

History of Peace United Methodist Church

Peace United Methodist Church was organized as Peace Methodist Church sometime prior to May 1902. Records are unavailable to establish the exact date. Land was deeded on May 13, 1902 by James W. Brown and wife Annie Powell Brown for a church building. The foundation was laid in 1904, Mr. Brown supervised the building of the church and donated a large part of the materials. Members and friends in the community donated the labor, ^{and as} the church was built on a pay-as-you-go basis, it was not completed until 1907. Prior to this time and during the building of the church, preaching services were held in Powell School, a one-room schoolhouse nearby. The church is located on Red Hill Road approximately five miles northeast of Whiteville.

The charter members were Eli M. and Caroline Powell, Samuel W. and Elizabeth Owens, (these transferred from Smith's Chapel). John Olin Powell, James M and Annie Powell Brown, Graham and Sallie McFayden, Cora Powell Sessions, Cary and Columbia Sessions Powell and Nicholas S. Powell. At the time the church building was completed, several members of the Powell and Brown Families were taken into the church along with others and the membership began to grow.

Rev. J.J. Porter was the first pastor, followed by the Reverends Jesse Marlowe, Y.E. Wright, Rev. Gant, D.C. Geddie, J.P. Pate, RW. Fitts, J.H. Miller, W.C. Benson, J.C. D. Stroud, B.F. Watson, E.C. Sell, J.M. Worthington, W.C. Wilson, N.P. Edens, C.N. Phillips, C.A. Jones, E.M. Hill, C.B. Long, W.J. Freeman, W.F. Trawick, N.B. Strickland, H.M Jamieson, Richard Braunstein, George M. Kelly, W.B. Gregory, W.D. Wise, C.B. Pierce, W.L. Creech Jr., J.M. Carroll, Allen Richardson, Clarence L. Warren, H.B. Harrell, James Starnes, W.F. Cupit, L.H. Dodson, J Rodney Lane, Dennis B. Craft,

History of Peace United Methodist Church
Page 2

David Spaulding, Gladys Williford, Robert W. Dawson, Sr., Douglas Lamb, Nick Moorhead, Harrell Hinson, Beverly Fitzgerald, and the present pastor, Dalma Cribb.

In 1954 Rev. George M. Kelly became the first full-time pastor when Peace was put on the Whiteville Circuit with Mishop Springs Church. Church was held on the first and third Sunday mornings and the second and fourth Sunday nights of the month. Prior to this time, church services were held once or twice a month on Sunday afternoon.

A church school was organized and held for the first time on the first Sunday in April, 1954 with 32 members. Mr. A. H. Sessions was elected Superintendent with Mrs. Frances Sessions teaching the adult class and James Sessions as the teacher of the young people's class. Prior to this time, Sunday school had been held only at intervals because of bad roads and poor transportation. Some of the church school superintendents were Mrs. Annie E Brown, who served for many years. John Olin Powell, W.L. Burchette, H.S. High and George M. Harrell. Also serving since 1954 are Paul Baldwin, James Sessions, Harold Sessions, Jimmy Baldwin and Bobby Sessions. The present superintendent is James Sessions.

The First Homecoming of the church was held on the first Sunday in October, 1954 and has been an annual event since. Guest speakers are usually former pastors and dinner is enjoyed on the grounds. Peace celebrated its 100th anniversary on October 6, 2002 along with its observance of the annual homecoming.

History of Peace United Methodist Church
Page 3

The need for a new church building became evident, and a building fund was started with Mrs. Nannie Thompson being the elected treasurer of the fund. She later became treasurer of the church and served for many years. Mrs. James R. Sessions served as church treasurer after Mrs. Thompson and the present treasurer is James Sessions. Mrs. Virginia B. Branch and Mr. A. H. Sessions made the first pledges for the building fund for the new church building, and soon members and friends began contributing. Plans were drawn up by the firm of Ballard & McKim in Wilmington, North Carolina. The brick building was started in 1956 and completed in 1957. The Church had five class rooms and a sanctuary which would seat 125 people. The Rev. W.B. Gregory held the first church service in the new sanctuary on the first Sunday of July 1957. The building was dedicated by Rev. J.C. Garlington, District Superintendent, in September 1957. In the spring of 2002, through a grant from the Duke Endowment, a small class room was converted into a second restroom and a back entrance to the church. Also, a handicap ramp was added at the back door.

Church services have been held on Sunday mornings with no night services since 1960. Present membership is 39. Sunday school enrollment is 23. There is an active UMW with 9 members and UMYF with 5 members. The present pastor is Rev. Dalma Cribb.

The church history was compiled by Mrs. Frances Sessions in March 1966 from information gathered from old records and members of the church. It has been kept up to date by Mrs. James R. Sessions since 1985.