

A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
PINE VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

On February 1, 1961, the late Bishop Paul N. Garber appointed Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., to organize a Methodist congregation in the growing Pine Valley Estates area. The Rev. J. E. Garlington was Superintendent of the Wilmington District then.

Bringing his family to Wilmington to embark upon his new duties, Rev. Joyner served his charge diligently. The first members were received on September 10, 1961; and on December 31 of that year, the membership roll of charter members was closed with 46 persons.

The first worship service was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Criser, 1640 Robert E. Lee Drive, attended by 12. During the quarterly conference of the church in September 1961, our church was aligned with the Oleander Church to become the Oleander-Pine Valley Charge. As our attendance grew, worship services were held at the Oleander Methodist Church until the Pine Valley building was completed. The Rev. Clyde S. Boggs was Superintendent of the Wilmington District at that time.

Ground breaking for the new church was on June 11, 1961, very indicative that the "belief-in-action" was in the hearts of those interested in a Pine Valley church. Rev. Joyner's sermon for the first service in the new building on November 5, 1961, was "In the Beginning", text John 1:1-14. Eighty-five persons attended this service.

As the years passed, our church continued to grow by "leaps and bounds" in membership, attendance, new programs, and church activities. In September 1968, construction was started for the addition of four new classrooms and a restroom. In June 1969, the new Educational Building was finished and a consecration service was held with Rev. Clyde McCarver delivering the message.

Our church continued to grow and became a station church, leaving the joint charge with Oleander in 1970. Two Sunday morning services had been required for many months in order to seat the large number of regular worshippers.

Plans were drawn and in 1972, bonds were sold to finance the building of a large new sanctuary with a seating capacity of approximately 375. Ground breaking for the new sanctuary was on June 3, 1973, and its construction was completed in October 1974 with the first service being held in the beautiful new sanctuary on October 20. A consecration service was held at 11:00 A. M. on December 8, 1974.

Our church membership had grown to 479 by mid-November, 1974. In March 1975, a new church parking lot was completed to accommodate our membership. In December 1975, Mr. Bruce Cameron donated one acre of land in back of our church adjoining our church property for parking and a playground.

As of January 1, 1982, our membership has expanded to 623. Our activities include two active circles for our United Methodist Women, a Methodist Men's Club, Methodist Youth Fellowship, Altar Guild, Sharing Groups, Junior and Senior Choirs, Shekinah Singers, etc. Homecoming is celebrated the third Sunday in October of each year.

Since its inception, Pine Valley United Methodist Church has been served by the following pastors, assigned the North Carolina Conference, each of whom has made his own unique contribution to our church:

Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr.....	1961 - 1965
Rev. Lee A. Phillips.....	1965 - 1967
Rev. Alvis J. Morris.....	1967 - 1974
Rev. Lovell R. Aills.....	1974 - 1977
Rev. Paul B. Scott, Jr.....	1977 - 1982
Rev. Dr. Billy F. Seate.....	1982 -

H I S T O R Y

Of the

P I N E V A L L E Y M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

February 1, 1961 through January 23, 1966

This History of Pine Valley Methodist Church was compiled from records and information gathered thither and yon. It covers the period from the beginning of the organization of the congregation to the date of this writing.

Since there was no previous History written, to my knowledge, dates, records, growth, and various happenings of the Church have been secured from reliable sources, and I feel sure are very accurate.

At this point I would like to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., the Rev. Lee A. Phillips, officers and Charter members of the Church for their help. Needless to say, without their cooperation, it would have been impossible to compile this five year History into one paper.

As a recommendation, may I suggest that a complete yearly History of the Church be kept by the Historian, beginning with the Conference year, and ending with each Conference year.

*Virginia H. Folkman*

Virginia H. Folkman  
Historian, Pine Valley Methodist Church  
1965 - 1966

Following is a chronological report of the organization, development, and progress of the Pine Valley Methodist Church, written to the best of my ability from the information and records that I had access to:

FEBRUARY 1, 1961 - The Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., was appointed by Bishop Paul N. Garber to organize a Methodist congregation in Pine Valley Estates. Bringing his family to Wilmington to embark upon his new duties, they first resided in a rented house at 2018 Pender Avenue, then in July of 1961 they moved into the parsonage at 110 Ridgeway Drive. Diligently serving this Wilmington charge, he was a very integral part in the organization of the church and served here for four years and five months. His work in Wilmington will live far, far into the future.

FEBRUARY 21, 1961 - At the Wilmington District Methodist Men's Rally, thoughts were planted as to the possibility of a new church in Pine Valley, and upon roll call, the ideas were confirmed by a good representation.

MARCH 14, 1961 - The first issue of ENCOUNTER (the Church publication) was printed, even under the adverse conditions of no congregation and no equipment.

About this time, still no official congregation, interested persons and potential Pine Valley Methodists, began Bible Study groups in homes. This started the wheels turning, slowly but surely, to the official organization of a Pine Valley Methodist Church.

Financial support of the initial project was from the discretionary fund of the District Superintendent, the Rev. J.E. Garlington, supplemented by a \$300 gift from a true and interested Wilmingtonian.

MAY 11, 1961 - The dead line for bids submitted on the proposed building, sketches having been made earlier by Frank I. Ballard, architect. The contract was given to A.G. Carter, Jr., of Whiteville.

JUNE 11, 1961 - Just one month after a bid was accepted on the construction of the proposed building, the Ground Breaking Services were held, very indicative that the "belief-in-action" was in the hearts of those interested in a Pine Valley Church. More than 50 happy and enthusiastic persons witnessed as the Rev. A. P. Hill, Jr., pastor of Wesley Memorial Church, turned the first spade. In addition to the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr, others taking turns with the shovel were the Rev. Russell Harrison, Pastor of Grace Church and the Rev. W. R. Stevens, pastor of Trinity Church.

JUNE 14, 1961 - Actual construction was begun on the building to house the congregation of Pine Valley Methodist Church.

JUNE, 1961 - At the annual Conference held in Durham, Pine Valley was joined with Oleander, with the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., being appointed to this two-church charge for another year.

JULY 28, 1961 - The first meeting of the Young People was held at the home of Don Bullard, and immediately became very enthusiastic, as well as very active in the program of the church. This was the nucleus of the present M.Y.Fers.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1961 - Even though the sanctuary was incomplete, and amidst the workmen's tools, and cogglomeration of materials, a general meeting was held, at which time the District Superintendent, the Rev. Clyde S. Boggs, made a motion that the Pine Valley Church be declared into existence and open her doors to receive members. Thirteen members were received into the church membership on this date.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1961 - The first regular service of worship was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. E.B. Criser, with approximately 12 persons in attendance. Later the regular worship services were held at Oleander until the completion of the new building, with the attendance and membership growing.

SEPTEMBER 27, 1961 - The official organization meeting was held with Mr. French Lewis elected as chairman of the official Board, Elective stewards were Mr. Hubert Holcomb and Mr. Carlton Herring. Trustees were Mr. Don Bullard, chairman, Mr. Maurice Waddell, Jr., and Mr. Carlton Herring; Lay Leader, Mr. Don Bullard; Church School Superintendent, Mr. Cecil Turner; and Treasurer, Mr. G. T. Hall, Jr.

OCTOBER 17, 1961 - The first meeting of the official Board held at the parsonage, at which time Mrs. C.H. Bolton was elected Secretary.

NOVEMBER 5, 1961 - A "red-letter" day in the Pine Valley Methodist Church. The first service of worship held in the new and beautiful building, accomplished through the untiring efforts, faith, loyalty, and devotion of many interested persons. It became the tenth Methodist Church in Wilmington. The lack of pews, borrowed chairs, etc. did not hamper the services or the pleasure of the congregation in the least.

The sanctuary of this first building is designed for a seating capacity of about 200 people; a balcony for the choir, a kitchen complete with range, refrigerator, hot water heater, and cabinets galore. The land and building are valued at \$36,500. and furnishings at \$3,000.

For the first service, the Oleander Choir supplied the music, and after this the church formed its own choir under the leadership of Mr. Joyner. From then on, the Choir has been a vital part of the Church and has given willfully of time and energy.

DECEMBER 14, 1961 - About 40 adults and 30 children enjoyed ushering in the holiday festivities in the form of the Church's first Christmas supper.

DECEMBER 31, 1961 - This date was selected by the official board as the closing date of charter membership with 46 charter members on roll. Thirty-one were transfers <sup>FROM</sup> 10 other Methodist churches, six from other denominations, and nine were received on profession of faith.

Also having a place of distinction, this was the date of the first baptism in the new church.

FEBRUARY, 1962 - The M.Y.F. sub-district met at Pine Valley for the first time.

JUNE 4 - 8, 1962 - First Vacation Church School held under the leadership of Mrs. Carlton Bolton, with an average daily attendance of 20 youngsters.

JUNE, 1962 - By Annual Conference time the church was growing by leaps and bounds in membership, attendance, new programs, and church activities. All signs pointed to the interest and need of this suburban church. Many gifts from various sources enhanced the beauty of the church and grounds, in addition to the convenience and usefulness they afforded. ( a record of gifts is kept in the church.)

JUNE 30, 1962 - The first wedding ceremony was performed in the church.

AUGUST, 1962 - The Altar Guild was organized with the first chairman being Mrs. Carlton Herring.

OCTOBER 5, 1962 - Laying of the corner stone services were held. A copper envelope containing many items of interest were placed behind the stone.

DECEMBER, 1962 - The new pews were installed in time for the Christmas programs. The initial payment for the pews was a memorial gift, along with the pulpit chairs, and the remainder was paid by the membership. The pews added much dignity to the sanctuary, and incidental as it may seem, matched the lectern and table which had been designed and built by Mr. Joyner and men of the church.

MARCH, 1963 - Four acolytes were chosen and trained for service.

JUNE, 1963 - At Annual Conference the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr. was again appointed to serve the Pine Valley - Oleander charge. By this time the church had shown a steady and commendable growth in all phases of the church program.

JULY, 1963 - No more borrowing! The Westside Methodist Church of Hopatcong, N.J. (home church of Mrs. Joyner) graciously gave a communion set, which was used on this date for the first time.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1963 - From September 29 through October 1, the first preaching mission was held at Pine Valley Church. By this time the membership <sup>had</sup> increased to 70 members, even though six had been transferred to out of town churches. The Rev. Lawrence Bridges, pastor of Franklinton Methodist Church delivered the messages.

OCTOBER, 1963 - The Men's Club was started and immediately became active, with approximately 22 members. Although this club is, as of yet, <sup>NOT</sup> a chartered organization, they are a very important part of the church. They are in charge of ushering, care of the church grounds, and are active in the promotion of recreations for the membership, both adult and youth. Mr. Don Bullard was elected the first president.

OCTOBER, 1963 - A new class was added to the Church School. "With the <sup>GROWING</sup> ~~growing~~ attendance and interest, it proved to be a dire need.

JUNE, 1964 - At Annual Conference, the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., was appointed to return to the Pine Valley - Oleander charge for another year. At this time records show the church membership increased to 97 active members; an average attendance of 65 per Sunday morning and the Church School attendance greatly increased. The church indebtedness was reduced to \$36, 219. (With records like this to prove his diligent work and interest, not to mention his outstanding ability, no wonder they returned him to this infant church.)

AUGUST, 1964 - At a meeting of the official Board (Frank I. Bullard being present) talk and ideas were discussed as to an expansion program. By this time the church had shown such rapid progress, it was literally "bulging at the seams". Tentative plans were to increase educational and church facilities.

SEPTEMBER, 1964 - The Women's Society of Christian Service offered to purchase an organ to replace the piano that had been bought when the church doors were first opened. The offer was gratefully accepted.

NOVEMBER, 1964 - The second preaching mission was held with the Rev. Wallace Kirby, pastor of Divine Street Methodist Church, of Dunn, as the guest minister. This service was a great success.

DECEMBER 13, 1964 - Bishop Paul N. Garber presented the church congregation with a check for \$15,000, as a gift of the "Ten Dollar" Club.

At this time the new organ (gift of the W.S.C.S.) peeled out for the first time. The entire congregation, including the pastor, was all smiles and happiness radiated over the entire area.

JANUARY, 1965 - The beginning of this year showed a notable increase in church attendance with about an average of 72 persons each Sunday.

MARCH, 1965 - Pine Valley Church building won for its architectural firm the Randolph E. DuMont design program award.

JUNE, 1965 - At Annual Conference the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., who had served this congregation for the past four years and five months, was appointed to Mt. Bethel Methodist Church in Bahama. Through heartaches and awareness of the loss, the congregation was very grateful for his contributions to this church and happy to see him climb the ladder of promotion.

The second pastor, the Rev. Lee A. Phillips, was warmly welcomed and assured of the cooperation and devotion of the congregation.

The Rev. Mr. Joyner's stay in the Pine Valley Church will long be remembered and cherished by most of the members. In his service here, he received into the church over 100 members and had 33 baptisms. He was very instrumental in the organization of this new church and saw it grow from a membership of 46 charter members to an active membership of 113 (as of the ending of the conference year), with 18 being removed by transfer. The Church School increased to an average attendance of 75 each Sunday (almost double), the budget increased from \$4450 in 1961 to \$7500 in 1965, and the Church indebtedness dwindled to \$19,852 (at the end of the 1965 conference year.)

An interesting note here is the fact that during his 4 years and 5 months service to the Pine Valley Church, no deaths are recorded among the membership, however, he did officiate at the burial of two infants.

The Rev. Lee A. Phillips came to the Pine Valley-Oleander charge from Fair Bluff. His first sermon here was on June 27, 1965. He assumed his duties as a veteran, with enthusiasm, vitality, and new ideas for the advancement of this church. Immediately he and his family were NOT strangers, but beloved co-workers for the progress and betterment of the Pine Valley Church and congregation. Through their dedication and the cooperation of the increasing and active membership, a shining light of growth is seen for this church.

As of this date plans are in the final stages for an addition to the present building to increase facilities for Church School space, a nursery, educational programs and all phases of church programs.



During his brief service here, he has received 25 new members into the church, with a record of receiving new members each Sunday for the first three months he was pastor of the Pine Valley Church. This is the leading record of the entire Wilmington District in the new members' category. Since June, 1965 three members have been removed by transfer. The church now has 136 members.

Mrs. Phillips is organist for the church and takes an active part in all church activities.

Even with a "shoe string" beginning, it is the consensus of opinion that at some future date Pine Valley will be among the most recognized and active congregations in the Wilmington area.

These two "hard-working" pastors have a legitimate right to feel proud, feel a sense of accomplishment, and a warm-hearted satisfaction to have had a part in the progress, activity, and service to our Savior in this church.