

A History of the Colerain United Methodist Church

Written by: Mrs. Franklin McCrery

The earliest record of the Colerain United Methodist Church is dated in the year of 1883, when Wiley D. Hays and his wife gave a lot of one-half acre for the purpose of building a house of divine worship in Colerain. For the consideration of one dollar, paid by the trustees of the Colerain Methodist Episcopal Church South, the deed was made on July 3, 1883. It was registered December 8, 1883, Book 54, page 171 at the Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor, North Carolina. The names of the trustees appearing on this deed are, Edward P. Simons, Joe Leary, John H. Hardy, John W. Leary, Thomas D. Holley, Carson Fulcher, and John B. Parker. The beautiful stained glass memorial windows in the church bear some of their names and some of them were buried in the church yard. There are members of the church today who are descendants of those first trustees.

A building of wood construction was erected on the lot designated and this building was used until 1939 when it was completely remodeled. As was the custom of the day for worship services, the men positioned themselves on one side of the church, the women on the other and there was an Amen corner. During this time, it was known as the Methodist Episcopal Church South and was on the Harrellsville Charge, Warrenton District, and included the churches of Ahoskie, Colerain, Harrellsville, Union, Vanns Grove, Winton and Powellsville.

In November, 1940, a fire caused by an over-heated wood stove completely destroyed the church. The pump-organ and a few pews were the only things that were saved. The present brick structure was built on the same site in 1941. It was not dedicated until April 8, 1945 as this was the earliest that a Bishop was available to come to Colerain. Bishop W. W. Peele of Richmond had charge of the service and after the congregation joined in reading the dedication service, the pastor, the Rev. John A. Whitesel, was ordained as an Elder. This was his desire that the ordination service take place in the Colerain church, one of the four churches in which he had served since completing his ministerial course. He was soon to leave and serve as a Chaplain in the United States Navy.

During the years, the church has been on different charges and in different districts and experienced many changes. It was placed on the Aulander Charge, Elizabeth City District in the Mid Thirties and remains there today. It is a house of divine worship and a dignified religious atmosphere prevades its walls. Upon entering the sanctuary, one is immediately attracted by the beautiful stained glass memorial window of the Garden of Gethsemane that is located behind the pulpit. The other memorial windows cast a soft glow and the harmonious colors present a deep feeling of reverence and serenity. Many memorial gifts have been given through the years to add to the beauty and service of worship.

The picture of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane draws one down the center aisle to a circular communion rail. Around this is a wine velvet kneeling cushion. Within the rail is a lovely antique marble-top table which holds a brass cross and a pair of candlesticks. There are two candlelighters and two wooden collection plates. On either side of the table is a beautifully styled Gothic baptismal font and a matching flower stand. On the pulpit is the open Bible and bookmarkers of the liturgical colors are used in this. There are three clergy chairs. On either side of the altar stands the Christian Flag and the American Flag. A glass vase trimmed in silver and a brass Revere bowl have been given as memorial gifts. The piano was given many years ago and just last year a new Conn organ was purchased by memorial and individual contributions.

The congregation has always been small, but love and loyalty have made up for this. The Methodist women have been strong support to the church and its mission. From the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, to the Women's Society of Christian Service to the present United Methodist Women, they have done much to aid the church both physically and financially. We are proud to have two members still living that have been in all of the women's organizations. These members, along with all those who have served but who are no longer living, are an inspiration to us as we now recall our past and look forward to our responsibilities and relationships of the future in our Methodist heritage.

Pastors of the Aulander Charge

(NOTE: The men listed are only those who served from the time the present charge emerged.)

J. T. Draper	1934-36	C. M. Mitchell	1954-58
J. R. Poe	1937-40	E. M. Measamer	1958-59
M. R. Gardner	1941-42	C. R. Breedin	1959-65
J. A. Whitesel	1943-45	Harold T. Pickett	1965-68
G. C. Wood	1945-47	Douglas Lamb	1968-69
J. E. Roark	1947-48	Virgil N. Moore	1969-70
D. M. Lewis	1948-49	Leon E. Hill	1970-73
W. S. Green	1949-51	Bobby L. Privette	1973-75
J. E. Richardson	1951-54	M. L. Funkhouser, Jr.	1975-Present