

SHORT HISTORY OF ROSEMARY METHODIST CHURCH  
Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina  
November 21, 1971

In 1902 under the leadership of Rev. E. R. Welsh, pastor of the Roanoke Rapids Methodist Church (now First Methodist Church) a small group of people banded themselves together to organize the Rosemary Methodist Church.

For several months after the organization of this church group, a meeting place was shared with the Rosemary Baptist Church, which, too, was in its infancy. The first church building was built largely by donations from the mills and from individuals outside of the Methodist and Baptist groups. In 1903 the Methodist group built a new church on the corner of Eleventh and Henry Streets. This frame building was used until 1908 when it was destroyed by fire. The congregation went to work immediately to build another house of worship. A new site was chosen and a frame building was erected on the corner of Tenth and Jackson Streets. A number of years later four Church School classrooms were added to the building.

For a number of years after the church was organized, it was under the supervision of the First Methodist Church. At the Annual Conference in 1915, Rosemary, along with Smith and New Hope, was taken from First Church to form the Rosemary Charge with Rev. R. F. Taylor as the first pastor of this new charge. This combination was retained until 1940, when Rosemary became an independent station. A parsonage was erected on the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets in 1918.

The church membership and Church School enrollment continued to grow, so early in 1949 under the leadership of Rev. W. R. Stevens, the construction of a new church building of modified Gothic design was begun on the corner of Nineth and Jackson Streets. The corner stone was laid February 26, 1950 with Bishop W. W. Peele present. The congregation at that time adopted the pay-as-you-go plan, but later, due to the overcrowded conditions, decided to secure a loan which enabled the church to be completed much quicker. The church was completed under the leadership of Rev. C. J. Andrews and the first service was held April 6, 1952. The formal opening of the new church was held September 7, 1952, commemorating the 50th Anniversary and Homecoming. Bishop Peele, W. R. Stevens, and Pastor C. J. Andrews, were among the ministers present.

In the fall of 1956 the Official Board decided to purchase the adjoining property on Jackson Street for future expansion.

The Christmas of 1956 was especially happy, because at that time, under the leadership of Rev. Leslie L. Parrish the church debt was paid. The congregation had worked long and hard to fulfill this dream. Many friends outside the congregation also made generous contributions.

The first Methodist Men's Club on the District was organized at Rosemary.

On January 7, 1962 a ground-breaking service was held for an addition to our Church School Building. Rev. W. A. Tew was pastor at that time. The educational building was completed January, 1963. Rev. R. H. Eason was serving as pastor.

The summer of 1970 a beautiful new parsonage was acquired at 625 Jackson Street, after occupying the old one for fifty-two years. Rev. L. P. Jackson was pastor. Also the spring of 1970 a recreation building was set up by the men of the church, from an old business building, half a block from the church, especially for our youth.

That same summer, 1970, Dr. and Mrs. M. A. Garriss of Rosemary Church, donated a tract of land just under 20 acres, on the shores of Roanoke Lake. The men of the church have cleared the woods for a recreation area, and built a large open shelter, with fireplace and barbecue pit.

The present church membership is 850.

The people of Rosemary Church consider it to be one of their highest privileges to be host to the 1971 Rocky Mount District Conference, with the Rev. Paul Carruth, District Superintendent, presiding.