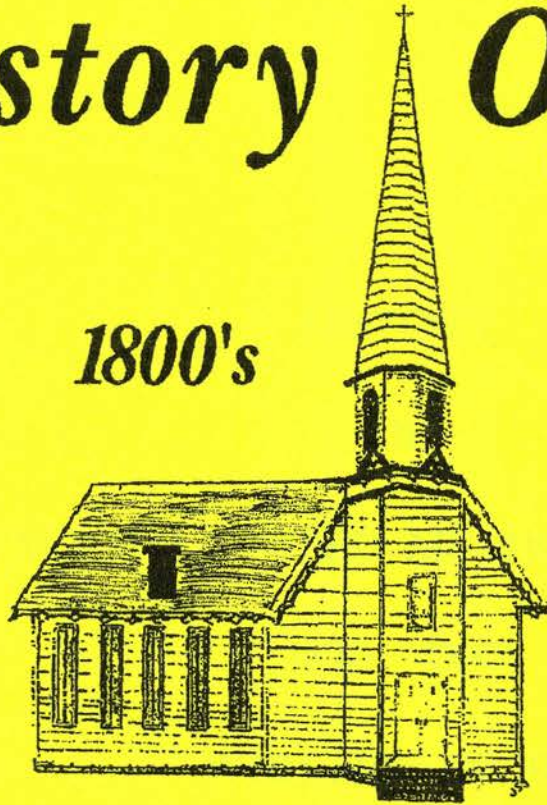


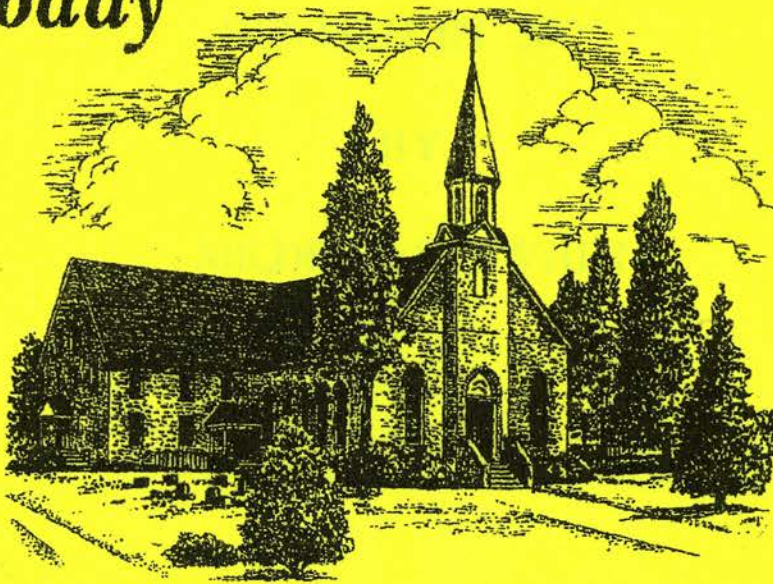
History Of The

1800's



Plymouth United Methodist Church

Today



1826

*Where the Spirit of the Lord Reigns,
Directs, and Inspires*

2001

HISTORY
OF
PLYMOUTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1826 - 2001

WRITTEN IN 1977

BY

MRS. EDWARD (KITTY) HILL
MRS. LAWRENCE (FRANCES) JONES
MRS. LELAND (DORIS) THOMPSON

REVISED IN 2001

BY

MILDRED S. SWAIN

In the Year of our Lord, 1826 on February 15th in Portsmouth, Virginia, the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church received it's first appointment. William J. Waller was assigned to Washington and Plymouth. Nothing is known about this young man prior to 1825 or after 1828.

In May, 1836, Plymouth became a part of the North Carolina Conference which was set off from the Virginia Conference. We were in the Roanoke District until 1838 when we became a part of the Washington District.

In time setting, John Quincy Adams was president of our country when the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church was founded; and many new things we now consider necessities, such as electric lighting and power, the telephone, television, computers, to name a few, had not even been invented.

Plymouth became a charge of the newly formed Elizabeth City District of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1894. We had the honor of entertaining the first conference of this new District on July 18, 19 and 20, 1895. Sessions were held morning and evening of each day, with a sermon at each session. The Conference was composed of one minister and four lay delegates from each of the eighteen pastoral charges, beside local preachers and members. According to the ROANOKE BEACON of Friday, July 19, 1895: "Every boat and train since Wednesday has brought delegates to Conference."

The first building was erected in 1832. At that time, Plymouth was listed as the eighth largest town in the state with a population of 660. Methodism was the second largest denomination in North Carolina having 32 preachers and a membership of 12,641.

The church property was acquired in four separate lots on four different dates as follows:

#1. On August 3, 1832, Samuel Hardison deeded lot #45, for the sum of \$40.00 to the church trustees "that they shall erect and build or cause to be erected and built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the Member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America". Samuel Hardison had purchased the lot on August 18, 1831 for \$3.00 from the Sheriff, William M. Chepon for back taxes. There were 12 graves on the

property when the Trustees purchased it. The Trustees at that time were: Joseph C. Norcom, John Cornell, John D. Bennett, Paul Cornell and W. Beckwith.

#2. On February 2, 1845, John Pike of Hyde County deeded lot #21 to Trustees: Charles Latham, Joseph Ramsey, Edward Windley, Wilson White and William Bateman "in consideration of the sum of \$1.00" for use as a cemetery. This lot was directly behind the church building, and a 25 foot square in the center was retained for the Pike family burial plot.

#3. On January 2, 1852, lot #22 which is beside Lot #21 was bought from John C. Pettijohn for the price of \$100.00. The cemetery has been extended to include this lot.

#4. On December 1, 1853, lot #46 beside the church was purchased from Sarah Bennett for \$150.00. The deed states: "At some convenient time, if they see fit to do, when the funds of their hands as Trustees will justify it, erect a good and substantial wood fence so that said Lot shall and may be secured from ordinary intrusion."

Our forefathers had the vision, determination and faith to purchase the four parcels of land that encompasses our buildings and cemetery in the span of 27 years.

According to an article in the ROANOKE BEACON dated June 13, 1890, entitle "History of the M. E. Church" it states: "but during the war (Civil War) this town being destroyed, the churches received their share of the ill fate. The Methodist Church was torn down and its timbers used for fire wood or to make coffins for the dead soldiers who fought and died under it shadows." For many years, we were not aware of this statement and had been lead to believe, our facilities were not destroyed.

On 29 March, 1863, David L. Day, who was stationed in Plymouth with the 25th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, wrote in his diary: "Church service today for the first time in several weeks; we occupied the Methodist Church. The house was well filled with soldiers and the galleries running around three sides of the house were filled with darkies, who somewhat resembled an approaching thunder squall."

Quoting from THE FLAG TO THE CROSS written by A. S. Billingsley, Chaplain U. S. Army: “we arrived at Plymouth, N. C., December 19, 1863... I preached the first Sabbath evening after my arrival, and announced a Christmas sermon for the following Sabbath evening. *At the hour appointed, the large Methodist church, seating some eight hundred, was crowded to overflowing; hundreds, they said, had to go away for want of room.*”

If, in fact, our church building was destroyed during the war between the States, it probably happened during the battle of April, 1864. One account tells us that all but seven buildings were destroyed. Another account mentions much destruction but no specifics. When was a new building erected? We do not know at this time, but our search continues. We do know that our first communion service - a silver pitcher, chalice, and two small plates - were given in 1876 by Mrs. Emma Norman. These were displayed in the Susannah Wesley room, a small room off the vestibule, until the church was broken into and these items, as well as other things, were stolen in 1990.

We have several photographs and verbal descriptions revealing the appearance of the church in the late 1890's. Its outstanding architectural feature was it's tall steeple, enormous in size and measuring 105 feet from the church roof. In 1912, this steeple was toppled by a storm and was replaced with a lower one. Inside the sanctuary, there was a narrow balcony across the back of the room and extended partly down the sides.

A major renovation project was begun in May 1931; and the August 14th ROANOKE BEACON of that same year published a picture of the finished church with an announcement that services had been resumed the previous Sunday. In 1930, the church had received a \$1000.00 donation (His second donation) from Mr. C. W. Toms, president of the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company of New York, who had once taught school in Plymouth and attended this church. This provided the “nest egg” and incentive for the renovation project. At that time the Reverend Robert Grandison Lee Edwards was pastor; and Mr. Ambrose L. Owens had general supervision of the construction work.

The church building was brick veneered, and the basement was excavated for the installation of a modern steam heating plant. The original windows, which extended almost to the floor, were shortened; and marbleized green

and white panes were put in. Wainscoting was added to the inside, and an addition was constructed on the rear of the church, extending back 14 feet, forming the present pulpit and choir space. "The Good Shepherd" stained glass window was installed at that time, and provided a beautiful, inspirational background for the altar, choir loft, and pulpit. The two stained glass windows on the front of the church were also installed during this renovation.

Soon afterwards, around 1934 - 1935, the first pipe organ was bought. In 1890 there was a pump organ and the first choir was organized. Our present pipe organ, the third in our church history, was dedicated, together with memorial carillon chimes, in February 1971.

By 1939-1940, enough donations had been made to replace the earlier, plain windows with beautiful stained glass memorial windows depicting events in the life of Christ. Matching doors divide the vestibule from the sanctuary.

Sunday School has been an important part of this church from its very beginning, with classes held in various parts of the building - in the "amen corner", in the choir stall, and in the balcony (the pump organ was in the balcony at one period). In 1933, a log cabin was built, behind the church facing Adams Street, by a Sunday School teacher, Mr. Tom Burgess, and his class of boys. The log cabin was used for Sunday School classes and also for recreational purposes until it was replaced with a modern brick Educational Building in the 1950's. After the exterior of the building was completed, the church members and friends finished the interior, and the building was dedicated by Bishop Paul Garber on May 8th, 1955.

In the history of the church, there have been four known parsonages. The first one, now numbered 418 Washington Street was purchased on December 23, 1913 for \$1250.00. Then, on June 25, 1917, the Trustees acting for the church, bought the house and Lot #69 on the corner of Third and Adams Streets, directly across from the church for its parsonage. The lot for the third parsonage, fronting on Latham Lane was purchased in July, 1944 for \$500.00. A parsonage was built on this lot; and on June 30, 1946, while the Reverend Theodore Jerkins was minister, it was dedicated by Bishop W. W. Peele. The fourth and present home for our ministers was purchased in 1983 at 101 Virginia Pine Drive. It was dedicated by Bishop Cannon on November 27, 1983 while Dr. Robert S. Pullman was minister.

The organization of women of the church also has a long history. The Ladies Aid Society was the first organized group, and records show that it existed before the turn of the century, but how long before is not known. The Missionary Society was organized in 1922, and its first project was the adoption of a Methodist Home orphan to be clothed and supported. Unification in 1939 brought into being the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Guild. Then, these two groups combined locally as Women's Society of Christian Service in 1959, predating this move in the general organization in 1968. Finally, when the Methodist and United Brethren denominations merged, the present name, United Methodist Women, was adopted in 1972.

The activities and services of our women's organizations have been and continue to be numerous and diverse. The United Methodist Men were organized in 1953, and have faithfully and diligently served the needs of the church and community since then.

The Methodist Youth Fellowship, long standing in the church, has provided a Christian environment for study, fellowship and recreation for the youth and their leaders.

Bible study has always played an important role in the life of the church. In the 1990 this was strengthened even more when the Disciple Bible studies were added to the already weekly Bible Study classes. The Christian Believers class was begun in the year 2000.

Through the dedication and hard work of the United Methodist Men and under the leadership of I. Miller Warren, a beautiful iron fence was erected around the cemetery in 1996. A History Room was established and dedicated in 1994.

Three additional pieces of property have been acquired since 1996. In early June the house on the corner of Third and Adams burned and was a total loss. We had previously owned this house as our second parsonage. Rev. Julian Scott, who served in Plymouth from 1973 until 1980, donated this property to the church. Later we purchased the house and lot beside this property which was in a sad state of disrepair. Both lots were cleared and leveled and are now used as a parking lot. In 1998 the house and lot facing Adams Street

beside the Library was purchased and donated to the church by Jearl Harrison.

Memorial monies and gifts have been used over the years to add to, enhance and maintain our buildings, embellishments and the items that make our facilities so pleasurable.

Today Plymouth United Methodist Church still stands in the same peaceful setting, back from the traffic of the street, surrounded by age-old cedars and the graves of many of its faithful members. This church has served the people of this area in many ways, and has played an important part in Methodism in this section of the state. May it continue to be a cherished heritage for many more generations.

Plymouth United Methodist Church, we salute you and commend you on your accomplishments and influence over the years. We, who today stand and serve here, are repositories of a rich heritage. With the same faith, dedication, and measure of devotion, which was characteristic of our forebears, may we accept the challenge of the future. Remembering our past, we pray that we may do what is God's will to make this church His instrument now and in the years to come.

“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as every you can.”

John Wesley's Rule

Ministers

Ministers

DATE APPOINTED NAME

**VIRGINIA CONFERENCE, PETERSBURH, VIRGINIA
Roanoke District**

February 15, 1826	William J. Waller	Washington & Plymouth
February 15, 1827	John Kerr	Washington & Plymouth
February 15, 1828	Abraham Harrell	
February, 1829	Leroy Madison Lee	Washington & Plymouth
February, 1830	Wilson Barclift	
February, 1831	John D. Halstead	
February, 1832	Abraham Harrell	
February, 1833	Edward Wardsworth	
February, 1834	Thomas R. Brame	Washington & Plymouth
February, 1835	J. M. Boatright	Washington & Plymouth

Ministers

NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

Roanoke District

1836 - 1837 Samuel Pearce

Washington District

January, 1838 William M. Jordon

January, 1839 Ira T. Wyche

December, 1840 Thompson Garrard

October, 1841 John Tillett Plymouth & Tarboro

October, 1842 William Closs

October, 1843 Thomas Page Ricaud

December, 1844 Edgar L. Perkins

December, 1845 Allen Speen Andrews

December, 1846 Thomas Branch Reeks

December, 1847 Nathan Hunt Daniel Wilson

November, 1848 - 1849 Joel W. Tucker

November, 1850 William Hilliard Bobbitt

November 1851 - 1852 Lingurn Skidmore Burkhead

November, 1853 Oran Scoville

November, 1854 Abram Weaver

November, 1855 James L. Fisher

Ministers

November, 1856 - 1857	Thomas William Guthrie	
December, 1858	James Emory Mann	
December, 1859	John Wesley Jenkins	
December, 1860	Joseph Halstead Wheeler	
December, 1861	Benjamin F. Guthrie	
1862		
1863		
1864		
1865	Civil War - No Appointments	
November, 1866 - 1867	William F. Clegg	
November, 1868		
November, 1869 - 1870	John F. Heitman	
November, 1871 - 1873	Frederick Dallas Swindell	Plymouth & Jamesville
November, 1874 - 1875	William Samuel Rone	Plymouth & Jamesville
November, 1876 - 1877	Squire Micajah Davis	Plymouth & Jamesville
November, 1878	William Blake Doub	
November, 1879	Squire Micajah Davis	
November, 1880	Matthew H. Moore	Plymouth Station
December, 1881	William L. Grissom	Plymouth Station

Ministers

December, 1882	William H. Watkins
December, 1883	Franklin A. Bishop
December, 1884 - 1885	William Reynold Ware
December, 1886 - 1887	Frank Mebane Shamburger
December 1888 - 1890	Charles Wesley Robinson
December, 1891	William Bowling Moore
December, 1892	Walter Herbert Willis
December, 1893 - 1894	Julian Lee Craft Rumley
December, 1895 - 1897	Jesse Lee Cunninggim
December, 1898	Marion Timothy Plyler and Jesse Lee Cunninggim
December, 1899	Julian Lee Craft Rumley
December, 1900 - 1901	James Henry Buffaloe
December, 1902	William Henry Brown
December, 1903	Lloyd Baum Jones
December, 1904	Benson H. Black
December, 1905	Lloyd Baum Jones
December, 1906 - 1907	Louis Thompson Singleton
December, 1908	Junius Arthur Martin
December, 1909	Marvin Young Self

Ministers

December, 1910	Hampton McRae Jackson	
December, 1911 - 1913	William Joseph Watson	
December, 1914 - 1916	Bernard Talmage Hurley	
December, 1917 - 1918	Edward Norman Harrison	
November 9, 1919	Daniel Luther Earnhardt	Four Churches
October, 1920 - 1921	Walter Cleveland Benson	
October, 1922 - 1925	William Graham Lowe	
October, 1926 - 1930	Robert Grandison Lee Edwards	
October, 1931 - 1932	John Wesley Harrell	
October, 1933	Rufus Rhodes Grant	
October, 1934	Kirby Formy Duval	
October, 1935 - 1937	Charles Tinsley Thrift	
October, 1938	Wade Johnson	
October, 1939 - 1942	Olen Leon Hardwick	
October, 1943 - 1946	Theodore R. Jenkins	
October, 1947 - 1948	John Oglesby Long	
October, 1949 - 1953	Dwight Lang Fouts	
October, 1954 - 1957	Jesse Herbert Lanning	
June, 1958 - 1961	Albert DeWitt Byrd, Jr.	
June, 1962 - 1968	Carl Webster Barbee	

Ministers

June, 1969 - 1972	James Claude Chaffin
June, 1973 - 1979	Julian W. Scott
June, 1980 - 1981	Vassar Wilson Jones
June, 1982 - 1985	Robert Stanford Pullman
June, 1986 - 1990	Ellis Jennings Bedsworth
June, 1991	William W. Snotherly
June, 1992 - 1995	James Ralph Oliver, Sr.
June, 1996 - 1998	Carolyn Reed Smith
June, 1999 -	Howard Dennis Draper, Jr.

MORE FACTS OF INTEREST

1. In February 1895, new lamps were put in the church.
2. In April 1895, the Ladies' Aid Society had an ice cream supper in the Town Hall (present site of the Mini Park), for the benefit of the church.
3. In May 1895, Mr. Joseph Tucker was appointed by the ladies of the church to supervise cleaning the church yard and grave stones, trimming trees, etc. The ladies assumed this responsibility again in the 1930's.
4. In April 1896, two workmen painted the tall steeple in half a day and were paid \$1.25 together, which was the current rate for a day's labor.
5. In December 1899, the Ladies' Aid Society placed heaters near the pulpit and covered the entire floor with new carpet.
6. In May 1902, the ROANOKE BEACON stated that "a series of meetings was held at the church, with 50 conversions, 40 reclamations, and 34 joining church".
7. In October 1903, the ladies of the Methodist Episcopal Church held a bazaar during court week and advertised in the ROANOKE BEACON "You can eat cheaper with us than at the hotel". The menu was also printed:

Ham-Turkey-Goose
Chicken Salad
Gel-tine and cream
Ice Cream
Minnehaha Cake
Cheese Straws
Coffee

Oysters - stewed - raw - fried
Cranberry Sauce - Celery - Pickles
Cream Almond Cake - Ambrosia
Chocolate Cake - Jelly Roll - Fig Cake
Cocoanut Cake - Caramel Cake
Candy - Salted Peanuts
Hot Chocolate

8. No history of a Methodist Church would be complete without mentioning the Epworth League, forerunner of our present Methodist Youth Fellowship.

9. In early 1956, a lighted bulletin board was erected on the front lawn.
10. Two outstanding series of meetings were held, one in the 1950's with Bishop Ralph Cushman preaching, and the other with Dr. Harry Denman in 1961.