

Prospect

Thank

CHURCH BEGINNINGS

Although the exact date of the beginning of the Prospect United Methodist Church is unknown, the name "Prospect Church" appeared in the "Wilmington Star" as early as August 18, 1871. The Rev. W.L. Moore, who helped to bring Methodism to the area, moved from Columbus County to the Prospect Community in 1875. Those two facts would indicate the late 1700's or early 1800's as the approximate date of its inception. Today, Prospect United Methodist Church, located five miles northeast of Pembroke and seven miles south of Red Springs, is only a few hundred yards from the site of this original structure.

BUILDINGS HISTORY

There have been a total of five church buildings in the history of this ever-growing community. The first recorded deed was in April of 1876, when the church acquired land from William and Mary Ann Locklear to erect a small log building with pegged benches as a place for community Christians to worship. Some of the leaders of this early 20-25 church were Isham Locklear, Preston Locklear, William Locklear, Littleton Locklear, Elias Locklear, and Richard Chavis.

Most of the people in the area were farmers who owned their own lands. Meat was raised; gardens were grown; sugar cane was processed into syrup and wheat and rice were gathered. A few men found it necessary to travel to Georgia for work "dipping" turpentine. As is true in many rural areas church life and social life were often the same. Box suppers and harvest days allowed for fellowship and the raising of necessary church funds.

Before the first year was over another church building was erected due to the growing congregation. This one room log structure with a high fireplace served the community as church and school. This building was destroyed by fire. (It is at this time that the name of Rev. William L. Moore began to appear in the church records.) In September of 1887, a two acre tract was deeded from S.R. and Martha Townsend for a cemetery.

In 1895, a third church building was constructed to replace the previous fire destroyed structure which had served the community for almost ten years. This was another one room building of 1,350 square feet with a large heater to reduce the likelihood of another fire.

In 1946, the congregation's size demanded yet a fourth building drive. This 7,482 square foot structure was designed to seat approximately 250 adults in its sanctuary. The congregation's first modern brick church as to consist of a sanctuary, eight classrooms, restrooms, office and other storage space. As the building was being built the existing church as moved beside the new church until the basement could be finished. This basement was used for worship until the sanctuary was completed. (Later, Luther W. Moore bought

the older building and moved it across the road behind Moore's Chain Saw.) During its construction, the church ladies prepared food to nourish the men who were doing the building. Each year's Harvest Day was an important event when loads of corn, bales of cotton, potatoes and other goods were donated and sold to produce the necessary building funds. This particular building housed the church's first stained glass windows illustrating the life of Christ. Various families purchased these special windows in memory or in honor of other family members. Now that an adequate, up-to-date church building was in place the church could turn its attention to other important building concerns.

The Prospect community has always taken a great interest in educational concerns and spiritual education was not going to be neglected. In 1961, three acres of land which was the former site of Prospect High School were purchased from the Robeson County Board of Education. On this land a new youth education building was erected. Almost the same size as the church itself, this new brick building had 13 classrooms, two offices, a utility room and restrooms. In 1970, a 2,428 square feet fellowship hall and kitchen were built to enhance the active social activities of this energetic Christian community. Approximately 1,680 square feet consisting of three more classrooms and another office were constructed in 1976 to connect the sanctuary with the education building.

Currently, the church is in a new phase of physical growth. The church is to acquire a new sanctuary, its first specifically designed music room, a chapel; and the existing fellowship hall is undergoing needed renovations. In order to initiate the new project a special ground breaking ceremony was held on May 17, 1987. Members of the congregation "broke" the land in the shape of a cross by manually pulling a plow through the earth.

It had long been the dream of the church to have its own parsonage and in 1976, land was purchased for this purpose. Due to other activities, however, this project was delayed. On July 20, 1987, the church was fortunate enough to be able to acquire a pre-existing home to serve as the parsonage and were able to sell the land that had been designed for this project back to its former owner .

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Although Sunday School classes were held in the late 1800's, formal classes according to age levels were not initiated until the 1940's, when five separate classes were formed: the Card Class (3-4 year olds), the Primary Class (5-9 year olds), the Junior Class (10-15 year olds), the Intermediate Class (15-20 year olds), the Adult Class (adult men), and the Senior Class (adult women). By the early 1950's, a further division was made into three distinct groups - Children, Youth, and Adult. These divisions seem to follow the growth in Sunday School enrollment. From an

average membership of 100 in 1920, the church now boasts a 609 membership enrollment.

The literature used in the classes has always been from the Methodist Publishing House. However, the 1940's cost of \$12.05 per quarter has risen to 1987's \$1,448.19 per quarter.

Children's Day has become an annual event of the Sunday School program as well as the entire church picnic. A gospel sing which invites other churches to participate is also sponsored by the Sunday School.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Methodist women have always been an active part of church life. In the early 1900's, the women were organized into the Ladies Aid Society. Their special function was to aid the church in fundraising projects through Box Suppers and the sale of various farm product such as eggs and butter. Many of the niceties that added to the church activities were bought with these funds - such as communion linens and curtains for the pulpit windows.

In 1930, the Women's Society of Christian Service was formed. They continued the special fundraising efforts of the Ladies Aid Society by purchasing a communion set for the church and carpeting the sanctuary. Community service became a part of the women's organization at this time as they reached out to help needy community families. By 1972, with the advent of the United Methodist Women's organization, community service had become a major objective for these church women. Members began to broaden the scope of their social concerns as they attended district and national conventions and planning sessions where they often served as official delegates and/or officers. Local community projects grew to include a tape ministry for shut-ins (1977), a rest home ministry for the elderly (1979), "The Lord's Pantry" (1982), which serves food to needy families and special services for pre-release prisoners (1983). It is through projects like these that the Methodist Women have helped to aid and strengthen the growth of the church community.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Children are always an important part of any family and the church family is no exception. as early as 1926, the church began special youth instruction in the form of Vacation Bible School. Four years later, with the help of Marion Davidson from Bedford, Pa. and Louise Corsein from Clarion, Iowa, the Epworth League was formed in order to involve the church youth more fully into church life. By 1953, the first United Methodist Youth Fellowship was begun. One of their first projects was to help with the church's on-going renovations. Later projects expanded into fundraising efforts like car washes and hot dog sales. In an effort to incorporate youth into the broader church community, young people were attending district and state conferences by early 1973.

In the last ten years the United Methodist Youth

Fellowship has become ever more active. Added to the traditional fundraisers of car washes and hot dog sales has been a rock-a-thon for area youth. These monies were used to contribute to the Youth Service Fund and to attend youth rallies and conferences. In 1984, the youth performed the musical "The Runaway". It is through programs and projects like these that hopes to mold today's youth into its Christian future.

WORSHIP SERVICE

The heart of any church program is its Sunday Worship Service. As the church grew so did the elaborateness of this traditional service. In its early history a typical church service consisted of an altar prayer followed by a song and the collection of the church offering. Then a love feast and communion preceded the sermon, which was followed by the benediction and a final hymn. These hymns were sung acapella with only a tuning fork to locate the beginning note. In 1938, the church's first piano enriched the "joyful noise" and added to the parishioners singing pleasure. (A strong music program, in fact, seems to be one of the major factors that contributed to strong, steady church growth.)

Today's worship service is a rich blend of song and spoken word, of leadership and participation. From the opening prelude to the closing postlude, there are efforts to incorporate all members of the church community into being active participation, not passive observers in God's praise.

One of the church's strongest ministries is its revival program. Revivals (or Big Meetings as they were once called) were held, at first, in the summertime during the day. By the late 1930's or 1940's, however, the advent of electricity allowed these special services to be held at night. Generally, they were planned to cover a full seven-day week. In the 1960's, Religious *emphasis Week was organized during which a religious service was held daily with the local high school students. This tradition is still carried on today with the local junior high school and is scheduled to coincide with the church's spring revival. The Anderson Scholarship Fund was an outgrowth of these youth oriented services and was instituted to assist people who are pursuing church vocations.

Other special programs include Christmas and Easter activities which were begun around 1935, and are still anticipated eagerly each year. A junior worship service was begun in 1974 for children from kindergarten to fourth grade. Its purpose was to help the church youth learn more about being a Methodist through sermons, games, tapes, music and other activities. A similar program, begun very recently (1987), is aimed at providing religious instruction for pre-schoolers of two-four years of age. Combined with the church's nursery which opened in 1964, to allow parents to more fully participate in the Sunday Service, these youth oriented programs and other special services seek to fulfill the spiritual needs of the church's members and to more

closely unite them into close Christian Communion.

INFLUENCES OF MISSIONARY WORKERS

Marion Davidson and Louise Coursein were two missionaries who greatly helped the growth and organization of the church. From 1930 to 1935 these ladies were an integral part of the community. They visited in the area to encourage church attendance and helped greatly with the women's organizations and projects in particular. Ms. Davidson even carried a small organ from house to house as a means of inviting people to participate in Christian activities.

A scholarship fund to aid young people interested in church work and the Christian Workers' School held by the Conference Council on Ministries helped to train religious leaders for the church community.

Others outside the local community aided in church growth. A volunteer teacher, for example, helped operate a kindergarten school during the summer of 1964. It has been through efforts like these that the church has maintained a strong and vital link with other Christian communities. Perhaps it is ties like these which kept the church connected to the Methodist Episcopal Conference - now the United Methodist Church - when others splintered off to form the Lumber River Holiness Methodist Conference in 1900.

MAIN SERVICE/SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECTS

Since 1932, when Mary Lee Goins and Carrie M. Dial did mission work in Iowa and Pennsylvania, Prospect United Methodist Church has gladly assumed its role in the broad spectrum of man's Christian and human concerns. Their contributions since 1962 have been consistent and strong. Among these accomplishments are several firsts:

- 1932 Mary Lee Goins and Carrie M. Dial did mission work for six weeks in Iowa and Pennsylvania
- 1962- Emma Lee Locklear was a US-2 from Prospect who served in other states. Probably the first Native American US-2 in the nation.
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- 1963 Helped in forming the Pembroke Community Welfare fund.
- 1964 Prospect UMC made a contribution to assist in the building of a chapel at the Lumberton Unit of the Department of Corrections.
- 1973 Emergency Aid Fund Established for the needy. Later it was named the Rev. Harvey Lowry Memorial Emergency Fund.

- 1979 Prospect UMC began a prison ministry at Wagram under the sponsorship of the United Methodist Men.
- 1979 Prospect UMC began a rest home ministry at Green Manor, continued now at Sampson Rest Home under the sponsorship of the United Methodist Women.
- 1979 Harold D. Jacobs was the first UM Native American Diaconal Minister in both Christian Education and Music to serve full-time.
- 1979-87 Musical groups of Prospect toured in and out of state under the direction of Harold D. Jacobs.
- 1980 Kenneth Wayne Locklear of Prospect answered the call to preach.
- 1983 Prospect UMC and Prospect Volunteer Fire Department provided religious leadership monthly at Hickory Grove UMC in Clio, SC
- 1983 Hunger Human Need Fund granted and established at Prospect for the needy.
- 1983 Rev. Bill James Locklear became the first Lumbee who grew up in the UMC to finish seminar and be ordained.
- 1983 Prospect UMC helped organize a Prospect softball league.
- 1984 The Friend in Court Justice Project of the Rural Advancement Fund Inc. was organized under the spearheading of Luther Harbert Moore and Rev. Robert Lee Mangum from Prospect.
- 1985 Prospect UMC assumed pastoral administrative responsibilities for Hickory Grove. Quarterly, Rev. Mangum conducts Holy Communion, Baptisms and reception into membership. Rev. Bruce Locklear, who attended Prospect UMC, continues to serve as pastor of Hickory Grove UMC.
- 1985 Prospect UMC helped bring about Little League and the Tar Heel League to the community for children and youth.
- 1986 Colette Dial went to Florida to work with the Seminoles under the SEJANAM project for the summer.
- 1986 Vicky Bullard, a former member of the Sunday school at Prospect, is a student pastor at Lighthouse UMC.
- 1987 Hickory Grove and Fairview will become a charge and will no longer be attached to Prospect UMC. Rev.

Mangum will be the counseling elder.

1987 Three students have received grants from the SEJANAM for summer work.
Christina Locklear, Branch Street UMC, Lumberton, NC.
Tina Jones, Cherokee, NC.
Lisa Locklear, Sandy Plains UMC, Pembroke, NC.

INFLUENCE OF NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS

Being a part of the Native American community has always been a special blessing and a special responsibility for the members of the Prospect United Methodist Church. The church has addressed these issues throughout its history. Three of its most recent accomplishments are:

- A. Adolph L. Dial was chairperson and the Rev. Robert Lee Mangum spearleader of the tri-racial task to organize the Robeson County Church and Community Center (RCCC). The task force was formed in 1968 and the RCCC was established in 1969. The center came from the Native American community, and continues to grow with a satellite ministry in Maxton, NC. and Clio, SC.
- B. The Southeastern Jurisdictional Association for Native American Ministries finally was established in 1984, under the endorsement of the Jurisdictional Conference. It was conceived and established under Lumbee leadership to meet the needs of the 130,000 Native Americans of the nine southeastern states. Rev. Simeon F. Cummings, a Lumbee and a former pastor of Prospect United Methodist Church, is the first director of the organization. Rev. Cummings began his tenure in 1985, and is continuing in that position.
- C. The Native American Caucus of the N. C. Conference under the chair of Luther Harbert Moore, urgently sought the appointment of a Native American District Superintendent in 1983. Though denied, a Native American assistant to the cabinet position was established. Rev. Simeon F. Cummings was appointed to that position in 1983, and remains in that part-time capacity. An American Concerns Committee was also established in 1983, and continues as a result of the caucus efforts.

SUMMATION

From its small beginnings, the Prospect United Methodist Church has managed to grow into a thriving Christian community that serves not only its own membership, but the larger Methodist community of which it is a part. Its history demonstrates the positive influences that a church

can achieve when it reaches out to form vital links with the surrounding communities in its quest to grow in Christian service and fellowship.