

# Elevation

## United Methodist Church

*Established About 1861*



**JOHN HAMMOND CRUM, M. Div., Pastor**

**205 East Church Street, Benson, North Carolina 27504  
Study and Parsonage Telephone: 894-3004**



# The History Of Elevation United Methodist Church

From the writings of Harold Medlin as Edited by J. H. Crum

**"If we are to find purpose in our own individual being we must know something of the reason we are here"**

I would like to tell, as I remember hearing, the history of the church. Actually the history of this church is a history of a community of people who many years ago felt the need of a house of worship. This feeling of the heart was fanned by the exhortation of a Methodist circuit rider from Clayton who came to the community about 1860 with his Bible in his saddle bags. He arranged with some of the local people to hold services in the community school house which stood some two hundred yards in front of the present church on the old Aversboro Road.

It was a log building perhaps with a stone chimney.

Our circuit riding preacher brought messages which were of the Methodist faith filled with the fire of the early evangelists. The people heard, secured a piece of land about 1862, and with slave carpenters built a place for the worship of God. It was not a fancy building by today's standards, but it was one of which they were proud. It is said the first ministers were named Brooks and Raven, but this is uncertain. Services were held for several years in this building until something better was desired. The old church was then moved across the road to the Dorman farm where it was used as a stable and a crib.

The cemetery in back of the church building was already beginning to fill with some of the people whose early work had brought the congregation into being and included an unknown soldier from the Civil War. Abraham Dixon, Gidion Woodall, Louisa Johnson, and Lessie Dorman share the eternal sleep beneath the mounds of the red clay on the hill. James Woodall, an older resident of Elevation, and goodness knows how many more sleep beneath the sand dunes in the fields near by.

The early worshippers at Elevation, according to the recollection of the late Ed Dorman of Benson, included Mr. and Mrs. Abram Dixon, Barbara Capps, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Johnson, Mrs. Sarah Woodall Stevens, and Mrs. Gidion Woodall.

A new church was erected with Rufus Johnson of Benson in charge of building. It is still remembered by many. It was a big barn like building with one entrance. The interior was of tongue and grooved ceiling of the knottiest lumber available and the pulpit was flanked on

either side by two chairs.

We cannot forget Mrs. Nolia Barbour. "Miss Nolie" was here when I first came playing a peddle organ and sitting straight backed in dresses designed to conform to an earlier generation. We remember how with patience she tried to teach us the sharps and flats of the song books. Sheriff Rufus U. Barbour we will not forget. "Big Rufe" would come to church. How much his attendance meant to all. He loved the church and saw to many of its financial needs.

A church is more than a building. A church is a group of people meeting in fellowship to worship God. First, they were in the old school house, then in the first church on the site, and later in the church many still recall. Eventually on this third building the knots were covered with paint and sheet rock. There was a new look in pews and a coat of paint on the floor. That was the status of the building after the second World War. The small wood heater in the center aisle, with all the children huddling as closely as possible to absorb its radiated heat, was replaced by floor furnaces and later by gas heaters. The Rev. H. A. Chester built a new pulpit speaker's stand and new railings around it. Wire was stretched across the barn-like sanctuary and dyed bagging hung to separate the classes. Later a contract was let to J. O. Clifton, and Sunday School rooms were built. We were a happy church of folks, and the church prospered.

However, the high winds of Hurricane Hazel and other strong winds on one of the highest hills in Elevation township blew the church to one side a bit. Members pressed the idea of a new modern building to be constructed of brick. When the Rev. Carlton Hirschi was pastor a Building Committee composed of Ben Barbour, chairman, Johnnie Medlin, Mrs. Ralph Medlin, Seba Barbour and Mrs. P. T. Smith was formed. Brant Medlin was Superintendent of the Sunday School at that time and the Trustees were Ralph Medlin, Ben Barbour, Ed Dorman and Seba Barbour. This present building was <sup>COMPLETED</sup> in 1958. In the past at Elevation there have been a school house, a Masonic Lodge, a Post Office, a store, and the church buildings. The church remains. "We are not then at the end of the history either, for it is a continuing thing. We share with one another the privilege of loving our church, and we dedicate ourselves to the task of keeping her strong for those who will worship here in the many years ahead."