

History of Edgerton Memorial Methodist Church

Compiled by Mike Davis, 1965

Sources:

Miss Blanche Mitchener  
Miss Margaret Etheredge  
Mr. James C. Woodard  
Materials at Selma Library  
given by Miss Mitchener  
Church Records  
Files of Johnstonian-Sun

The first wooden building of Methodist Episcopal Church in Selma was started in September, 1878. The lot was given by John A. Waddell and Wilson Lumber Company of Wilson's Mills. This lot was on the corner of Sumner and Anderson Streets. Members of the building committee were Dr. J. W. Vick, chairman; John A. Mitchener, treasurer, and W. L. Graves, secretary.

This first building was located about between the two big oak trees now standing on the lot, and it faced Anderson Street. In 1909, this building was moved to face Anderson Street where it served as an educational and Sunday School building. In that same year, a drive was put on to raise money for a new brick building. Mr. A.E. Edgerton was on the committee to secure a new pipe organ. This instrument, still in use, was secured by the committee which was able to get a large sum from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation to help with the purchase.

The new brick building was completed in 1910 and dedicated in July of that year. A copy of the opening and dedication program of Selma M.E. Church, South, is framed and now hangs in the vestibule of the church, a gift from Miss Blanche Mitchener, who had preserved it through the years. This program shows that Bishop John Kilgo preached both the morning and evening services. Among those singing were Mrs. N.E. Edgerton, Mrs. W. H. Call, Miss Anne Noble, and Miss Maggie Whitley. Mr. Matt Wall was an usher that day. J. M. Daniels was pastor of the church in 1910. The church was given the official name of Edgerton Memorial Methodist Church, about this time.



When the church members decided to building a new educational building in 1928, the old wooden original church was moved to the place where Brietz Memorial Methodist Church now stands. This structure later burned. The new educational building was planned by the Church Planning Commission of the North Carolina Conference and was considered a model Sunday School building at that time.

The explosion of a munitions truck at Catch-Me-Eye in 1942, at the intersection of US 301 and what was then US 70, broke out all the windows of the church and did considerable damage to the brick front of the building. Funds were later appropriated by the federal government, after long litigation, to help pay for repairs.

In 1951, a modern brick parsonage was constructed on a lot just south of the church. This was completed in March of that year and dedicated in August, with the Rev. Mr. Fisher, district superintendent, as the guest speaker. The Rev. H. B. Baum was pastor and first occupant of the new home. The old parsonage, located on South Railroad Street between Green and Sumner streets, was sold to Mr. R. P. Oliver, father of Mr. James A. Oliver. It partially burned several years ago and was reconstructed as a one-story dwelling.

Again in 1954, the church suffered severe damage when hurricane Hazel struck the area. The partial vacuum created by the storm and the fact that the sanctuary was tightly closed caused a large section of the upper part facing Sumner Street to be sucked out. Some of the brick and mortar fell into the sanctuary damaging pews on the left side. The scars from this disaster still show today on the pews. Other pieces of debris broke portions of the stained glass window at the front. Insurance funds were used to repair this damage quickly, including the stained glass. L. A. Watts was pastor at that time.



By 1959, the sanctuary was in need of a complete overhaul. Included in the work was waterproofing of the roof areas, new ceiling tiles, enlargement of the choir loft, cutting of a double door between the sanctuary and the educational building, installation of a divided chancel with new lectern and pulpit. The organ was completely electrified and a new console installed. The cost of construction was about \$7,500; the organ work, about \$3,000.

Early Sunday morning, September 27, of that same year, a day set aside as the third annual homecoming of the church, fire broke out in the educational building. Firemen were able to confine the blaze to the upper floor of the structure; however, smoke and water damage made the lower floor unusable. Nevertheless, the homecoming was held as scheduled, and SBI head Walter Anderson spoke to an overflow crowd in the newly redone sanctuary which was undamaged by the fire. Matt R. Gardner was pastor at that time.

During 1961, a building committee was established to plan an enlargement of the educational building. Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on March 25, 1962, and S. R. Hinnant and Sons received the contract for construction. On October 14, Governor Terry Sanford was the guest speaker for homecoming, and the new building was put into use. This includes a modern kitchen on the first floor, a fellowship hall, a pastor's study, three classrooms, nursery, heating and air-conditioning plant--the estimated cost, \$52,000. W. R. Crowder was pastor.

According to Miss Mitchener, the big wooden pulpit now used by the MYF upstairs, was given by Dr. Richard Noble in memory of his son Richard. The altar, cross, candlesticks and plates now used in the sanctuary were given by Mrs. Grace Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Johnson, Jr., in memory of Dr. W.B. Johnson. This was done when the

sanctuary was renovated in 1959. The chapel is a memorial to Mrs. Alma Edgerton, mother of Mr. E. E. Edgerton of Raleigh; the candlesticks in the chapel and the pulpit Bible in the sanctuary were given in 1964 in memory of Mrs. Maude Earp, by friends and family. Also the stained glass window arch over the double doors in the sanctuary were given by Mr. Earp in 1966 in memory of her husband, Mr. Alonzo Earp. The piano in the sanctuary is a memorial gift in memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Call; she served as church organist for many years.

Since the annual conference of 1964, the Rev. Ernest R. Porter has served as pastor of the church.

MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THE CHURCH  
(according to records of church)

1878*		1921-1923-	G. W. Perry
1891-1894-	W. H. Puckett	1924-1926-	O. P. Fitzgerald
1900-1902-	K. D. Holmes	1927-1930-	D. M. Sharpe
1903-1904-	N. E. Coltrain	1931-1934-	L. T. Singleton
1905-1906-	J. O. Guthrie	1935-1938-	F. B. Peele
1907	F. A. Bishop	1939-1942-	O. L. Hathaway
1908-1909-	W. H. Puckett	1943-1946-	G. W. Blount
1910-1912-	J. M. Daniels	1947-1951-	H. B. Baum
1913	J. G. Johnson	1952-1955-	L. A. Watts
1914	J. M. Daniels	1955-1956-	James E. Hodges
1915-1916-	J. G. Johnson	1956-1960-	M. R. Gardner
1917-1920-	C. K. Proctor	1960-1964-	W. R. Crowder
	1964-		E. R. Porter

\*The information on the first minister was provided by Miss Blanche Mitchener; the church records do not give his name.