

Grady L. E. Carroll

St. John United Methodist Church



A History of Our Church

1835 - 1971

Dedicated to the memory of the many Christian members and friends who have walked across the pages of St. John Church history and left their foot-prints of Christ centered influence upon one of the great Churches of Methodism.

William R. Cannon, Bishop, Raleigh Area
Dr. Joyce V. Early, Sanford District Superintendent
Rev. J. David, Jones, Pastor, St. John-Gibson Charge

Grady Carroll

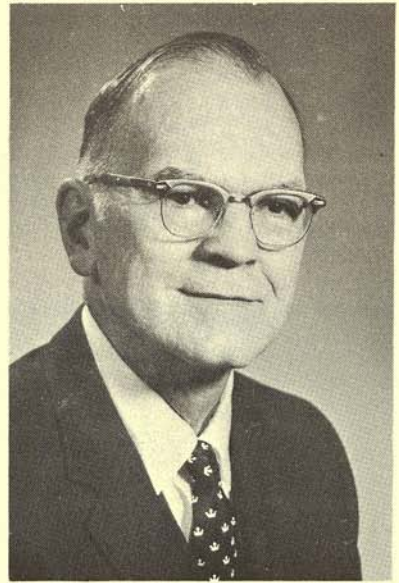


ST. JOHN AS IT WAS IN 1914



William R. Cannon
Bishop, Raleigh Area

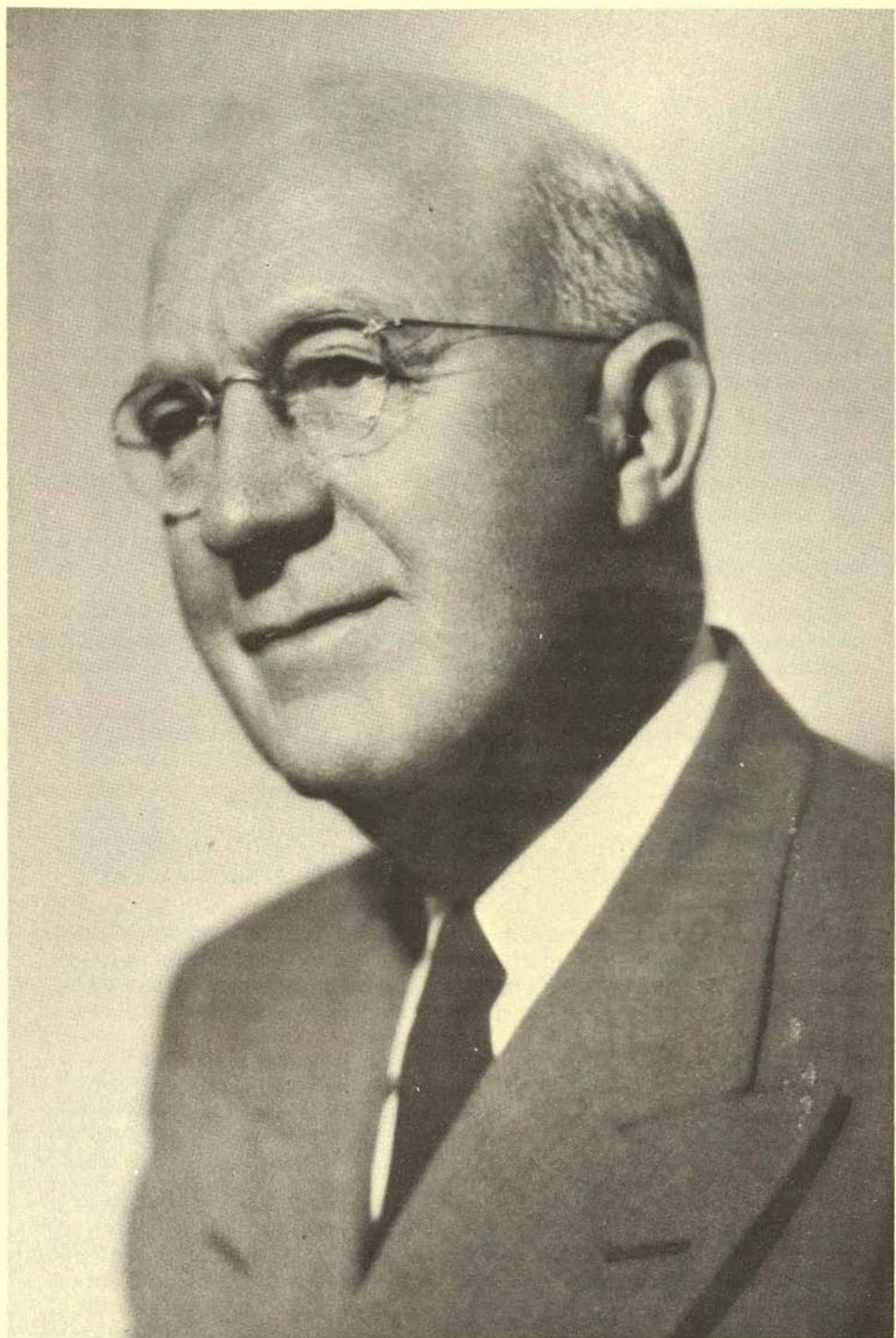
1968-1972;
1980-1984



Dr. Joyce V. Early
Sanford District Superintendent



Chaplain Lt. Col. J. David Jones, Pastor
Member of North Carolina Conference
Dept. Wing Chaplain, N. C. Wing
CAP - USAF



BISHOP W. W. PEELE

Mrs. Lizzie Peele was a lifelong member of St. John. From his retirement until his death, Bishop Peele, made St. John his home church.

HISTORY OF ST. JOHN

St. John United Methodist Church, located on N. C. Highway No. 79 two miles east of Gibson, was founded by the Reverend Thomas Gibson, a local Methodist Preacher. Prior to this time Rev. Gibson was a leading member of the Caledonia Church and for a number of years after the founding of St. John served as a local preacher under the direction of the "Circuit Rider" who was the pastor.

In the year 1835, Stafford Gibson and his wife gave about five acres of land comprising the present church grounds to establish a church "for the preaching of the gospel and the good of souls." The trustees were: Rev. Thomas Gibson (the founder), James P. Gibson, Nelson Gibson, John K. Gibson and Stephen Wallace.

Until 1872, the church though in North Carolina, was served by preachers from the South Carolina Conference. For this reason the church had to be named in the definition of conference boundaries in the "Book of Discipline."

Since 1872, the church has been served by preachers from the North Carolina Conference.

In 1872, the old church building was torn down and a new and more suitable building was constructed. The lumber from the old church building was used in the construction of the Beaver Dam Methodist Church - a negro congregation.

By the year 1884, a number of the members of the church had moved to Gibson Station, built on the railway line, about two miles west of St. John Church. Many of these wished to have a church in the village. They organized the Gibson Methodist Church and transferred their membership to that church. Since that time both churches have grown and been served by the same pastor. The circuit is called "The St. John-Gibson Charge."

In 1913, while the Rev. O. W. Dowd was pastor of St. John, the building was remodeled and enlarged. Beautiful memorial stained-glass windows were installed. One of the windows, located at the back of the choir, is in memory of the church's founder, The Rev. Thomas Gibson.

In 1935, on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of St. John, Centennial Exercises were held with the late Bishop W. W. Peele delivering the morning sermon. The Bishop was assisted by the pastor, the late J. H. Buffaloe and The Presiding Elder, Rev. D. E. Earnhardt.

With the events of World War I and II, many of St. John's finest men and women entered the armed forces for the defense of our country. Those wounded and receiving the Purple Heart were: L. P. Wright, Jr., N. T. Gibson, and Earl Parker. Jack and Jimmie Gibson, sons of the late Mr. and Mrs. W. James Gibson, gave their lives during World War II. Rev. W. W. Keeler, pastor of St. John, entered the armed services as a Chaplain. A former pastor, Rev. W. H. Brown, who had

retired, returned to fill the remainder of Rev. Keeler's term. It was during this time that Rev. Brown conceived the need for an additional building to accommodate the growth that was taking place in the program of the church at St. John. Rev. Brown gave a donation which became the nucleus of a fund which was used for the construction of a Fellowship Building.

Mr. Edwin Pate donated two strips of land adjoining the church property and thus enlarged the present site.

The construction of the building was started in 1947, during the pastorate of the Rev. J. P. Pegg. It was completed and then dedicated in 1951 while the Rev. W. L. Maness was pastor. The building committee was composed of the following members: H. E. Myers, James Beane, Fred Howell, Mrs. Laura B. Wright, and Mrs. B. P. Lytch, Sr.

The Rev. W. L. Maness, pastor; Rev. W. C. Ball, District Superintendent, assisted Bishop Peele in the dedication of the Fellowship Building.

In the closing of the worship service, Bishop Peele praised the people of St. John Church for the fine work that went into the growth of the church, and for the Christian Spirit that prevails.

For the dedication services three former pastors returned for the occasion. Rev. O. W. Dowd, Raleigh, N. C. pastor from 1911-1915, Rev. W. H. Brown, Jackson Springs, N. C. pastor from 1915 - 1919, and Rev. J. P. Pegg of Seaboard, N. C., pastor from 1942 - 1947.

The Fellowship Building serves the church in many ways, both in the religious and social life of the congregation.

With the completion of the Fellowship Building — its kitchen and dining facilities, the annual Harvest Day, which was begun in 1934, was moved from the church into this new building. The harvest day is a joint effort of all the members and is well attended by people from this area. Many former members return for this special occasion. The last Thursday in October is the established date for this event. Bar-B-Que and chicken salad meals are served. Many home prepared foods, cakes, and a variety of crafts are donated for sale. The profits are used for permanent improvements at the church.

In 1955, St. John members realized they needed an expansion to relieve over-crowding in the Sunday School Classes. One of the classes, a young married couples class, was having to meet in the Fellowship Building. This class had been organized and was first taught by Mrs. Laura B. Wright (Mrs. Sam Wright). This class was named in honor of Mrs. Lizzie Peele, the wife of Bishop W. W. Peele.

When the addition was completed, along with the remodeling of the original portion of the church, St. John now had a beautiful sanctuary, complete with newly laid carpet, a choir room, a library, and eight class rooms.

Central heat was installed in 1957, in connection with the addition of new Sunday School rooms.

On January 26, 1958, members and friends attended a Service of Consecration conducted by Bishop Peele. Bishop Peele said he was proud to call St. John his church home—having served his first pastorate in this church. He offered congratulations for the modernized sanctuary and for the educational part of the building. He also said he hoped it would serve as an added encouragement for members to participate in its services, even more regularly. (Quote—from The Laurinburg Exchange) Using the Publican, Zaccheus—Dr. Peele said the purpose of the church is “to seek, to find and to help save.” Admonishing his listeners again and again with simple but powerful truths. He said that membership is not enough in a church, but that it requires “Churchmanship” to make for Christian growth. Dr. Peele said Jesus loved people. He stopped by the wayside, time and time again, to talk with people and even delayed an engagement elsewhere because he could serve better in his present location. Murmurs and criticism arose when Jesus went home with Zaccheus, the publican and sinner. But Dr. Peele stated, with sinners was where Jesus wanted to be and it was the place he should be. Members and friends of St. John were charged by Bishop Peele to go further than just brief friendly visits with sinners and with those who are sought. A relationship should be established between church people and with those outside the church in order to have christian direction for a church’s growth. (End Quote)

After the worship service, Fayetteville District Superintendent O. L. Hathaway led in the dedication of special memorials which were presented by several families of the church. These were:

ITEM:	MEMORIAL TO:	DONORS:
Adult Class furniture	Mrs. Maggie Warner Gibson	Brothers and Sisters
Outside Bulletin Board	John K. & Emma Gibson	Children
Intermediate Class Furniture	Samuel J. & Esther Wright	Samuel D. Wright
Junior Class Furniture	Wright, Mary Parker, & Lestie Parker McLean	Mr. and Mrs. Carl Parker
Lizzie Peele Class Furniture	Mrs. Lizzie Peele	The Class
Primary Class Furniture	None	Lizzie Peele Class
Kindergarten & Nursery Furniture	Painted and refinished by	Mrs. Carl Parker

Upon the conclusion of the services about 250 people toured the building before adjourning to the Fellowship building for a picnic lunch.

The people of St. John are proud of the fact that it is the home church of Bishop Peele. It was in this church that Bishop Peele met and married one of its finest young ladies, the former Miss Lizzie Lytch. Bishop and Mrs. Peele came home to St. John when the Bishop retired.

In 1961, the church building was dedicated. Fred Howell served as chairman of the building committee. Others on the committee were: Mrs. W. W. Peele Mrs. Samuel D. Wright, Mrs. B. P. Lytch, Sr., W. L. Johnson, H. E. Myers, and Rev. M. W. Warren.

The District Superintendent Rev. Millard Dunn accepted the presentation of the building by Mrs. Ralph T. Haney. The Morning Worship Services were presided over by The Pastor, The Rev. Grady L. Kinley with Rev. Dunn delivering the sermon.

Since the completion of the educational wing other memorials have been added.

ITEM	MEMORIAL TO:	DONOR
Altar Cross & Candlesticks	Mr. & Mrs. Brack Brown	Children
Communion Set	Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Wright	Mrs. Blanche Wright
Electric Organ & Chimes	Fred C. Howell	Mrs. Fred C. Howell and Children
Large Stained-glass window	Mrs. Laura B. Wright	Sam Wright
Large Stained-glass window	Mr. & Mrs. B. P. Lytch, Sr.	Children
Large Stained-glass window	Mr. & Mrs. Ziba B. Gibson	Children
Large Stained-glass window	Mr. & Mrs. Henry F. Gibson, Sr.	Children
Large Stained-glass window	Mr. & Mrs. Sidney Beane	Children
4 Stained-glass door Panels	Marjorie Beane Connaly Mr. & Mrs. Harris McGregor	Brothers & Sisters Children
	Mr. & Mrs. Clifton McGregor	Mrs. Bessie G. McGregor
	Mr. and Mrs. Elijah Gibson	Children
	Mr. & Mrs. Will H. Gibson	Children

ITEM	MEMORIAL TO:	DONOR
3 Adult class small	Roy Gibson	Mrs. Roy Gibson
Stained-glass windows	Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Odom Mrs. Sally Bullard	Children Son- Franklin Bullard
Baptismal Font	J. Chris Gibson and Honor of Mrs. J. Chris Gibson	Children
Library Furniture	Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Wright	Children
Lecturn Light	Mrs. Josie Gibson	Mr. and Mrs. Clifton McGregor
Offering Plates	None	Miss Alice Gibson
S. S. Bulletin Board	None	Ralph T. Haney
Choir Seats	None	Will H. Gibson
Altar Tables-		
Flower Stands	None	Mr. & Mrs. H. E. Myers
Junior Class Piano	None	Mrs. Sally Norton
Sr. - Hi Class Piano	None	Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Pearson

In 1962, the members of the church decided that air conditioning was needed. Fred C. Howell and W. F. Parker were co-chairmen of this project. During the summer of 1962, air conditioning was completed, and now the church is comfortable in summer and winter.

St. John continues to grow, meeting the needs of the congregation as they arise. During 1969 a new class was organized for college students and young married couples. This class was completely furnished in memory of Miss Gracie Wright by her brothers and sisters and Mrs. Marie Wright Bates.

The Woman's Society of Christian Services and the United Methodist Youth fellowship are engaged in various fields of study and service. The Administrative Board, Commissions, and Committees carry out the business of the church. The entire membership cooperates with the district and conference in wider programs of missions and service.

During its history, the leadership at St. John has been one of excellence. The early leaders were of noble character and deep spiritual reverence. When the first leaders laid their spiritual torch down, the next generation picked it up and this has been done throughout its history. Many members have gone to their rewards, but the members that came on later are still reaping the benefits of their influence, and will continue to do so as long as the church stands.

For the past 30 years, many have served the church, but a few members have served for a number of consecutive years. The late Porter C. Gibson taught the Adult Class for over 25 years and was chairman of the Board several times. The late Fred C. Howell taught the young people class for over 15 years and was also chairman of the Board. The late Mrs. B. P. Lytch, Sr. served as chairman of the harvest day festival for 25 years. She also taught a Sunday School Class and was President of the Missionary Society. In her early years, she also served as church organist. Miss Mamie, as all the members called her, was endeared to all. Belton Norton served as church treasurer for over 20 years and H. E. Myers served as Church School Superintendent for 17 years. Mrs. Ed Gibson has served as church organist for 31 years.

During its history, St. John has sent out into the world a host of fine young men and women endowed with the spirit of religion, taking a prominent place in civic and religious affairs. It has given three of its members to the Methodist Ministry. They are: Reverend John W. Gibson, Reverend Nathan Wright, and Reverend Boyd Peele. The Reverend Boyd Peele was a brother of the Bishop W. W. Peele.

The Reverend Philip J. Parker, a childhood member of St. John, entered the Ministry in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and served as a minister for over 40 years. Upon retiring, the Rev. Parker returned to this community and has filled the pulpit at St. John on numerous occasions.

The Ministers who have served St. John and their dates of service are listed below:

Thomas Gibson — Founder	W. H. Brown — 1915-1919
A. P. Tyre — 1884-1885	J. E. Underwood — 1919-1920
L. E. Stacy — 1885-1887	A. J. Parker — 1920-1924
J. W. North — 1887-1889	J. B. Thompson — 1924-1928
J. T. Lyon — 1889-1892	E. B. Fisher — 1928-1932
L. M. Wood — 1892-1893	J. H. B. Buffaloe — 1932-1936
W. S. Davis — 1893-1895	J. W. Lineberger — 1936-1940
W. J. Crowson — 1895-1896	W. H. Keeler — 1940-1942
M. D. Hix — 1896-1899	**W. H. Brown — 1942-1942
J. A. Lee — 1889-1903	J. P. Pegg — 1942-1947
G. B. Perry — 1903-1904	W. L. Maness — 1947-1951
F. B. McCall — 1904-1907	F. R. Dail — 1951-1953
L. L. Nash — 1907-1909	M. W. Warren — 1953-1958
*W. W. Peele — 1909-1909	G. L. Kinley — 1958-1962
N. E. Coltrane — 1909-1911	C. H. Mewborn — 1962-1967
O. W. Dowd — 1911-1915	W. A. Crowe — 1967-1969
	J. David Jones — 1969

*W. W. Peele finished year for Rev. Nash as supply.

**W. H. Brown finished year for Rev. Keeler as supply.

The 1971 Governing Board:

District Supt. — Dr. Joyce V. Early

Pastor — Rev. J. David Jones

Administrative Board Chairman — B. P. Lytch, Jr.

Church Lay-leader — W. F. Parker

Chairman of Trustees — W. F. Parker

Comm. on Finance Chairman — Sam D. Wright

Pastor — Parish Relations Chairman — B. P. Lytch, Jr.

Comm. on Nominations and Personnel Chrm. — W. F. Parker

Church Treasurer — Mack Norton

Financial Seretary — Mrs. Mack Norton

Council on Ministries Chrm. — Miss Edna Gibson

Supt. of Study Program — Odell Adams

Womans Society of Christian Service — President Mrs. George Benfield