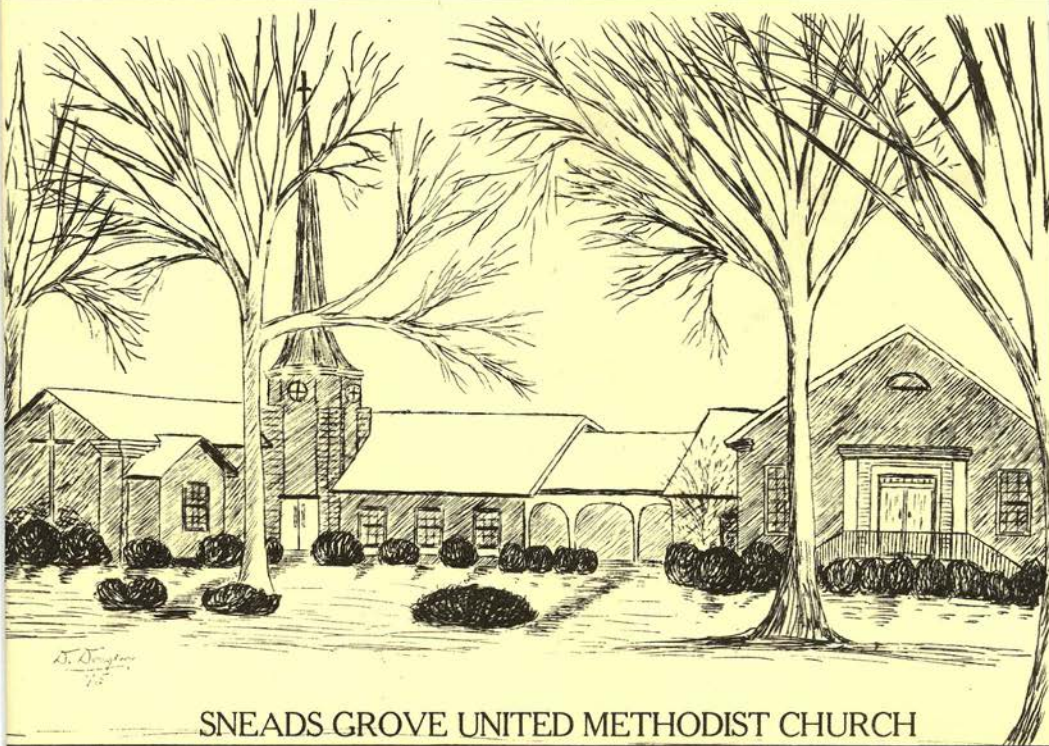


A History
of
Snead's Grove
United Methodist Church



SNEADS GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Interior of the Old Church

A History of Snead's Grove United Methodist Church

About the year 1780, many of our ancestors began moving into the area now known as Scotland County. From Fayetteville, a commercial center, travelling preachers went out to the settlements serving at places where groups could gather. Laurel Hill Church, established in 1797, grew out of Presbyterian meetings held at the McFarland plantation. The Presbyterian church was followed by Spring Hill Baptist, organized near Wagram in 1813. Tabernacle Methodist Church was organized prior to 1822. Caledonia Methodist and St. Johns Methodist were organized around 1835. The Methodist Churches of this area belonged to the South Carolina Conference.

When Bishop Francis Asbury, the Father of Methodism in the United States, passed through this area in 1788 and 1789, he preached at the Green Pond near Ghio. His visits, and those of circuit riders, encouraged Methodism and resulted in the establishment of Tabernacle Church. Some of the families from the Green Pond moved into the Snead's Grove section. Peeles, Quicks, Livingstons, Gibsons, Skippers, and others brought with them the seeds of Methodism and were prepared for the encouragement of the Conference to establish a new church.

It was in 1870 that the Cumberland District of the Methodist Church was organized. The Scotland County churches came into that district and into the North Carolina Conference. Upon the creation of the Cumberland District, preachers were sent out to organize new Methodist churches.

The rigid Calvinistic doctrine of the nearby Presbyterian church may not have been acceptable to many. Economic and social factors probably influenced religious preferences then, just as they do today. The Presbyterian membership consisted of many substantial businessmen and large landowners who were better educated than most.

The early members of Snead's Grove Church were relatively small landowners, sharecroppers, and small businessmen. Many of them were not prosperous in this world's goods. Most were of limited education. The Methodist church could provide worship in keeping with their beliefs, a congenial fellowship, and the opportunity to promote services needed in the community -- especially a school for the children.

The services which led to the organization of Snead's Grove were held in a brush arbor about two-tenths of a mile north of the present church on the farm of Mr. Younger Snead. Early history gives the dates of 1874 - 1876. The Reverend Baxter Phillips, pastor of the Laurinburg Circuit, was in

charge. A small building nearby was used for Sunday School. Later the brush arbor was moved to a site across the road from where the church now stands.

Interested persons from outside the community gave support in various ways. Tom and Bob Bundy from Laurinburg, and Ben Stewart, superintendent of Richmond Cotton Mills, were kind to Snead's Grove. Hector McLean and A. F. Patterson of Old Laurel Hill Church gave support.

On January 17, 1899, Younger Snead and his wife, Lucy Ellen, deeded an acre of land to Snead's Grove. The first building was erected soon after that date. The first trustees were T. H. Walters, John C. Norton, A. D. Gibson, J. Bunyan Snead, and Younger Snead. There is no record of where church was held until the building was completed. In 1893, the sanctuary size was doubled, making the building cross shaped. Inside, a rail down the middle aisle divided the men from the women. Two small seating areas on each side of the pulpit were known as Amen Corners. The pulpit and pews were said to have been built by Elijah Gibson. Funds for the building addition were secured by a note signed by Younger Snead, A. D. Gibson, and J. C. Norton.

The church was part of the Laurinburg Circuit from 1876 - 1897. Pastors during that period were Baxter C. Phillips, J. L. Lyon, J. W. North, W. B. Doub, R. J. Moorman, and R. M. Shamburger. Dr. J. W. North served Laurinburg, Snead's Grove, Tabernacle, Boykin, Shady Grove, Caledonia, St. John, and Shoe Heel. The eight churches paid him a yearly salary of \$700. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference, the churches petitioned the bishop to send them a cheaper preacher. They requested R. B. John, a local young man who had just entered the ministry.

Since the churches on the circuit were so numerous and so far apart, it was necessary to schedule services on weekdays. The area was so poor that ministers' salaries had to be supplemented by the Home Mission Board. It was the custom of the Conference to send the young pastors to this circuit, which was referred to as the "Calf Pasture." For around ninety years, Snead's Grove was a circuit church with services no more than twice a month. Every summer, Snead's Grove held a revival or "Protracted Meeting."

In the fall of 1897, the Snead's Grove Circuit was formed. It was composed of Snead's Grove, Tabernacle, Old Hundred, and Ida Mills. The Reverend Saul E. Mercer was the first pastor. He taught school at Snead's Grove to supplement his salary. At the end of his four years in 1901, the cir-



Exterior of the Old Church

cuit was combined with the Hamlet Circuit. This arrangement lasted only five years and in 1906, the Laurel Hill Circuit was formed. The Laurel Hill Circuit included Snead's Grove, Tabernacle, Old Hundred, and Springfield. In 1908, Rachels became a part of the group. In 1920, Laurel Hill Methodist Church became a successor to Springfield and Ida Mills. Old Hundred was discontinued in 1949, and Rachels in 1954.

The financial status of the four churches comprising the Snead's Grove Circuit is indicated by a report to the Conference in 1898. The following items were paid in full: Minister \$314, Presiding Elder \$51, Bishop \$6, Conference Claims \$20, Foreign Missions \$47, Church Extension \$16, Education \$17, and American Bible Society \$3.15. The four Sunday Schools reported that they had raised \$28.00 during the year.

There is no record of where the pastor lived during the early years of the church. Presumably he lived in Laurinburg. In 1902, the Hamlet Circuit purchased a house and lot in Laurel Hill from D. F. Taylor for \$380. This building, with many remodelings during the years, served as a parsonage for the churches until 1966, when Laurel Hill Church became a station and built their own parsonage. On November 18, 1967, the Barber residence, adjoining Snead's Grove, was purchased for the pastor's home.

During the long period when income for the members was largely dependent upon farming, the budget was necessarily low and collections were sometimes difficult. For many years, the members were assessed by the board and collecting was assigned to the stewards.

Around 1935, Mrs. J. Y. Gibson, president of the women's organization, persuaded the Snead's Grove congregation to have an ingathering. The harvest sales at other churches had been successful in helping to supplement income. The members donated farm produce, baked goods, crafts, and other items which were offered for sale. The proceeds from the first ingathering amounted to little more than \$100. At first the ingathering meals were served picnic style and free. Soon the meals were charged for, and the occasion increased in popularity and income. Ingatherings have continued as an annual event and have made a building program possible.

In 1937, encouraged by additional income, the interior of the church was remodeled and Sunday School rooms were provided. Pews (those now in use in the sanctuary) and folding chairs for the rooms were purchased. The cost of that project was about \$1100.

The educational building was erected in 1950, during the ministry of the Rev. C. B. Harris. The new unit contained an assembly room, five class rooms, and a kitchen. It was dedicated in 1952.

A new sanctuary was built in 1960. The original wooden structure was torn down and removed. James A. Ward was architect of the new building which housed the sanctuary and six class rooms. The Rev. N. P. Edens was pastor during the period of planning and financing. The next pastor, the Rev. E. R. Shuller, led the dedication service on April 5, 1964. The church was enriched by many memorials which are listed on tablets in the narthex of the church. Total cost of the building was about \$63,000. In 1968, an outside kitchen was added for use on special occasions.

It is appropriate to remember those outside our church family who have helped to make our program possible. The Duke Foundation has contributed money and helpful advice to all our building projects. The structural timbers of the educational building were given by Mrs. A. D. Gibson. In 1954, the D. J. Sinclair family gave an acre of ground which now provides parking space west of the church. In 1960, the Morgan Foundation contributed to the building of the sanctuary. The purchase of the Snead's Grove School property of 4.4 acres was made possible by a gift of \$10,000 from the estate of Miss Irene Gilchrist, a former teacher at Snead's Grove. A clear title to the property was made possible by the gift of their residual interest in the land by the heirs of S. A. Snead. Many others have in various ways contributed to our needs.

Any history of the church would be amiss if it failed to record the part that Snead's Grove School contributed to the life of the church and the



Interior of the Present Church - 1984

community. In February 1900, S. A. Snead and his wife Cora deeded one acre of land to be used for a school. The site was across the road from the church. The trustees were A. D. Gibson, T. K. Farmer, and C. J. Bowen. Snead's Grove began as a one room school. The original, remodeled building was replaced by a new brick structure in 1924. The school burned in 1975. During all of the school years, many of the teachers were a vital part of our church life. Twelve of its principals and some of the teachers were graduates of Trinity College (Duke).

General Conference redistricting through the years has caused our church to be under the administration of the following districts: Cumberland, Rockingham, Fayetteville, Sanford, and again, Rockingham. The title of Presiding Elder has been changed to District Superintendent.

Snead's Grove had its first full time pastor in 1973 when the Rev. John Farmer was appointed to our church. The influence of our church reached beyond our borders when we helped send his wife Peggy, a nurse, to help the earthquake victims in Managua, Nicaragua.

Many organizations help the church to be effective. The women, under several organizational titles, have been very active through the years. The first record of women's work was in 1895. By collecting ten cents from around 300 people, they raised \$29.40 to buy kerosene lamps for the church. Led by Mrs. D. A. Watkins, the pastor's wife, the Ladies Aid Society provided clothes for a boy at the Methodist Orphanage. That boy later became Superintendent of the Raleigh City Schools, and had a building named in his honor. The United Methodist Women and the Young Adult Methodists (YAMS) are always busy with worthy projects.

The Methodist Men promote community activities and work toward the improvement of the building and grounds. They have a fellowship breakfast every third Sunday.

The church also has a Methodist Youth Fellowship, an active Sunday School, and an annual Vacation Bible School. Around 1954, Mrs. Ralph Epps organized the first choir. There are two scholarship funds and a Memorial Fund.

In the more than one hundred years since the establishment of the church, the surrounding community has undergone radical changes. For the first seventy-five years, the majority of the families lived in the community and derived their income from farming. With the coming of industry into the county, the demise of the small farm, and the ability of women to find employment, there was an exodus of farm families to town. The closing of the local school directed the interests of the children and young people to town. Town became the educational center, the recreational center, the medical center, and the financial center. This change in the social structure, the trend toward smaller families, and the gradual loss of older members by death have resulted in a decreasing membership. At the same time, the demands by the Conference for ever increasing funds places the country church in a difficult position. Membership in 1984 is 149.

Snead's Grove is the realized dream of many individuals who have in their own time and in their own way been a part of the church. There has been much accomplished through fellowship, joy, effort, hardship, and an abiding faith in God's purpose for us. We have come from services under a brush arbor on borrowed soil to our present grounds and buildings --adequate and beautiful. We have come from a circuit of eight churches to our own full time minister. We have come from a people of limited educational opportunities to a church with two scholarship funds.

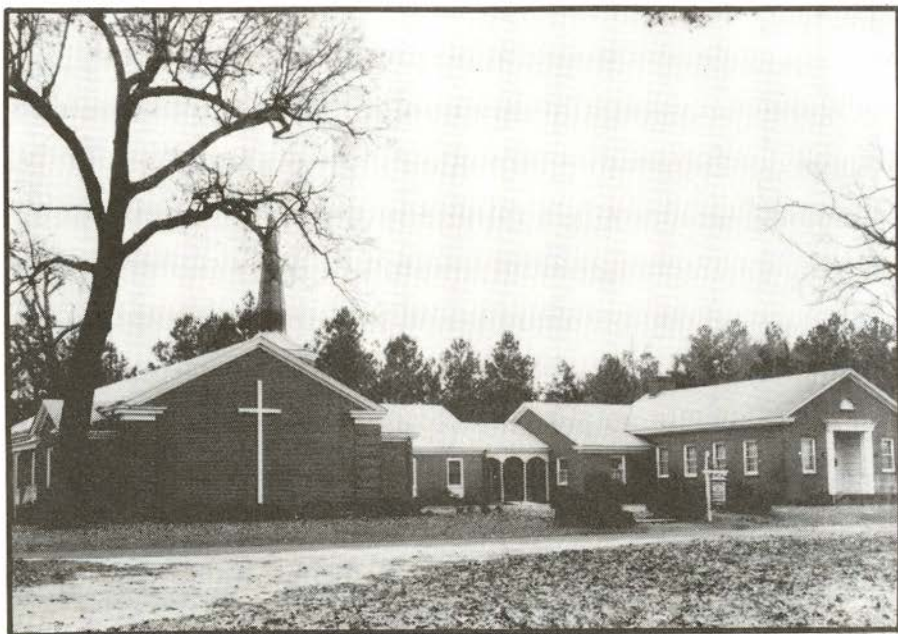
Our accomplishments, though important, must not overshadow the true purpose of the Christian church. Snead's Grove Church must continue to send out people whose lives exemplify the life of Jesus, who went about doing good.

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Psalm 16:6

By Edwin P. Gibson
December 1984

With my thanks to Joyce Gibson for editing and typing.
And to Doris Douglas for Ink Drawing on the cover.



Exterior of the Present Church - 1984

Snead's Grove United Methodist Church, during its history, has been served by the following dedicated pastors:

1873 - 1897	Baxter C. Phillips, J.L. Lyon, J.W. North, W.B. Doub, R.J. Moorman, R.M. Shamburger
1898 - 1901	Saul E. Mercer
1902 - 1903	C.O. Durant
1904 - 1905	W.G. Usry
1906	T.A. Sikes
1907 - 1908	F.B. Noblitt
1909 - 1911	D.A. Watkins
1913	F.B. McCall
1914 - 1916	D.B. Parker
1917 - 1918	G.T. Simmons
1919	J.C. Cummings
1920	J.C.D. Stroud
1921 - 1922	J.G. Johnson
1923 - 1926	W.J. Dubois
1927 - 1928	H.C. Ewing
1929 - 1931	G.H. Biggs
1932 - 1934	W.D. Yarborough
1935 - 1936	W.F. Elliott
1937 - 1938	J.H. Buffalo
1939 - 1942	E.H. Measmer
1943 - 1944	D.D. Broome
1945 - 1948	J.W. Dimmette
1949 - 1952	Cecil B. Harris
1953 - 1956	Ralph I. Epps
1957 - 1959	N.P. Edens
1960 - 1962	C.D. Brown
1963 - 1965	E.R. Shuller
1966 - 1972	Harold M. Chrismon
1973	John A. Farmer
1974 - 1975	Roger Keller
1976 - 1978	Robert Atchley
1979 - 1980	Ralph Waters
1981 - 1984	Leonard Mayo

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