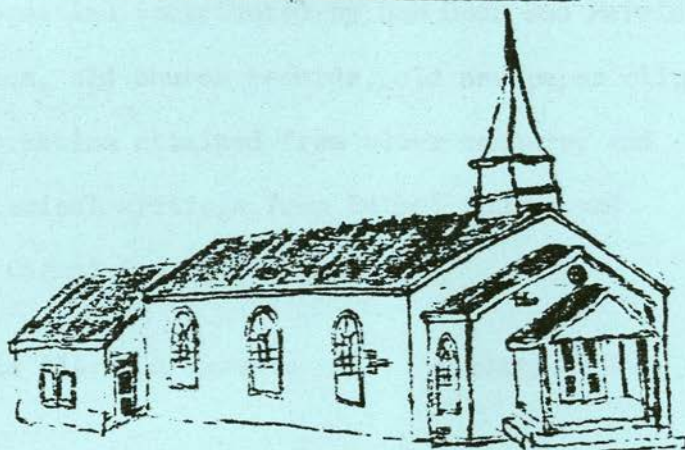


CONCORD
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH



BICENTENNIAL

W E L C O M E
to the
Commission on Archives and History
of the North Carolina Conference
of the United Methodist Church

A HISTORY OF CONCORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The following history is based on written historical information contributed by Sue Dunn and Marvin Bolton, old church records, old newspaper clippings, information obtained from older members, and historical writings from Bethel Church and Mt. Carmel Church.

David Clarence Parsons

January 1987

Concord Church began as a small Methodist Society in 1787. It is one of the older churches in Richmond County. Several of the older churches in the county are Mt. Carmel Presbyterian, Mt. Pleasant Methodist, First Methodist in Rockingham and Cartledge Creek Baptist-- formerly Dockery Baptist. One of the first churches in the County that later became a Methodist Church was Bethel formed in 1775. This Church still exist as a Baptist Church.

The first settlements in Richmond County, which originally was included in Anson County, were formed in the mid-18th century. Most early settlements were along rivers. Settlers traveled up the rivers from around Georgetown, South Carolina. As they came farther inland, they used smaller boats and canoes. Roads were built around the Pee Dee River. The land around the rivers were suited for farming, and the river provided for fishing. In the late 18th century and 19th century Grassy Island section, around the Pee Dee River about 7 miles west of Ellerbe, was the most populated farming area in the County. The Pee Dee River could easily be forded at this point. The settlers in the area were Scots, Welsh, English and Germans. Richmond County was formed from Anson in 1779. Rockingham was formed soon after this.

Concord Methodist Church was first located a short distance Northwest of the Ewing Cemetery. At that time the Church

was about one mile west of Mountain Creek where Capels Mill and Store were located. This is the road from Norman to the present highway 73. people were buried in the cemetery for many years before a Church building was constructed. Many of the graves were marked only with rocks and this can be seen today. The oldest marked grave was dated 1804.

Concord Methodist Society began in 1787 and had no selected minister. The preaching was done by a circuit rider or an individual in the community.

In the early days of Concord Church, the area was in a circuit known as the great Pee Dee Circuit. It extended from Mt. Gilead to Georgetown, South Carolina. J. Martin and Hope Hull were the first preachers in the circuit. This was in 1786. During the year of 1798 Bishop Francis Asbury was in the area. He preached at Bethel Methodist Church and other churches and at residences.

In the following quotation from his journal, Asbury makes reference to Henry Ledbetter, an early preacher at Concord Church. Bishop Asbury was one of few ministers who came over from England and did not return after the Revolutionary War. "We rode down twelve miles to D. West's, and were benighted, which ill suited me. As we had to travel an unknown road to Henry Ledbetters's, I wished to continue on our journey, and not stop at Hancock; but the people thought and said otherwise, so

I stopped, and brother Lee preached, after which I gave a discourse on Acts 2:39, and came off in haste. D. West escorted me down to the ferry, where we called in vain for the flat. D. West went over, and it was with difficulty that he persuaded the ferryman to come with the boat and take me. It being dark, and the wind blowing very strong and cold, we had hard work in crossing. I told the company so in the morning, but stay I must and preach, or be accounted proud. At Henry Ledbetter's I preached on Hebrews 10:23-24, and at John Randall's 2nd Corinthians 6:1. Brother Jackson had secured for me riding and preaching enough as far as Camden. Thursday November 22, 1798: We recrossed the Pee Dee River at C's Ferry, and make it about 18 miles to Mask's, where I preached on Hebrews 4-1 on Friday, at Bethel, on 2nd Corinthians 6:11. Saturday and Sunday, at quarterly meeting at Jesse's (a coloured man) meeting house, near Webb's Ferry. My subject on Saturday was Acts 2:17-18, and on Sabbath day, 2 Tim. 4:1-2. We then rode seven miles to Isaac Jackson's. Monday, rode."

A newspaper article written by Sanders M. Ingram indicated that in the late 18th and 19th Century preachers rode

* The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, Volume II, edited by Elmer T. Ceach, J. Mannings Potts and Jacob S. Payton. Published Jointly by Epworth Press, London, and Abington Press, Nashville, 1958, pp 177-178.

on horseback and carried their Bible, hymnbook, and clothes in saddle bags and preached every day. These preachers were not learned men. They studied the Bible and preached it. They made their congregation feel that to be a Christian was to be like Christ.

Concord Methodist Church became organized in 1816. A new building of logs was built. The board of trustees consisted of Isaac Ewing Sr., John McIntyre, and Stephen Williams, who assisted in cutting and hewing the logs. The new building was located near the entrance to the cemetery. Two of the early preachers were Henry Lebetter And Jonathan West.

In 1866, Concord Church was moved to its present site. This was at a point near the center of the community it served. The building, which had been constructed previously, was of frame construction. It served several communities. Covington community at that time had approximately 75 people, Capels Mill 60, and Powelton 30. The general area east of Little River was served. The church building was destroyed by fire in 1884, and a new building was constructed. This building was of excellent wooden construction and was the first part of the present structure. Serving on the Board of Trustees at this time were David A. Parsons, James McIntyre, and John Bragg Covington. The pastor was the Reverend Frank Shamberger. At this time

Concord was placed in the Pekin Charge. The charge consisted of Sardis, Candor, Hoffman, Little River, Pleasant Hill and Jones Springs--in addition to Concord.

Among the older records on Concord Church is the Church Conference Record, which goes back to 1887. This was the first record book for the Church Conference established in 1866. It was a meeting held quarterly to allow members to make known their views and wishes and to promote personal religion, Christian fellowship and an interest in all institutions of the Church. Present at the first Conference were J. H. Lowdermilk, D. A. Parsons and I. McIntyre. The Church Conference was concerned with the poor of the congregation, the contributions to missions, and the circulation of religious literature. Literature was limited at the time, but included several copies of the Raleigh Christian Advocate. This literature was used for Sunday School.

During the early days horses were ridden or horse-drawn buggies were driven to Concord. A relic of those days is on the Church grounds to this day. It is a large brown rock, which was used for riders to mount their horses and to help ladies get in or out of the buggies.

In the early 20th Century Homecoming at Concord Church was an all-day affair. Sunday School was at 10:00 A.M. The morning Service was at 11:00. After this there was dinner spread on the grounds. The afternoon Service was at 2:00. A

young people's program was at 8:00 P.M. During the following Rival Week, preaching was at 5:30 P.M. and again at 8:00 with supper on the grounds in the time between the services. During these years Concord was in the Ellerbe Charge, which included Mt. Pleasant, Ellerbe, Norman, Jones Springs and Concord.

In the years that followed, the church building remained the same, but the membership grew. As modern conveniences became more plentiful or easier to obtain, the people of the church began to take notice. About 1957, it was decided to build an educational wing. One of the members agreed to furnish the timber for the educational wing. Still another member who had a sawmill agreed to cut the timber. The members and some outsiders helped cut logs and haul lumber. The minister at the time did a lot of work also. As the work continued, it was decided that the old wooden building would not look good with the new brick educational building. One of the members agreed to furnish the brick and other members agreed to pay to have them laid. With the help and hard work, faith and prayers of many members and some outside help, the church was remodeled and brickveneered. With all of this done, it was decided to remodel the inside of the church building. The wood-burning stove that stood in the center of the building was replaced with a gas

heater. This was done in 1957. Since then the cemetery has been added to the church grounds. Also added was electric heat and air conditioning. Carpet was placed on the floor. A steeple was added to the building.

Ministers who have served Concord since 1876 include:

1876-1878 Rev. W. B. Doub
 1879-1880 Rev. C. M. Gentry
 1881-1882 Rev. F. L. Townsend
 1883-1884 Rev. John Hall
 1885-1886 Rev. F. M. Shamburger
 1887 Rev. C. O. Durant
 1888-1889 Rev. J. E. Worley
 1890 Rev. W. B. Tounsand
 1891-1892 Rev. S. Ethridge
 1893-1894 Rev. J. M. Lowder
 1895 Rev. J. P. Pate
 1896-1897 Rev. J. B. Thompson
 1898 Rev. J. W. Stryder
 1899 Rev. W. H. Watkins
 1900-1903 Rev. J. W. Hoyle
 1905 Rev. W. F. Shuford
 Rev. Leach Seabolt
 Rev. Jenkins
 Rev. Watson
 Rev. Simmons
 Rev. M. E. Cotton
 Rev. Neil B. Johnson
 Rev. Dimmette
 Rev. K. F. Duvall
 Rev. Traywick
 Rev. J. C. Whedbee

Rev. Dwight A. Petty
1939-1942 Rev. Dayne Young
1942-1947 Rev. Charles T. Thrift
1947-1952 Rev. William Junius Neese
1952-1955 Rev. Jo Bostick
1955-1957 Rev. Jo Wagnon
1957-1961 Rev. James Hamilton
1961-1963 Rev. Dan Boone
1963-1966 Rev. Walton Needham Bass
1966-1969 Rev. Sam Dodson
1969-1973 Rev. Ecwood Colon Lancaster
1973-1985 Rev. Donnie Gray Davis
1985- Rev. William Miles Wells

CONCORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Homecoming Sunday
August 17, 1986

Mrs. Vivian Mitchell, Secretary to Bishop C. P. Minnick, telephoned day before yesterday to report on some research into our church's history that she is doing as a labor of love. Thanks to Tom McQueen for contacting her on our behalf!

Mrs. Mitchell's research is tentative at this point, but she says that from 1787 - 1850, we were in the South Carolina Conference. From 1806 - 1837 there was a Montgomery Circuit in the South Carolina Conference and that Concord Church probably was on it. (We assume that the "Montgomery" refers to Montgomery County, North Carolina and its environs.)

From 1850 - 1882 there was a Rockingham Circuit in the North Carolina Conference, and Mrs. Mitchell says that Concord Church probably was on it.

She has not yet traced the years from 1882 - 1915.

In 1915 Concord was placed on the Ellerbe Charge. In 1917 we were on either the Ellerbe Charge or the Mount Gilead Circuit for one year.

From 1918 - 1957 we were on the Ellerbe Charge, and since 1957, on the Norman Charge, along with the Jones Springs and Norman churches.

Mrs. Mitchell asks that we share this information especially with old-timers in the church and seek further facts from them and other sources.

-- W. M. Wells, Pastor