Mrs. E.W. Chavis, Mrs. J.B. Jackson
Young Adults:	Mrs. Annie Ransom
Ladies' Fidelis Class:	Mrs. Daisy Baker, Mrs. Pleaz Clark
Ladies' Bible Class:	Mrs. Rufus Carlyle, Mrs. Mary Cooper

Women's Society of Christian Service Officers:

President:	Mrs. Burnie Evans
Vice-President:	Mrs. E.W. Chavis
Secretary:	Mrs. Jeanette Lewis
Treasurer:	Miss Ruby McFadyen

Choir members:

Mrs. Daisy Baker	Mrs. Inez Rhye
Mrs. Rufus Carlyle	Mr. Grey Sewell
Mrs. E.W. Chavis	Mrs. Grey Sewell
Mrs. Mary Cooper	Miss Brenda Smith
Mrs. Burnie Evans	Miss Elizabeth Smith
Miss Cathy Evans	Mr. Vick Snipes
Mrs. Ruth Jones	Mr. Charles Whitehead
Mrs. Coleman Martin	Mrs. Charles Whitehead, Organist
Mrs. James McRae	Mrs. E.C. Wright
Mr. John Peele	Mr. Calvin Williams
	Mrs. Vick Snipes

Church Ushers: Dan McFadyen, E.C. Wright, Melvin Sellers, E.C. Wright, Jr., Mike Wright

Methodist Men Officers:

President:	Wayne Freeman
Vice-President:	J.B. Jackson, Jr.
Secretary-Treasurer:	Victor Snipes
Program Chairman:	Reverend Joseph H. Kinkle

Methodist Youth Fellowship:

President:	Miss Brenda Smith
Vice-President:	Miss Wanda Boyette
Secretary-Treasurer:	Miss Cathy Evans
Program Chairman:	Miss Elizabeth Smith
Counselors:	Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Jackson, Jr.
	Mr. Calvin Williams
	Pastor

APPENDIX I

Pastors and their term of service:

J.C. HUMBLE	1911-1914
J.B. THOMPSON	1914-1918
G.M. DANIEL	1918-1921
FRANK CULBRETH	1921-1925
J.L. SMITH	1925-1927
W.C. MERRITT	1927-1928
J.T. DRAPER	1928-1930
W.L. DAWSON	1930-1934
M.C. ELLERBE	1934-1936
M.F. HODGES	1936-1940
B.F. MEACHAM	1941-1942
PAUL CARRUTH	1942-1943
M.D. McLAMB	1943-1944
E.G. COWAN	1944-1948
J.W. DIMMETTE	1948-1949
C.G. TILLEY	1949-1952
R.S. GIBSON	1952-1956
F.B. BRANDENBURG	1956-1959
B.P. TYSON	1959-1963
G.A. DAVIS	1963-1966
J.H. KINKLE	1966-

APPENDIX II

Since every member is a vital part of our church, it is appropriate for the history to include the names of all current members; the official full membership roll, listed alphabetically, follows:

Mr. & Mrs. Melvin D. Anderson	Mr. & Mrs. Sam Freeman
Mrs. Arthur Anderson	Mr. Wayne Freeman
Mrs. Daisy Baker	Dixie Gales
Miss Donna Barton	Mrs. Elvie Grace Gales
Mrs. Henry Bardel (Phyllis Sewell)	Mrs. Kate Gales
Mrs. Edna Louise Boswell	Miss Cornia Godwin
Mr. & Mrs. J.L. Boyette	Mr. & Mrs. Carl Grant
Miss Wanda Boyette	Miss Cathy Grant
Mr. James Brigman	Mrs. Lena Hardee
Mrs. J.W. Burdell	Mr. & Mrs. Wilbur Hardee
Mrs. Ruth Burdell	Mr. Greg Harelson
Mrs. Gladys Caison	Mrs. Jimmie Harelson
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Caison	Mrs. Paula Ingram Hasty
Mr. Marvin Caison	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hatcher
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Campbell	Mrs. Mary Etta Cooper Henson
Mrs. James Cannon (Geraldine Carlyle)	Mrs. Lena Horne
Mr. & Mrs. Levy Carlyle	Mr. Larry Ingram
Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Carlyle	Mrs. Bertha Inman
Mr. & Mrs. Rufus Carlyle	Mr. Grady Inman
Mr. Sammy Carlyle	Mr. & Mrs. Van Inman
Mr. Bobby Caulder	Mrs. J.B. Jackson, Jr.
Miss Pearl Caulder	Mrs. Lorene Jackson
Mr. & Mrs. E.W. Chavis	Mr. M.D. Jones
Mr. Grady Chavis	Mrs. Ruth Jones
Mrs. John Clark	Miss Sherry Justice
Miss Liza Clark	Mrs. Newton King
Mrs. Pleaz Clark	Mr. & Mrs. Al Leichter
Mrs. Molly Cooper Coble	Mrs. James Lewis (Jeanette)
Mr. Joe Cooper	Miss Emma Neal Maddox
Mrs. Mary Cooper	Mr. & Mrs. Ishmael Maddox
Mrs. Wendell Covington (Ellen Wright)	Miss Judy Maddox
Patricia Maddox Culp	Mr. & Mrs. Walter Maddox
Mr. & Mrs. Burnie Evans	Mr. & Mrs. Coleman Martin
Miss Cathy Evans	Mr. & Mrs. W.L. May

Mr. Roy McArthur
Mr. & Mrs. Donald McCormick
Mr. & Mrs. Tom McCormick
Mrs. Charles McDonald
Mr. Dan McFadyen
Mrs. Rebecca McFadyen
Miss Ruby McFadyen
Mrs. Ray McLean
Mrs. James B. McRae
Mr. & Mrs. David L. Myers
Mr. David L. Myers, Jr.
Mr. Wilbur Outlaw
Mr. & Mrs. John Peele
Mrs. Henry Penny
Mrs. B.M. Phillips
Mr. William R. Phipps
Mr. Bobby Quick
Mr. Darrell Quick
Mrs. Hattie Quick
Mrs. Levie Caison Quick
Mrs. Cecil Radford
Mrs. Annie Ransom
Mr. Curtis Rhye
Mrs. Inez Rhye
Mr. Mike Rhye
Mr. Richard Rhye
Mrs. Ruby Rhye
Mrs. James Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Sanford, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Sanford, Jr.
Mrs. Ethel Sanford
Mr. James Sanford
Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Sellers
Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Sellers
Mr. Ronnie Sellers
Mrs. Jean Quick Sessoms
Mr. & Mrs. Grey Sewell
Mrs. Bob Smith

Miss Brenda Smith
Miss Elizabeth Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Joffrey Smith, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Joffrey Smith, Jr.
Mr. John Smith
Sgt. Edward E. Snipes
Mr. Mac Snipes
Sgt. Ted L. Snipes
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Snipes
Mrs. Earl Stewart
Mr. & Mrs. Clem Sturdivant, Sr.
Mr. Clem Sturdivant, Jr.
Mr. Edwin Sturdivant
Miss Fannie Sturdivant
Mr. Jimmie Sturdivant
Miss Linda Rose Sturdivant
Miss Peggy Sturdivant
Mr. Thomas Sturdivant
Mrs. Bill Stutts (Joyce)
Mrs. Ella Stutts
Mrs. C.J. Terry
Mrs. Barbara Ward
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Ward
Mrs. Ira Ward
Miss Joy Ward
Miss Lillian Ward
Mrs. Nellie Ward
Mr. & Mrs. Tony Ward
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Whitehead
Mr. Joe Wilkes
Mr. Tony Wilkes
Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Williams
Mr. D.J. Williams, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. E.C. Wright, Sr.
Mr. E.C. Wright, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. George Wright
Mr. Jennings Wright
Mrs. Rachel Wright
Mrs. Wilbur Wyatt

FOOTNOTES

1. This statistical data is as reported in the Conference Journals.
2. Reverend J.C. Humble, Pastor's Report, First Quarterly Conference Records, dated January 16, 1911.
3. Quarterly Conference Record, dated April 15, 1911.
4. Based upon original membership book, Mary E. Sanford's history, and personal conversations with charter members.
5. From the Deed, recorded at Scotland County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office, Book H, Page 568.
6. Quarterly Conference Records, dated July 7, 1915.
7. Quarterly Conference Record, dated October 22, 1917.
8. From the Deed, recorded at Scotland County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office, Book 3-C, Page 16.
9. Church bulletin, Sunday, September 5, 1964.
10. Quarterly Conference Record, dated May 8, 1961.
11. The Cotton Reporter, Volume 10, Number One, p. 6, dated December, 1959.
12. The Laurinburg Exchange, May 27, 1960, p. 2.
13. Quarterly Conference Record, dated July 6, 1967.
14. Quarterly Conference Record, dated April 15, 1911.
15. Mary E. Sanford's history, dated September 13, 1936.
16. Mary E. Sanford, ibid., added notes dated May 28, 1949.
17. Quarterly Conference Minutes, Supplement A, dated April 26, 1925.
18. Church bulletin, dated April 17, 1955.
19. The Methodist Discipline, 1964, paragraph 1250.1
20. Doris Maddox's additional notes to Mary E. Sanford's history.
21. Western Union Telegram, dated August 28, 1954, signed Miss Priscilla Steger.
22. Quarterly Conference Record, Pastor's Report, dated December 20, 1936.
23. First Quarterly Conference Record, Pastor's Supplement Report, dated January 16, 1911.
24. Quarterly Conference Record.
25. Central Church 1968-1969 Budget.
26. Report of the Trustees, Quarterly Conference Record, for year ending June 30, 1968.
27. District Book of Reports for the Sanford District, p. 2, dated March 3, 1968.