

A  
HISTORY AND COMMENTARY  
OF  
ROSELAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

The year 1976 marked the 200th birthday of the United States of America and through the interest engendered by the many celebrations of this important milestone, underlined the importance of keeping records while the facts are known firsthand. Such a thought sparked the interest in recording the beginnings of Roseland United Methodist Church which is still in its childhood, so to speak. Several of the charter members are still very active in the activities of the church, and it was through conversations with them that the writer obtained the basis for this history. Since our membership is so small, it can be truly said that we all had a hand in this work, but it has been such a pleasure and such a learning experience that we can say it was a joyful activity, rather than a job.

To all who read this, be it a year from now, twenty years from now or maybe even during the Tri-Centennial celebration of America's birthday, may you see in the story of Roseland the spirit of Christ, who came that we might have Life - and have it more Abundantly. We pray that the warmth, the friendship and the loving-kindness that is a part of us now will grow and bud and blossom with a perfume that permeates our lives and the lives of those round about us that through this church this part of God's world will be made more nearly as He planned it.

Catherine Blue Robeson

October 20, 1976

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the area surrounding the spot on which Roseland United Methodist Church is now located was a lonesome land of long-leaf pines and black-jack oaks. Owned principally by a turpentine and lumber company, it knew the sight of the turpentine pans attached to the gashed trunks of the towering pines and the sound of the lumberman's saw and axe.

During this period, a traveler from the North passed this way and saw the potential for a resort, for the pine trees, sandy soil and mild climate combined was thought to be a very healthful environment and would attract people from the colder climates, especially.

The land was bought from the turpentine company, plans drawn for a village and lots were sold. A railroad was built with the depot located on the lot now occupied by the Charlie Logwood home....but financial problems arose and with other complications, the dream began to fade and before many years had passed, Roseland was a "ghost" town.

In the meantime, farmers to the west had become interested in growing tobacco and hearing how the soil in the Sandhills was so easily tilled compared to their clay and rocks, and how the tobacco weed produced such a fine smoking tobacco when grown here, the news of available acreage brought several of them here with their families to make their homes.

One of these families was that of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. (Chine) Morton, whose son, Ralph, tells the following:

At the time his family moved to Roseland, March 20, 1912, the Methodist Church, M. E. North, was operating a weekly Sunday School in the old Roseland depot of the Moore County Railroad. At this time, the rails had been removed and this later became the Aberdeen-Roseland road.

This Sunday School was operated under the supervision of Mr. and Mrs. George Wells. Mr. Wells was the representative of all the absent landowners of the town of Roseland. The Wells were very interested in every phase of public life at Roseland, and this consisted mainly of the Sunday School and the public school which was known as the Roseland 4th District School. The depot was the property of a Mr. Howell who had used it for a barn, and the school house stood on the two lots located behind the present Gerald Kirk home. The great forest fire of April 1963 burned the old school building to the ground, the old depot, and a house located behind the depot in which Mrs. Zilphia Evans made her home.

Mr. Morton recalls that one of the early school teachers was Mrs. Bertha McLeod and that she roomed and boarded with the Wells.

Preaching was conducted by various available Methodist preachers at both the depot and the school house. These preachers were located by Mr. Wells and paid by a collection taken up at the services. Among those early preachers was the grandfather of Curtis Lawhon, a current resident of Aberdeen. The Reverend Lawhon was an early settler in Moore County and is well known to historians of that era.

Another well remembered preacher was an ex-missionary by the name of John Gillespie, who was followed by a Reverend Dennis, a minister from Troy.

As time passed, the Sunday School and Church came under the supervision of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Sunday School was held on a regular basis, with Ralph's mother, Mrs. Anna Morton, and Mrs. Emma Ferguson as leaders. One young girl, Maxie Cook, who is still a very active member, was teacher of the children's class when she became the bride of her neighborhood sweetheart, Lane Kirk.

About this time, Ralph Morton left for a career with the armed services, but he says his mother always kept him informed of the church activities, soliciting his monetary support. She never faltered in her devotion to the church and was rather unusual for a

woman in her day in that she quite often offered the principal prayer at the Sunday School hour.

(After serving in World War II and the Korean Conflict, along with several other assignments, Ralph, his wife, Ethel, and their children retired from the Army and came home to Roseland where they are today.)

By the early thirties, the minister at Page Memorial Methodist Church in Aberdeen was conducting the services at Roseland, mostly on Sunday afternoons. Several of the families had their membership at Page Memorial; but in those days, transportation was hard to come by and for many, foot power was the only kind available, so services held in the old school house were attended by the whole neighborhood. The Drew Cooks were Quakers, originally from Surrey County; the Kirks all were Methodist; the Claytons were Baptist, as were the Shavers and Stancils. The Mauneys, Mortons, and Lowders were Methodist. Others came during the years, but these families and their descendants remain active in the church today.

When the decision was made to build a church, many were the hands that helped. Throughout the project, Page Memorial Church stood behind it with their aid and encouragement. Reverend S. J. Starnes was pastor during the years the church was being built. All the lumber used in the construction was donated by the members. Mrs. W. T. Kirk, who was a great worker in the church but never moved her membership here (she was a Baptist), claimed the honor of helping to saw the first tree to be felled for the church building. All the work was done by the people in the community except for the brick work which was done by a contractor, Mr. Ray Lampley.

To obtain money for the materials which had to be purchased, the women served many, many suppers to the Lions Clubs from neighboring towns and other civic organizations and in this work, Mrs. Lottie Lowder was a never-tiring force. She also collected money by making little birthday aprons which she mailed to friends, asking them to contribute pennies for their waist measurements. Among others at this time who gave

so freely of their prayers, presence, tithes and service were Mrs. Cora Kirk, Mrs. Nola Clayton, Mr. Harve Kirk, Mrs. John Stancil, and Mr. and Mrs. John Kirk.

Beginning with \$4000 in money and materials, with the Duke Endowment Fund supplying a matching amount, the church was constructed to a usable point in the summer of 1939, and a revival was held in the new building in the fall.

This revival was held in connection with the formal organization of the Roseland Methodist Church, and those joining by profession of faith and those who brought their membership from Page Memorial Church became the Charter Members. Mrs. Gertrude Woodard Stancil, who had come a few years before from Wilson County as the bride of Clifton Stancil, was one of the adults who joined on profession of faith, while her husband came from a Baptist church. She says being part of this church in the early days was an inspiration to her. In the working together as well as in the accomplishment, she felt the warmth and love of people all interested in serving their Master by helping one another. She became one of the teachers of the children's class and later on was MYF counselor, also directing and producing some fine Christmas pageants, making the costumes as well.

Barney Kirk was elected as the first Sunday School Superintendent; and his mother, Mrs. Mae Kirk, along with Mrs. Mamie Ferguson, took turns playing the old organ which had also been used in the school house. As cold weather came on, heat was provided by wood heaters. One was placed in the sanctuary and one was placed in the hallway to warm the three Sunday School rooms. Someone remembers that Marvin Hartsell kept these fires going much of the time.

The land on which the church stands was donated by Mr. Drew Cook; and as it turned out, his was the first funeral held in the church. Mrs. Mamie Ferguson Humphries remembers that her first husband, John Ferguson, went to build a fire to warm the church for Mr. Cook's funeral and slipped and fell on the icy steps, fracturing his ribs and being laid up for three weeks. About six weeks later, Mrs. Cook passed

away. Neither had become a member on the rollbook at Roseland, but in spirit and action they were members indeed.

Soon after the church was organized, pews were obtained from a church near Lillington which was no longer holding services. Driving a truck belonging to his father, John Kirk, Barney Kirk hauled them up here where they were used until 1949 when the present pews were purchased. The sub-flooring had been used up to this point when flooring was laid and finished, wainscoting and seal-o-tex were put on the walls and ceiling, and all the wood work painted. This was a time of great rejoicing when the church was pronounced completed and plans were made for the dedication. This occasion took place on Sunday, September 24, 1950, with appropriate ceremonies conducted by now District Superintendent W. C. Ball who had been with the congregation during the early years and now helped them celebrate the finish of this particular undertaking.

The story of how a particular church came to be is always filled with a host of memorable happenings, none more treasured than those of weddings. Roseland has had many, and the first of these took place a year before the building was completed when Peggy Brown, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Worth Brown became the bride of J. C. Comer. Hers was one of beauty as they all are. Some twenty years later, after her father had been dead for several years, she witnessed the second marriage of her mother, Ozie, to John Cowan. The Browns had been sturdy supporters of the church all the while, and the Cowans continue this.

During the late forties, neighboring Deep Creek Baptist suffered a temporary suspension of services due to several reasons, and Roseland was pleased to have several of those families come to worship here while their difficulties were ironed out and their church moved to a new location.

The ministers who have come this way have each brought special talents which have served to broaden and enrich the church life here. Reverend W. A. Tew was here in the early fifties, and he and his wife

were diligent workers, Since this is a rural church, he encouraged Roseland to enter a rural church of the year contest. Although ours was not the winner, many improvements were begun and an inspiring service on farm life was held. It was also about 1952 when the women of the church became interested in having a Womens Society of Christian Service, and Mrs. Tew helped with the organization of the Roseland WSCS. Mrs. W. R. Robeson, Jr. (Catherine) was elected the first president, and the first regular meeting took place in the home of Mrs. Mamie Ferguson. That began the life of an arm of the church which is more alive and important as the years go by. It is an especial fellowship of Christian closeness for the women involved and a frame work within which many worthwhile things have been accomplished.

A few years later, Mr. J. E. Sponenberg came to be our pastor. It was while he was here that William M. Kirk (Buck) recalls one of those happenings that serve to bring a smile to church people.

While Mr. Sponenberg was pastor in our church, he had announced a hymn for the congregation to sing. Our faithful pianist, Mrs. Evelyn Hartsell, was playing for us when all of a sudden a mouse ran out from or behind the piano. It looked as though it came out of the top of the piano. The mouse ran out into the aisle, startling about four girls who were seated near the front of the church. It then proceeded down the aisle and suddenly stopped. By this time, the four girls were leaning all the way back in their pews. Suddenly, the mouse took a round-about position and went into a heat vent. Mrs. Hartsell never missed a note, neither did the girls, nor any member of the congregation. Mr. Sponenberg made the statement that he had heard a lot of pianists in his time, and he had heard them perform beautifully, but he had never seen a pianist who could make a mouse come out of a piano.

The Methodist Youth Fellowship has had an important part in the life at Roseland Church, too . At present, it is inactive. With a very small membership there are bound to be periods when youth in this age group are too few, but many have memories of this fellowship, and Brenda Robeson McFarland says:



MYF always meant plenty of good times. There were quite a few kids from all over the community and we would get together and play softball and basketball, go on long hayrides, ride to Rockingham for bowling, go caroling at Christmas, plus having our regular meetings. Even traveling to Sub-District meetings and each group performing some kind of skit - that was always exciting. Many times we brought home the banner for having the largest attendance. The leaders I remember were Don Nagel ( a ministerial student) and Zane and Mildred Burns. Don taught us quite a few crazy songs and could he play the piano!

Christmas has always been a joyful time in the Roseland Church as it should be. Beautiful pageants have been presented many, many times and it has been proven that where there is a will there is a way to have fun and fellowship in a church with limited space and small numbers. Because we believed that our heavenly father approved, Santa Claus came to our Church parties and brought gifts and goodies and the spirit of love for all. Eventually, we were able to use the Rose-Ridge Community House for these parties; and in the Sanctuary a . beautifully reverent worship service for Christmas was planned for several years by Carol Deane Joyce.

During the early sixties, Reverend Brooks Patten was our minister. He probably remembers the Roseland Charge as one with much sadness. While he was here, two of our beloved members died within a few months. Mrs. Barney Kirk (Irene) and Lane Kirk. Also, in April 1963 a terrible forest fire began a few miles southeast of West End and swept through the Roseland community and on through Pinebluff. Two homes were lost in Roseland, that of Mr. W. C. Morton and a house occupied by Mrs. Zilphia Evans. Much property was lost, and it took many years for the blackened landscape to recover but not a life was lost or a serious injury occurred for which all thanked God. Reverend Patten was out of town that day and when he returned that night he immediately came to Roseland and each family recalls with gratitude his concern as he visited each one.

Churches are made of people, and when they move on some are especially remembered. Barbara Kirk says:

I remember Billy and Betty Cole, Kathleen and Ricky. They were devoted members at Roseland Methodist Church when our family started attending services here. We lost their fellowship when Billy's work carried him and his family to Inman, S. C. Billy taught Sunday School classes and was Superintendent a number of times; Betty taught the Nursery for many years, and Ricky and Kathleen were always at Sunday School and Church every Sunday. The small church they found in South Carolina is fortunate to have such a fine Christian family. We miss them, but they have often returned to Roseland and attended services here.

Reverend and Mrs. Robert Jerome came here about 1969 and left especially lasting memories. Forrest Kirk has this to say about Mr. Jerome:

Ricky Sheffield and I were the first two Boy Scouts to receive The God and Country Award from our church. We were very fortunate to have Mr. Robert Jerome to work with us in this endeavor. He spent many hours working with us, and we developed a personal pastor-teenager relationship that I shall never forget. Mr. Jerome instilled within me an everlasting desire to live a moral and Christian life. To me, he was the finest pastor Roseland United Methodist Church has had, and I shall remember him throughout my life.

Mr. Jerome did not live to present Forrest and Ricky their God and Country Award. In early December 1971, during one of the worst snowstorms in recent years, Mr. Jerome was on his way to a meeting in Southern Pines when his car skidded into the path of an oncoming truck and he was killed instantly. His death cast a pall over all during the holiday season, but the one bright spot in it all was the almost saintly example Mrs. Jean Jerome gave us in meeting her tragedy. Mrs. Jerome wore a lovely red suit (because Robert liked it) to his funeral service. She comforted us all and afterward she agreed to help the supply pastor finish out her husband's work, which she did beautifully

and efficiently, afterward moving to the home she and her husband had prepared for retirement in Smithfield.

It wasn't so very many years after the Roseland Church was dedicated that interest in expanding the facilities occurred and it soon took the form of establishing a building fund with discussions concerning what and how to do it taking place every now and then. The first Sunday in each month was designated as building fund Sunday, and the funds collected were placed in the Aberdeen Savings and Loan until such time as we felt actual building could begin. Since planning the first building, life in Roseland had undergone a great deal of change. Then it was a total farming community. Now, not a member of the church relied entirely on farming for their livelihood. With perhaps quite a bit more actual money to give, time to give was very limited and this had to be considered in the planning. In the winter of 1974, Buck Kirk made a suggestion that a meeting be held to discuss further plans. With one person in each family being asked to attend, the group met at Mrs. Everett (Freeda) Sheffield's home one night. At this meeting, Jesse Joyce was named building committee chairman with Buck Kirk as vice-chairman and Edward Baker as treasurer.

Jesse Joyce drew a plan of what he considered practical and possible and met with each family to discuss his proposals and to ask for their reactions. His proposals were deemed good and all agreed to support him with hands and finances. Being a versatile young man, Jesse laid the cinder blocks for the walls and oversaw the carpentry. He was assisted in this work after working hours during the week, and on Saturdays when weather permitted by Buck Kirk, Forrest Kirk, Edward Baker, Ed Baker, Ricky Sheffield, Clifton Stancil, Joel Stancil, James Stancil, Bill Robeson, Lindsay Robeson, Jon Agic, and Marvin Hartsell. These men and boys put on the roof and did the electric wiring and installed the heating and plumbing. The brick work, including a lovely fireplace, was hired along with stippling of the ceiling and a few other jobs. This building is not completed yet but is expected to be by the end of 1976,

Reverend Wilbur I. Jackson came in 1972 to fill the vacancy left by Reverend Jerome and soon won the hearts of us all with his boyish good

looks, his boundless enthusiasm for Christ and his beautiful singing voice. With his wife, Myra, and their three young children, he entered the life of the community and encouraged us as we began the fellowship building. With a completion date of Fall, 1976, in sight, he made plans for the formal dedication of the new building and it was with a sad heart that the congregation learned at annual conference that the Jacksons would be moving on to Burlington in July.

Wishing him well always and thankful for the four fine years he spent with us, we bade him farewell with a dinner in the partially completed fellowship hall, and the next Sunday, welcomed our present pastor, Reverend Ray Sparrow, whom we have already grown to love and appreciate.

This is October 1976 and in writing this little story about 64 years have been covered. In asking for remembrances about Roseland, we found that it has been a vital force in this community from its beginning. People who have put themselves into its life have left their imprint on others. Christy Robeson Agic remembers being in a class taught by Freeda Sheffield, what a good teacher she was and how the class invited the whole church to go with them on a picnic to Morrow Mountain. As did the rest of the children she so looked forward to annual summer picnics at Pinebluff Lake.

Linda Baker Fogleman taught the primary class one year, and during that time her pupils sold church napkins enough to buy new collection plates. The interior of the sanctuary had undergone a complete face lifting that year, new wall paneling, new suspended ceiling, new red carpet; and in December, a few days before Christmas, Linda became the bride of Dean Fogleman in a beautiful wedding in the sanctuary looking its best.

The smallest children remember Easter egg hunts and Christmas parties and vacation bible school. The older young people remember how it rained at their weddings and how the groom could not get the ring on her finger and the fun of having laughed and played together. As the years go by others remember how blessed they felt when their children took for them

selves the vows of church membership, when they saw young parents present their babies for christening, and when someone who had seemed so disinterested for so long took up the cause of Christ and renewed their church activity again.

This account has been written because there are still several charter members in this community and it seemed good to get facts from those who were here from the beginning and those first years are always interesting for those who come later.

We also feel that with the completion of the fellowship hall in a few months that Roseland will be embarking on a new phase in its service to the people in the community. The membership is looking forward to a fuller church life with activities that are hoped will enrich many lives in many ways.

As America, our country, embarks on its new century, the 300th, Roseland United Methodist Church, too, embarks on a new day. It is hoped that as time continues to go by every one who comes here will say with Martha Dunn and Betty Dunn Stubbs - "when I think of Roseland United Methodist Church, I think of the people there, their warmth, friendship, their loving-kindness".