

HISTORY OF  
*Sanders Chapel United Methodist Church*

Route 2, Smithfield, North Carolina  
1860-70 TO 1979



Route 2, Box 131 Smithfield, North Carolina

Submitted by: Mrs. Claude Hill, Jr.  
Church Historian



Mrs. Claude Hill, Jr.  
(Leona E. Hill)  
Written 1974

### SANDERS CHAPEL CHURCH HISTORY

According to an article written by the late Mrs. John K. Sanders (Delia Woodall) around 1950, Sanders Chapel Church was started around 1860-1870.

Mr. Claudius Brock Sanders, a native of Smithfield, bought a tract of land from Mr. Ashley Powell and moved there to make his home. Since there was no place of worship in the community Mr. Sanders proceeded to build a small plank chapel about 25 feet wide and 35 feet long for this purpose. This building had three windows on each side and one in back behind the pulpit. In front were two doors (double) and long plank steps for entering and leaving.

This building stood across the road and in front of the present church building and the front corner was near the large oak which now stands to the left of the entrance to the yard across the road.

The pulpit was a boxed-in type with three rows of open backed benches on each side. Usually the stewards and church officials sat on these. On each side of the main part of the chapel was a row of open-back benches about 8 feet long. The men sat on the right side and the ladies sat on the left of the entrance. It was very unusual for a man and his wife to sit together.

Mr. Sanders dedicated his church to his wife, Zillah Whitley Sanders, and her sister, Obedience Whitley Smith, and it was called Sanders Chapel. Immediately a Sunday School was organized and regular church services were held. They welcomed all denominations to hold services there if they wished.

Mr. John Smith, husband of Obedience Smith, was the first Sunday School Superintendent and he held this office for many years. After him came Messers. Kiah Peterson, Luther Peterson, Edgar Woodall, Mrs. Alph Sasser, Adin Fowell, etc.

Pastors serving the chapel about this time were: Reverends Thomas, Smoot, Whitaker, Herman, Tynalson, Brickhouse, Puckett, etc.

(I forgot to mention earlier that Mr. Sanders gave one-half acre of land with this first building.)

When Rev. Puckett was pastor about 1890 the congregation decided to build a new and larger building. The membership at that time had reached between 100 and 125 members. Mr. Sam Godwin had lost his home by fire so the little chapel was sold to him for a dwelling, but the price is undertermined at this time.

It was decided to build across the road in front of the old chapel. This land was given by Mrs. Elizabeth (Bettie) Sanders Smith, daughter of Claudius Sanders and the mother of two of our present members, Mmes. Robert Hill and J. B. Talton. The old church ground was used to park horse-drawn vehicles. Our present church stands on this latter site.

The pulpit of this new church was in front of the church with a door on each side of it. There was also a door in the back center mostly used by women with small children going in or out so as not to disturb the congregation. The lumber for this building was bought from a negro, Bryant Alford. His mill was two or three miles away from the location and so it was necessary to haul the logs to the mill for sawing and then to the site for use. John K. Sanders, son of Claudius Sanders, used his

log cart pulled by a yoke of oxen to do this and donated this as a part in helping construct a new church. Mr. W. A. Smith was the foreman of this task with members giving work and money as needed and convenient.

No steeple was put on this building but after a few years the need and desire for a bell to remind the community of the many activities at the church was realized. Mr. John K. Sanders who lived quite a distance away went out and secured donations and a bell was purchased. The bell then needed a place, so a steeple on top of an entrance hall and two small rooms (one each side) were added next to the road. At this time the pulpit was moved to the back, and two stained glass windows were installed in memory of Mrs. Zillah Whitley Sanders and her sister Mrs. Obedience Whitley Smith. These beautiful windows still occupy places in back of the pulpit and behind the raised choir loft. A piano was purchased about this time and seats with solid backs were installed.

Some of the pastors serving after Rev. Puckett were: Reverends Poole, Johnson, Jenkins, Proctor, Daniels, Russell, Watson, Jenkins, Glenn, Herman, and Dodd. Reverend Puckett served at two different times of four years each.

In 1927 or 1928 more space was needed again. Some were for this being in the form of a new building while others wanted additions so wings containing two rooms each were added to each side. Sliding walls were put next to the sanctuary so they could be opened for services when needed. A Mr. Worley of Selma was foreman and Claude Hill, Jr. helped with the work. Reverend E. D. Dodd was pastor at that time.

(This ends the excerpts chosen from article by Mrs. Sanders.)

This building was used until around 1939 or 1940 when an educational building containing four rooms and a hallway upstairs and three large rooms and a hall downstairs was built at the back of the church. The choir loft was reorganized at this time also. Rev. Johnny Joyce was pastor and was honored by later having a class named for him.

Funds for a new chapel were begun being raised while Rev. Johnny Green was pastor, and his wife helped to organize a new Woman's Society for Christian Service. Mrs. Jim Creech (Nellie) was the first president and Mrs. L. F. Barnes was secretary. We sponsored Harvest Sales, etc. to earn money. Some had God's Acres and gave what they produced to this fund. When Rev. John Mitchell was pastor, we went to church and Sunday School in the Pomona-Creech Club House and began to work on our new chapel.

This new chapel was completed around 1961. It has a full basement containing a kitchen with refrigerator, stove, running water (hot and cold), cabinets, 14 sets of dishes each containing service for eight, and a huge amount of stainless steel silverware. We have a 30 cup electric coffee maker that is useful for church suppers and gatherings. At this time we do not have the basement ceiled overhead but it is our aim to do this soon.

Seats and stained glass windows were donated by dedicated members and friends. Green carpet covers the floor.

The first marriage performed in our new church was that of Miss Bettie (Elizabeth) Talton and Mr. William Wright Sambelson, and the first funeral held was that of Mrs. Will H. (Mabel Hill) Creech.

Numerous and various useful items have been donated from time to time till we now have a 16 mm film projector, a filmstrip projector, a

a record player, visitor registration book and stand and many items not here mentioned.

Ministers serving since we have been on the Pine Level Charge have been Reverends Tyson, Juren, Mitchell, Edgerton, Lewis, and Tripp. We have a brick parsonage near the church for minister's families to reside while here now.

A cemetery lies behind the church and is kept by donations from friends who have loved ones there or lots yet to be used.

The Chapel and classrooms are heated and cooled centrally.

The following is a sample of a typical year's activity at our church:

CHURCH HISTORY 1973  
SANDERS CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

During the year 1973 under the guidance of our minister, Rev. Bennie J. Tripp, Sanders Chapel United Methodist Church has gone forward.

Four members have joined us by letter, two babies have been christened, and one marriage has been performed. However, to our sorrow, we have lost one member by death and two members by church letter.

Our Administrative Board has met regularly once each month and has called meetings when necessary. The Board of Ministries meets monthly. Other divisions such as Ways and Means Committee, Education and Finance meet when necessary to attend to their field of endeavor. Pledge cards were handled by our Finance chairman and a committee of helpers.

Our church treasurer attends meetings, when able, and keeps the Administrative Board aware of our financial standing. The secretary of

the Administrative Board reads the minutes of our Board meeting to the Sunday School on the Sunday morning following our meeting. We feel that this keeps more members informed as to decisions made and what goes on at meetings.

We sponsor Scout Troop #26 and have helped them in purchasing necessary equipment this year. They spent a week at Camp Tuscarora in June and have held a bake sale to earn needed cash. They have been in charge of two Sunday night services and were awarded merit badges at one of them.

Our M Y F and leaders took a trip to Lake Junaluska in June. They meet weekly on Thursday nights. They sponsored a round-table discussion of problems of youth one Sunday night.

A church-wide study on India has been given.

A Vacation Bible School was held in June.

A well attended five night revival was held the first week in April by Rev. Jimmy Sutton, Duke's Chapel, Durham. Two members were added by letter. Our minister presented 16 copies "Good News for Modern Man" to faithful children who had attended. (Secretary of Education presented our six high school graduates with copies before they left for college.)

On March 9 our church sponsored a barbecue for the benefit of our Building Fund. Proceeds go for parsonage upkeep, church repairs, and necessities not included in our budget. Since we use the Pomona-Creech Homemaker's building we paneled and put new floor covering in the kitchen.

We have paid for 8 subscriptions to Interpreter for Board members and a subscription for Anthems for the choir.



Our yard was graded and grass sown in the early spring. A sofa was upholstered and a new type stove vent installed for the parsonage in the Summer.

Our Women's Society for Christian Service held its celebration on Sunday night, September 16, and became United Methodist Women, officially. A meal a day was prepared and taken to the family of a sick member. Our latest project has been to purchase materials and make curtains for our entire educational building. A general clean-up day for our building was sponsored on September 22 and the response was great. We held a successful bake sale in Smithfield on October 6.

Homecoming was observed on October 14 and our annual Harvest Sale is planned for October 24.

These are a few things done this year. We are contemplating air and heat for our educational building in the near future as our greatest achievement to be undertaken.

One hundred fifty (150) Methodist Hymnals have been placed in our Church as memorials and were dedicated for God's service.

Our church yard has been landscaped and a plan for parking started. Heat and air have been installed in our educational building, and a new sign has been erected in place of the one that had been accidentally destroyed.

We observed Home-Coming Day Sunday, October 13, 1974 which was well attended. October 23 we had our annual Harvest Day Sale which was the best ever.

Our minister has been teaching different books of the Bible (example, Acts) on Sunday nights and has had good attendance at these classes. We plan to have a Family Night observance on each fourth Sunday night with

families participating in the program for the remainder of 1975. Just how we will observe Christmas has not been determined at this time, but last year we had an old-fashioned family tree with a short program by the small children.

During December, 1973, we lost three members by death. They were Mrs. Jo Ann Keith, and Messrs. T. D. Woodall and Wiley Narron, both in less than one week.

Submitted by Mrs. Claude Hill, Jr.  
Class Historian  
November 5, 1974

#### ADDITIONS----1973-74 and EARLIER

Dana Elizabeth Powell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Ellen Daughtry Powell, christened Sunday, December 23, 1973. She was born September 5, 1973.

Kimberly Daughtry joined our church and was baptized on Sunday, June 24, 1974. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Daughtry.

Three sons of Mrs. Richard Hill and the late Mr. Hill, R. C., Ralph McCoy, and Leon have entered the ministry from our church in the last few years. Ralph and R. C. are now members of N.C. Conference and Leon expects to be next year.

Rev. Tripp christened Ralph McCoy Hill, Jr., baby son of Rev. and Mrs. Ralph Hill on Homecoming Sunday, October 14, 1973.

We want never to forget that our lovely organ is a gift from our dear friends Mrs. Roger A. Smith and her late husband, Mr. Smith. This adds so much to our church services, etc.

About 3 or 4 years ago the Young Adult Class added new and modern chairs to their classroom. Plaques near the door show that 11 chairs were placed in memory of the late Mr. Richard Hill by his family, and 9 by the family of the late Mr. A. A. Powell.

Mrs. Claude Hill, Jr,  
November 17, 1974

Since my last addition, Rev. W. S. Burns has served as our minister and Rev. Russell Blake is our present minister. Rev. and Mrs. Blake had their first child, a daughter, Johanna, born to them here in April, 1978. They had her christened the following August.

We are happy that our church basement was ceiled overhead and completed during 1978. Also, the Adult Sunday School Class purchased five folding tables for its use.

A small church library has been started with books donated and some purchased by UMW.

A white pall has been donated by the H.S. Daughtry family for the use when desired at funerals.

A Memorial Fund is established for the use of those who wish to contribute.

Mrs. Elva Parker and Mrs. Margaret Hill have presented covers for the communion table suitable for the different events during the year.

Central heat and air has been put in the educational building and  
back.

The ladies of the UMW purchased a new frost-free refrigerator for the

church kitchen in 1976, and Mrs. Avery Eason donated a slightly used electric stove in 1977.

Under the leadership of Mr. Jimmie Eason a Men's Breakfast Club was organized and meets monthly.

A mimeograph machine was purchased for the parsonage in 1978, and a typewriter had been purchased in 1977.

We still observe homecoming the 2nd Sunday in October and have our Harvest Sale late in October each year. We also have our yearly barbecue in March, proceeds of which are used for the benefit of the church.

Five members were lost by death in 1977 (R. Moses Hill, William Byrd, H.S. Daughtry, Lois Page, and Mrs. Richard Hill). We lost our two oldest members, Mr. J. Calvin Creech and Mrs. Zilphia Whitley in 1978; also, Mrs. Inez Whitley by death. Mrs. Hilda Daughtry Eason and Mrs. Dorothy Capps Spencer withdrew by letter during that year.

Among the most recent weddings performed in our church have been: Vickie Hill, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. J. T. Hill; Beth and Kaye Hill, daughters of Mr. & Mrs. Worth Hill; Kimberly Daughtry, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. W. P. Daughtry; Paul Hill, son of Mr. & Mrs. Marvin E. Hill; Theresa Creech, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Heba L. Creech; and Terry Lassiter, son of Mr. & Mrs. Cameron Lassiter.

A very successful Vacation Bible School was held in June, 1979.

Submitted by  
Mrs. Claude Hill  
June 30, 1979