

*The History of Shady Grove
United Methodist Church
in Jones County*



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Shady Grove United Methodist Church

Shady Grove United Methodist Church is an outgrowth of the Anglican Church of England. From England, Methodism spread to Ireland and then to America.

John Wesley, the fifteenth child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, was the father of Methodism. His father was rector of Epworth. His mother was a woman of devoutly religious life, and her influence upon the characters of her children was strong and lasting—but the turning point of Wesley's life was at a prayer meeting on May 24, 1738.

The gospel which Wesley founded for himself, he began to preach to others including his brother Charles. He gathered people in groups, in classes/and in societies. He appointed preachers who were ready to carry the message to people wherever they were whether at a house, in the open field, in a tavern, on the banks of a river or on the streets. Francis Asbury was one of his preachers.

John Wesley sent Francis Asbury to America as a missionary in 1771. Asbury had a deep feeling for and about his religion. His burning desire was to win people to Christ. Like John Wesley, his sermons were Biblical. Even though Asbury was only 26 years of age he began to make a religious historical impact almost as soon as he landed in Philadelphia. The Methodist practice of Circuit Riders soon helped Methodism become the largest demonination in America.

Asbury first visited North Carolina in 1780 by crossing over from Virginia to Roanoke Rapids. After this time he was in North Carolina nearly every year until he died, for it was one of the most promising of mission field. He came to Trent River area on February 10, 1788, and preached in Jones County throughout his traveling ministry. The last visit he paid to Jones County was in 1815. He died in 1816 at the age of 72. In Asbury's lifetime, there was only one Methodist Church in Jones County - Lee's Chapel - which was founded in 1790.

According to the North Carolina Conference Historical Directory, Shady Grove was on the New River Circuit in 1820. The New River Circuit was formed in 1788. There is no record of a church building then. During this time, the Circuit Rider probably brought the family and neighbors together in a home which became known as a "Preaching Place." Here, the Circuit Rider would stop on his rounds to preach.

The earliest known membership roll shows that Shady Grove received members as early as 1846 by Rev. Henry Gray. Homes were still being used as "Preaching Places."

A deed for the land on which to build Shady Grove Church was dated April 29, 1857. It conveyed 2 acres of land from Zaccheus Smith, Jr., to

Stephen Miller, Lewis Miller, and James Webb, Trustees of Shady Grove Church, for the sum of \$20.00.

During the next few years many church groups were organized and churches were built. The churches built in this area were: Lee's Chapel, Hopewell, Cypress Creek, Trenton, Shady Grove and Woodington. Shady Grove was now on the Jones Circuit with the other churches named. Jones Circuit was formed in 1858 or 1859.

Members of these churches felt the need of a parsonage. At the first quarterly conference in 1881, the Board of Stewards appointed a committee of five men to plan for a parsonage for Jones Circuit. Dr. F. A. Whitaker was appointed from Shady Grove. Rev. William H. Puckett was the preacher in charge; Dr. William Clop, the Presiding Elder. At the May 20, 1881, conference, the committee was given full power to do all that was necessary to build a parsonage. According to August 5, 1882 quarterly conference, the parsonage committee reported that they had purchased ½ acre of land in Trenton from Mrs. Susan King for said purpose. The deed is dated January 3, 1883. The record shows that Ezra Pridgen built the parsonage. Alexander D. Betts was assigned as pastor of the Jones Circuit in 1883. He and his family were the first to live in the new parsonage. (In 1884 Woodington was removed from the Jones Circuit.) In 1892 there was only a small debt against the parsonage.

According to the conference records, ministers were not adequately paid. In 1880 the preacher's salary for Jones Circuit was \$329.00. In 1882, it had been raised to \$575.00 but he received only \$412.00. Shady Grove was assessed and paid \$90.00. Some of the churches would pay what they were assessed and some did not. It was not always the same church that met or did not meet its financial obligation. However, 1923 was a "banner year" for the Jones Circuit. The records show that this was the first time Jones Circuit PAID OUT. Rev. K. F. Duval was minister.

According to quarterly conference 1902, a parsonage committee was appointed to build a new parsonage. The first parsonage had burned earlier. Windsor Dail was appointed to represent Shady Grove. Trustees were: F. B. Becton, Windsor Dail, Dr. F. A. Whitaker, James Bryan, and E. W. Scott.

In 1904, F. S. Becton was the pastor assigned. The parsonage was being built. Mr. Becton lived at his own home.

J. M. Wright was assigned to the Jones Circuit in 1907. He was the first pastor to live in the new parsonage.

As the Shady Grove membership grew, there became a need for a larger church building. A second building was built in 1912 next to the original church building. According to Mrs. Mildred Bland, Mr. Logan Dudley built

the second building for only room and board. This was provided by Mr. Jim Cox. When the second building was completed, the original church building was torn down and the best part of the flooring was used to make the benches for the new church. Rev. E. E. Vale was minister; trustees were: J. R. Lowery, W. L. Dail, S. H. Wilcox and J. H. McDaniel. Rev. Vale had two children to die young. They were buried in the Trenton Cemetery as were Rev. Vale and his wife.

In 1915, Rev. C. T. Rogers was assigned pastor of the Jones Circuit and served for four years. He was the first pastor who drove an automobile on the Charge. It was a Model T., five passenger, touring car.

In 1921, C. H. Foy, owner of a large sum of land, decided his community needed a church and he deeded .8 of an acre of land to the NC Conference for a church. Although Mr. Foy was a member of Lee's Chapel Church at the time, many members of Shady Grove lived in the Foy's community. That meant that there was a drop in Shady Grove's enrollment after Foy's Church was organized.

In 1946, W. E. Howard was sent to the Jones Circuit. In 1948, the Jones Circuit was changed to the Trenton Charge. Mr. Howard was pastor three years.

Rev. C. B. Long served the Trenton Charge 1949-1952.

In 1953, the Trenton Charge was divided into the Trenton Charge and the Shady Grove Charge with three churches on each: Shady Grove, Cypress Creek and Foy's on the Shady Grove Charge and Trenton, Maple Grove and Oak Grove on the Trenton Charge. Since the parsonage was in Trenton, it was necessary for Shady Grove to build a parsonage. According to W. Wilson Lowery, Sr., then treasurer of the Shady Grove Parsonage Fund, the charge was paid \$2,562.50 on February 1, 1954, by the Trenton Charge for its part of the Trenton parsonage. The Shady Grove Charge borrowed \$1,500 from the Branch Bank in Trenton, NC. Along with this money and donations from the membership throughout the charge, the parsonage was built by Kirby Hawkins, Contractor, for \$8,000. The total cost of the parsonage including the furnishings and building came to \$12,000. It was built beside the Shady Grove Church. Shady Grove Church paid 48.5% of the total cost of the parsonage, Cypress Creek paid 19% and Foy's paid 32.5%. This was based on the percentage of membership.

Earl S. Tyson was the first minister of the newly formed Shady Grove Charge. The parsonage was not completed when he was first assigned to Shady Grove Charge so he came on weekends and stayed with church members until the parsonage was completed.

In 1954, the NC Annual Conference was changed from November to June.

On October 12, 1955, there was a move for Shady Grove Church to build a larger, more substantial building with educational rooms. A building committee was named as follows: Paul Gilbert, Chairman; Jeannette Lowery, Secretary; George Davenport, Treasurer; Hilton Moore, and Jane White. Trustees serving during this building project (1955-1964) were W. W. Lowery, Sr., Dan Gooding, Mrs. Ruth Huggins, Mrs. Carl Gray, Leslie White, Hilton Moore and Nathan Gilbert.

With only \$2,197.87 in the building fund, the members sponsored suppers, solicited donations from the membership and set aside the offering each Fifth Sunday to go into the Building Fund.

After many meetings and visiting many church buildings in the area, the committee decided on a plan similar to that of St. Mark's Methodist Church in Kinston. The plan was obtained from Rev. Don Collins and changed to fit the needs of Shady Grove. The building was begun January 28, 1957. Oscar Casey, builder, was hired at \$2.00 per hour and four men from the church worked with him each day. Cement blocks were used for the interior walls with brick on the outside. The windows were of steel frames with frosted glass, the floors were hardwood and the roof was asphalt shingles. Leslie White and Paul Gilbert gave the cement blocks; Wilson Lowery, Sr., and Hilton Moore, the bricks; George Davenport and Matthew Moore, the cement; Rev. Durwood Wiggins, Minister gave the sand and Ruth Skinner and Clarine Fordham paid for having the foundation poured.

Twelve families gave windows in memory of or in honor of a loved one and Clarine Fordham was chairman of this committee.

By 1960, the project had progressed to the state that the committee's attention turned to the furnishing of the sanctuary. Katherine Lowery was appointed chairman along with Nannie Gray, Dorothy Pollock and Ruth Huggins to serve on a pew committee. Twenty-one people gave a total of \$1,906.20 to cover the cost of the pews. Ruth Skinner and Katherine Lowery were on the carpet committee.

The Church was dedicated June 14, 1964. Rev. Z. V. Cowan was the minister and Mr. R. Grady Dawson, District Superintendent. The old church building was torn down and the materials were sold with the money gained going into the building fund.

Through the years devoted members of the church, wives and daughters of the ministers have given of their time and talent in working with the choir. Those persons as recalled by church members include: Callie Pollock, Jennie Gooding, Jennie Windley, Nannie Kornegay, Maude Gray, Shirley Moore, Eunice Mae Pollock, Rena Lowery, Nancy Carol Moore, Jean Gray, Linda Huggins, Janice Lowery, Betty Becton and Daisy Bell Moore, Mrs. F. D. Brandenburg, Mrs. E. G. Cowan, Mrs. W. E. Howard and Frances Swink.

In 1964, Mrs. Ann Davis, wife of Rev. H. C. Davis, organized the choir for regular practice. The next year Rev. J. A. Williams was minister and his wife, Nell, worked faithfully with the choir as a group and with individual choir members. After the Williams left Shady Grove Charge, Sandy Moore directed the choir.

In December, 1968, J. C. Moore headed a committee to purchase an organ. The Hammond organ cost \$978.00. Collections totaled \$789.00 and the church paid the remainder.

Elizabeth M. Moore began playing the organ and/or piano with Sandy Moore in January 1975. She was appointed Director of Music in June, 1976, at Annual Conference.

During Administrative Board meeting, May 7, 1978, Sandy Moore requested that an organ fund be established to buy a new organ. His request was granted. By the next board meeting Sandy had \$2,800.00 in pledges. Organ and speakers were installed on trial. Congregation approved. By January, 1979, an Allen organ had been paid for with \$40.00 left in the organ fund. The cost was about \$5,500.00.

By this time there was a desire for choir robes. These were given by Elizabeth and Hilton Moore. The organ and robes were dedicated in May, 1979. Rev. Reginald Ponder, District Superintendent had charge of the dedication service.

There are many organizations and functional groups in Shady Grove Church. Our Church School (Sunday School) was organized about 30-40 years after the church was established. Rev. William H. Puckett, pastor in charge reported at the quarterly conference 1879 that there were three Sabbath Schools in operation on the circuit under Methodist supervision, each having a superintendent, four teachers and an average attendance of twenty scholars. The churches are not named. This might be the beginning of Sunday School at Shady Grove. At the November 11, 1882 Quarterly Conference, Rev. J. E. Mann listed six superintendents of Church Schools. Churches are not named.

We are sure that by 1891, Sunday School was organized at Shady Grove. The record states, "On March 28, 1891, Rev. Robert B. Gilliam reported to the first Quarterly Conference school at Shady Grove, The Sabbath School, opened up a fine field for Christian usefulness on the part of all who have the Divine grace to work for Jesus." Approved literature is studied.

During this period, many of the Church Schools discontinued during the winter months.

The superintendents of Shady Grove School as remembered by Sunday School members include: Mrs. Jennie Gooding, George McDaniel,

Mrs. Nancy Gooding, E. M. Gilbert, Mrs. Callie Pollock, H. S. Civils, Vance Spence, George Civils, S. L. Lowery, Harris Gilbert, Milton Gilbert, Thurman R. DeBruhl, Hilton Moore, Thomas Earl Civils, Saul Moore, Jimmy Eubanks Sandy Moore, Linwood Heath and Phil Moore. Linwood Hartsell is serving at the present time.

Shady Grove enrollment has been up and down. In 1979-80, the average attendance was approximately 95. In June, 1984, there are 72 members on the roll with an average attendance of 45-50.

The Administrative Board meets monthly to receive reports, determine policies and authorize action.

The Council on Ministry promotes programs and activities through the Chairperson. The Chairperson of different work areas is encouraged to set goals, make plans, carry-out plans and to evaluate the year's work.

The church observes special days with appropriate programs. Church sponsors revival, Vacation Bible School, mission study, joint Thanksgiving program with Lanie's Chapel Christian Church and the fall harvest festival, etc.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized during the time Rev. John R. Poe was minister, according to church members. He served the charge 1944-46. Mrs. Thelma Spence Johnson was the first president.

This group evidently disbanded as records indicate they reorganized October 11, 1953, by Mrs. C. B. Long, wife of the minister. There were 20 members. The name of the organization has been changed to United Methodist Women. There are now 25 members. They meet monthly, have an educational program and sponsor various projects.

The United Methodist Men were organized in 1957. Rev. Wiggins was minister. They have monthly dinner meetings. They plan and sponsor projects and programs. There are 11 members.

During the years Shady Grove has had well organized youth groups under strong leaders. At the present time there are few youth attending church and the youth group is not active.

At the Administrative Board meeting on June 9, 1974, members voted to select, purchase and install a stained glass window on the back wall of the pulpit. The committee named for this was Dr. Weldon Davenport, Chairman; Hilton Moore, Ruth Skinner, and Katherine Lowery. A call meeting was held on July 16, 1974, at which time Hilton Moore offered to give the window in memory of a loved one.

At the July 13, 1975, board meeting, plans were made for the dedication service to be held at the next church Sunday. The inscription under the beautiful window reads: "Given by the Family of Ocy Ola Gooding Moore in Loving Memory." Rev. Robert Rattz was minister.

The Billy Moore Family selected front doors for the church in loving memory of William Moore, Sr. They are made of oak with brass hardware and purchased from a church memorial fund established in his name. The memorials mentioned in this history are part of the building. Other items have been given and are listed in the Church Memorial Book.

For many years, Shady Grove had wanted a recreation building. On November 8, 1976, Mary Frances and Duval Barwick deeded to Shady Grove .86 of an acre of land located back of the church. This additional land was ample for a building or playground.

On January 1, 1979, Foy's Church, one of the three churches on the Shady Grove Charge, disbanded. Billy Moore, Shady Grove Building Chairman, and the minister, Rev. Emmit McCall worked toward obtaining the Foy's Building for a recreational building. The trustees at the time were: Thomas Earl Civils, Verna Belle Lowery and Phil Moore. They met with District Location Team on February 24, 1982. The team studied the site, plans for remodeling and the church operations and gave their approval. The building was to be finished according to the Duke Endowment requirements. The Foy's building and land was given to Shady Grove Church by the conference and Foy's Church roll was transferred to Shady Grove. On March 31, 1982, the building was moved from the Wise Fork Road to the back of Shady Grove Church. Remodeling was immediately begun. The 1.3 acres of land on which the Foy's Building formerly stood was sold to David and Ruby Seymour. The remodeling was completed and on January 9, 1983, this fellowship hall was consecrated by Rev. A. P. Hill, Board of Missions, Raleigh, NC. Verna Belle Lowery, Chairperson, Myra Hartsell and Jane Whaley served on the committee for open house for the special service and also the committee to plan and furnish the kitchen.

Now that Shady Grove had a fellowship building they needed a piano. Ruth Skinner, Secretary to the Administrative Board had been contacted by Oak Grove members as to whether the church needed any of their furnishings. Oak Grove Church had recently disbanded. Ruth Skinner reported this to the Administrative Board. The MYF wanted to give a used piano to the fellowship building. They requested money from the organ fund. Ruth, working with the MYF and the Oak Grove members purchased the piano for \$100.

Foy's Church had lost one member in serving his country. Elton Edward Davenport (Sonny Boy) drowned October 31, 1944. His shipmates erected a memorial for him. This marker was located on the grounds at Foy's Memorial Church. When Foy's building was moved to the back of Shady Grove Church for a fellowship building and the lot was sold, the marker for "Sonny Boy" was moved to the Courthouse square in Trenton, NC.

No sooner had Shady Grove members completed their remodeled fellowship hall from the Foy's building than they were forced into another remodeling project. At a meeting on April 7, 1983, Rev. Emmet C. McCall brought to the attention of the trustees: Verna Belle Lowery, Chairperson; Phil Moore, Secretary; and Tom Goodwin, the need to repair the roof and the sanctuary - the roof framing was built with minimal strength and with the design of the framing system, the span involved, and the existing roof loading, the framing had bowed and pushed the wall outward. Therefore, the building was not safe to enter. On September 3, 1983, Rev. Malloy Owens, III, District Superintendent, Rev. Al Fisher, Director, Duke Endowment; Rev. E. C. McCall, Pastor, John Hickman, Architect, and Verna Belle Lowery, Chairperson of Trustees met and made plans for remodeling. The plans were presented to the Administrative Board for further directions and approval and the following was done in this remodeling project: stabilized walls, installed insulation batts, installed new ceiling, repositioned suspended lights, added outlets and switches, replaced operable section of windows, replaced glass with stained glass, installed new block work on interior, painted block work with stucco panels, added bracing and insulation over fellowship hall and classrooms, reworked ladies restroom, painted sanctuary, reworked Cross, replaced outside vents, refinished floors in the fellowship building and added steeple. The total cost of the remodeling was \$30,496.68. Of this amount, \$20,000 was borrowed at a rate of 10.5%. The rest was acquired through donations and volunteer work.



A service of Consecration and Dedication was held on Sunday, March 25, 1984, in celebration of Shady Grove's completely remodeled building. Rev. Malloy Owen, III, District Superintendent, presided and Rev. A. P. Hill, Executive Secretary of the NC Conference Board of Missions led the congregation in the Liturgy of Consecration. Rev. Owen led the Dedicatory Service and Rev. Albert Fisher, Director, Rural Church Division, Duke Endowment, gave the prayer of dedication for the light fixtures in the sanctuary, fellowship hall and Northex and the steeple that were given by the J. R. Lowery Family in loving memory of their mother and father, Cattie Gilbert and John Raymond Lowery, and their sister, Katherine Lowery. Rev. Emmit C. McCall preached on the subject, "So Built We the Walls; for the People Had a Mind to Work."

Rev. Floyd Morrow and family came to serve Shady Grove Charge in June, 1984.

Shady Grove has given two of its members to the Methodist Ministry: Olene Civils, Director of Christian Education, Trinity United Methodist Church in Greenville, SC, and Floyd Vance Spence, minister, now deceased. One former member, Argie Neal Wilcox, is Superintendent of Baptist Missions in Winston Salem, NC.

Ministers who have served Shady Grove are as follows:

Henry Gray	1st	H. E. Tripp	1895	John R. Poe	1944
John M. Gunn	1858	J. M. Benson	1897	W. E. Howard	1946
E. J. Eatman	1860	D. C. Geddie	1900	C. B. Long	1949
G. G. Hines	1861	F. S. Becton	1904	Earl Tyson	1953
Wm. M. Walsh	1863	John M. Wright	1907	J. B. Speight	1954
R. P. Bibb	1868	Philip Greening	1908	J. D. Cranford	1956
E. A. Howland	1869	R. D. Daniel	1910	Durwood Wiggins	1957
J. J. Carden	1870	Chas. E. Vale	1911	J. D. Vernelson	1958
James Wilson	1871	C. T. Rogers	1915	L. C. Swink	1959
W. H. Cunninggim	1873	Chas. A. Jones	1919	Z. V. Cowan	1962
N. A. Hooker	1874	K. F. Duval	1921	H. C. Davis	1964
Jeremiah Johnson	1877	H. L. Davis	1924	J. A. Williams	1965
Wm. H. Puckett	1879	J. C. Whedbee	1925	C. L. Antis	1968
L. L. Johnson	1882	E. L. Stack	1926	D. V. Charlton	1968
A. D. Belts	1884	T. W. Lee	1927	R. M. Gradeless	1969
J. F. Washburn	1887	P. O. Lee	1931	Robert Rattz	1972
L. O. Wyche	1888	J. D. Young	1932	Ron Cyr	1976
T. A. White	1889	F. D. Brandenburg	1936	Mary Von Canon	1978
Robt. B. Gilliam	1890	W. G. Lowe	1939	E. C. McCall	1981
W. B. Lee	1893	E. G. Cowan	1941	Floyd Morrow	1984

In the history a Methodism Notable divisions occurred. In 1784, sixty American Methodist preachers met in Baltimore, Md. and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1800, Philip Otterbein, Minister German Reform Church and Martin Boehm who had studied Wesley's writing formed the United Brethren Church. In 1828 Methodist Protestant Church was formed. In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was formed. In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South united as the Methodist Church. In 1946, the United Brethren and the Evangelical Church joined as the Evangelical United Brethren. So, on April 23, 1968, in Dallas, Texas, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren joined to form the United Methodist Church.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Records - Church, Minutes of Administrative Board Meetings, Minutes of Parsonage Committee, Treasurer's Report of Parsonage Committee, Minutes of Quarterly Conference, Minutes of Trustees.

Deeds on file in the Register of Deeds Office, Trenton, NC.

Conference Historical Directory

Church Historian Book

Shady Grove Scrap Book

Finer Farms Scrapbook

History of Church started by Katherine Lowery

Bishop William R. Cannon's Office - Vivian Mitchell

Conversations with church members and ministers.

Pamphlets:

"About Being United Methodist."

"The History of the United Methodist Church about John Wesley"

"The Story of Methodism" by Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson

"Methodism Alive in North Carolina" by O. Kelly

"A Brief History of Methodism in Jones County" by Walton N. Bass.

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