

The Kenansville Parish
of
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**A Brief History of Four
Small Churches Located in
Duplin County, North Carolina**

BY JACK M. BENFIELD, MINISTER

1973-1976

1976

SARECTA CHURCH - 1955



The following information is compiled primarily from a history written at the time of the dedication service on May 22, 1960, furnished by Mrs. Carey A. Williams, Sr.

"In 1955, Rev. J. R. Regan, pastor of the Pink Hill Charge, found that there were members of the Woodland Methodist Church in the Sarecta community who seldom attended any church. He also discovered that there were other Methodists who had never changed their membership from the old Smith's Chapel church. Immediately he began investigating the possibility of beginning a new church in this area and thought of Beulaville as a strategic point.

After discussing this with Mr. Kirby J. Smith, Rev. Regan decided on the Sarecta area. Upon contacting Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Rogers, they suggested that he see Mrs. Bessie Smith, and she referred him to Mrs. Carey A. Williams. Mrs. Williams, with the help of others, carried out a survey covering a three mile radius. Approximately 100 members or prospective members were contacted.

Under the guidance of Rev. J. R. Regan, we obtained chairs and a used piano and our church school was established on February 13, 1955 in the old Sarecta school building. Mrs. Carey A. Williams was elected as the first Superintendant with Mr. Randolph Smith as her assistant. Our total membership was around 82.

Outgrowing our space around the first of May, we moved to the old store building and bought pews from Corinth Baptist Church.

On May 29, 1955 we were officially organized as Sarecta Methodist Church. The officiating officer was Rev. H. M. McLamb, who was assisted by our pastor, Rev. J. R. Regan. On the same date, thirty-three members were received by profession of faith and thirty-three by transfer of church membership by letter. These became the charter members of the Sarecta Methodist Church.

The first stewards were Raymond Rogers, Marvin Norris, Jim Atkinson, Carey Williams, and Mrs. Arthur Whitfield. Through the years our faithful teachers have been: Mrs. Marvin Norris, Mrs. Francis Williams, Mrs. Arthur Whitfield, and Mrs. Barbara Smith. Mrs. Georgia Smith has been our pianist.

In June, 1955, the conference appointed Rev. C. E. Vause of Hookerton as our pastor. Under his guidance, we adopted a budget and began making plans for our new church. Rev. Vause was very helpful in visiting the members, influencing others to attend, and organizing the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Mrs. Hunter Wells, the former Alice Rogers, was a very active leader, who has been greatly missed.

When Rev. Vause was transferred to Clinton, Mr. Otis Ridge became our pastor. He was a great inspiration to our church. Not only did he encourage our own members to be more faithful in attending church, but he also helped to obtain transfers from the Lee's Chapel Church. Mr. Ridge was very instrumental in helping to establish our building fund and inspired us to

work toward the goal for a new church. At this time, Mr. Randolph Smith became our new Superintendent.

In 1956, Rev. Russell G. Spence came as our pastor. He devoted not only his time and his good faith but also his material gifts. Mr. and Mrs. Spence have spent many happy hours in our community visiting shut-ins and remembering the sick with cards.

In June, 1956, Mrs. Bessie Smith donated the land for the site of our new church in loving memory of her husband, Norwood Smith. The construction soon began with Mr. Jim Atkinson, Chairman of the building committee, and Mr. Carey A. Williams, Chairman of finance. The men of the church donated labor and money. The ladies contributed all the proceeds from barbecue suppers to the building fund.

The educational building was completed first and we used this for church and church school. In October of 1957 a revival was conducted by Mr. Robert Rose, lay leader from the Goldsboro District. Our offering during this revival was given to the building fund. Our own members and visitors from other churches helped to make our revival a success.

Through funds from the Duke Endowment of \$3,500 and the Ten Dollar Club's donation of \$7,500, we have been able to continue our building project. We have also received a great deal through the conference with special missions from the district and the efforts of interested members. Many people outside the church membership have been very gracious in donating to this fund.

This year, Mr. Jim Atkinson, one of our faithful members, became Superintendent. We have now undertaken the project of purchasing pews and pulpit furniture for the sanctuary. Several have pledged to buy one pew and help with others if necessary.

Without the undying faith of our members and the gracious love of God, our Church would have been a failure. We wish to express our gratitude to the members, friends, pastors, and District Superintendent upon whom we have depended greatly.

It is our fondest hope that as we meet in this beautiful sanctuary to worship God, we may truly find peace and joy in our fellowship with each other."

Note: Bishop Paul N. Garber was present for the Dedication Service....almost five years to the date...lacking one week....of the organization of the church valued at \$40,000, PAID FOR AND DEDICATED! Other ministers present were the District Superintendent, Rev. H. M. McLamb; the Rev. J. R. Regan; and the Rev. H. L. Harrell, all taking part in the Service.

Of the charter membership of sixty-six, 16 are now deceased. Seventeen others have moved from the community although some still retain their membership. Another ten have moved their membership to other churches.

Following is a list of the charter members of Sarecta:

Mrs. Bessie Smith	Mr. J. H. Atkinson
Mr. Shirley N. Smith	Mrs. J. H. Atkinson
Mr. William Randolph Smith	Mr. Carey A. Williams, Sr.
Mrs. Elsie Smith Pollard	Mr. Marvin Norris
Mrs. Carey A. Williams	Mrs. Shirley Sommers Rhodes
Mr. Gilbert E. Smith	Mrs. JoAnn Stroud
Mrs. Shirley N. Smith	Mrs. Betty Baker
Mrs. Verona Williams Bass	Mrs. Sheraldene Howard Hayes
Mrs. Glacus Murray	Mr. Frank Ross Sommers
Mrs. Arthur Whitfield	Mr. Kenneth Davenport
Mr. George Williams, Sr.	Mildred Louise Turner
Mrs. George Williams, Sr.	Mrs. Evelyn Hall Blalock
George Williams, Jr.	Mrs. Fannie K. Hall Grady
Mr. Raymond Rogers	Mr. James Travis Jarman
Mrs. Raymond Rogers	Mrs. Billy (Mary Ann) Sanderson
Mr. Benjamin Rogers	Mr. Travis Williams
Mrs. Alice Rogers Hunter	Mr. Mazel Houston
Mrs. Eugene Smith	Mrs. Wilma Houston
Mrs. Pearl W. Smith	Mrs. Marvin Norris
Mrs. Major Lanier, Jr.	Mrs. Willard Gresham
Mrs. Eva Brown	Mrs. Peggy Williams Provst
Mr. James Brown	Mrs. Sandra Atkinson Brinkley
Mrs. James Brown	Mrs. Linda Hall Albertson
Mrs. Nettie Atkinson	Mrs. Edna Gresham Houston
Mrs. Vera Rogers Turner	Mr. Joel Lawson Williams
Mrs. Bessie B. Atkinson	Mr. Major Lanier, Jr.
Mr. Cleon Smith	Mr. Lebron Williams
Miss Eula Shepherd	Mr. Arnold D. Gresham
Mr. Clarence Shepherd	Mr. Oliver Lee Blizzard
Mr. Oliver Blizzard	Mrs. Marie Jones
Mrs. Oliver Blizzard	Mrs. Lois Williams Jones
Mr. Lawson Williams	Mr. Murphey Ray Williams
Mrs. Lebron Williams	Mr. Clayton Gresham
	Mr. Paul Williams

The column on the left joined by transfer from other churches. The list on the right joined by profession of faith.

Sarecta Church is thus a combination of folks from Woodland, Smith's Chapel, Lee's Chapel, and others. It should be noted that Methodist services were discontinued in the latter two churches in 1940. Lee's Chapel was closed and Smith's Chapel was deeded to the Presbyterian Church in exchange for a church on the Seven Springs Charge which was also being used jointly by Methodists and Presbyterians. It is obvious from these facts that no Methodist Church existed in the Sarecta, Beulaville, Hallsville areas for at least 15 years.

An interesting side note which most people do not know is that an attempt was made in 1895 to establish a Methodist church, known as Hallsville, which was temporarily located on the Sarecta-Hallsville road, north of State Highway 24. After a couple of years of holding preaching services at a bush arbor, the land was sold to Mr. Egbert Miller.

Current Membership Roll

Following is a list of the full members of the Sarecta Church. We apologize for any mistakes, omissions, and misspellings. We copy from the information we have on hand.

Atkinson, Donald	Kennedy, Hilda
Atkinson, Mrs. J. H. Sr.	Kennedy, Glenda
Atkinson, Zylphia Carol	Kennedy, Kathy Williams
Albertson, Linda	Lanier, Major Jr.
Brown Eva	Lanier, Susie
Brown, James	Lanier, Wanda
Brown, Catheline	Lanier, Rhonda
Baker, Betty Faye	Miller, Etta
Blalock, Evelyn	Malpass, Carson
Blizzard, Oliver Sr.	Norris, Marvin
Blizzard, Oliver Jr.	Norris, Lou Dell
Brinson, Pamela Atkinson	Norris, Jim T.
Ballard, Gene	Norris, Edward
Ballard, LaMonn	Pate, Lucille Sommers
Ballard, Mark	Rhodes, Shirly Sommers
Davenport, Thurman	Smith, Randolph
Davenport, Arlene	Smith, Georgia
Davenport, Tex	Smith, Gilbert Elwood
Davenport, Edward Earl	Smith, Shirley N.
Davenport, Marie	Smith, Mrs. Shirley N.
Davenport, Teresa	Smith, Mrs. Eugene
Gresham, Annie	Smith, Pearl
Gresham, Clayton	Stroud, Jimmy W.
Gresham, Joyce	Stroud, Jo Ann
Gresham, Arnold	Stroud, Mary Allison
Grady, Sandra Atkinson	Sanderson, Billy
Houston, Mazel	Sanderson, Mary Ann
Houston, Mrs. Mazel	Sanderson, Teresa
Houston, Marie	Sommers, Mrs. Frank
Houston, Herman	Shepherd, Mamie
Houston, Thelma	Shoup, Linda
Houston, Gloria Faye	Taylor, Christine
Houston, Betty Jean	Taylor, Timothy
Houston, Laylon	Taylor, Kenneth
Howard, Louise	Turner, Mildred Louise
Jarman, James Travis	Williams, Carey A. Sr.
Jones, Jane Marie	Williams, Hazel
Jones, Lois	Williams, Carey A. Jr.

Williams, Woody
Williams, Mrs. George Sr.
Williams, George Jr.
Williams, Shelby
Williams, Lebron
Williams, Frances
Williams, Tony

Williams, Peggy Sue
Williams, Joel Lawson
Williams, Murphey
Williams, Mrs. Della
Williams, Mrs. Alton
White, Cecil
Wiley, Judy