

CHURCH HISTORY

It is impossible to ascertain the exact date of the founding of the Methodist Church body in the town of Jacksonville, North Carolina. The first house for Christian worship in Jacksonville was provided by the Masons in 1851, and it is reasonable to assume that there was a group of Methodists worshiping together prior to the War Between the States. The earliest recorded reference to the Jacksonville Church is found in the Methodist Episcopal Advocate, published in Raleigh, N. C., February, 1866. During these years the group of Methodists, in cooperation with the Baptists, conducted their services of worship on the lower floor of the Masonic Lodge Building.

During the summer of 1894, while in a revival campaign under the leadership of the Reverend G. W. Starling, pastor, a lot on Mill Avenue was procured from the Onslow Land and Improvement Company, and a Board of Trustees of the Jacksonville Methodist Episcopal Church was elected. These Trustees, George W. Taylor, Charles Gerock, and Frank Thompson, with the assistance of the pastor, succeeded in raising \$520.00. This, with the \$150.00 secured from the Board of Church Extension, was sufficient for the erection of a suitable house of worship. The cornerstone for the church was laid November 15, 1894, and the church was officially named "Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church."

The earliest available records reveal that the Jacksonville Methodists were originally served by the pastor of the Onslow Circuit of the Wilmington District. This circuit consisted of practically all the Methodist groups within the bounds of Onslow County. At the 1896 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference, Trinity was taken from the Onslow Circuit and Richlands was taken from the Duplin Circuit to form a new charge known as the Jacksonville-Richlands Charge. In 1912, this charge was divided and Sneads Ferry, Folkstone, and Dixon were grouped with Trinity as the Jacksonville Charge. At the 1913 session of the Annual Conference, however, Jacksonville and Richlands were reunited, and they remained as a charge until the fall of 1941.

The church building at Mill Avenue was enlarged and remodeled to accommodate the growth of the church and to provide better facilities for church programs. The church school annex, a two-room frame building, was erected during the pastorate of the Reverend P. D. Woodall in 1912. By 1930, Trinity Church had grown so much that expansion was required. The Reverend L. A. Watts led the church to erect a two-story brick building to replace the first annex.

In May, 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church united to form the Methodist Church. The church name then became, "Trinity Methodist Church." During 1939, while the Reverend H. L. Davis was pastor, a movement was launched to renovate the church edifice. Then in 1940, the reconstruction of the church was begun and, through the strenuous efforts of the Reverend I. T. Poole, a new brick building was constructed, the church was completely renovated, and was reopened for worship in June, 1941. In November, 1944, a big celebration was held to celebrate the dedication of the church building and to observe the 50th Anniversary of the church at Mill Avenue.

In 1941, the Jacksonville-Richlands Charge was divided, and Trinity and Verona became the Jacksonville Charge, which was still in the Wilmington District. Trinity became a station church in 1948, when the membership was 448. In 1954, Trinity was placed in the New Bern District.

Around 1950, it became quite evident that Jacksonville Methodists had outgrown their church facilities. Camp Lejeune had been established in 1941, and all the churches were finding it difficult to expand their programs and facilities to take care of the town's new residents. In October, 1952, Mr. D. L. Phillips of Charlotte gave a land parcel for a new church building on Bordeaux Street. Early in 1953, the Board of Trustees wrote the Conference Board of Missions and Church Extension about plans to relocate the church and build a new structure.

Under the leadership of Dr. T. B. Hough, the present building was undertaken, and a groundbreaking was held in December, 1954. During the construction period, services were held at the Iwo Jima Theater, because the church on Mill Avenue had been sold to the County Board of Education. The first service of worship in the new sanctuary was held on Sunday, May 6, 1956. Church membership at that time was 670. Attendance on that Sunday was 530 in the morning and 117 at evening worship!

Though the members of the congregation were excited and grateful for their beautiful new church building, they remembered the congregations who had gone before them. They brought with them records and furnishings from the Mill Avenue church. The old pulpit Bible and other items used in worship are currently in the church library, and the bell from the steeple of the Mill Avenue church is in the church fellowship hall. Stained glass windows were added to the sanctuary in the summer of 1964, during the pastorate of the Reverend L. A. Tilley.

In 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church united to become the United Methodist Church. Since that time this congregation has been called, "Trinity United Methodist Church."

The Trinity congregation continued to grow, and by 1968, the membership was 1161. In 1968-69, during the pastorate of Dr. J. T. Maides, an addition to the facilities was constructed, to provide a fellowship hall, kitchen, and additional classrooms. The Ketchum Memorial Chapel, and the church parlor were added when the Reverend Paul Browning was pastor. At this time, plans were made for the purchase of a new pipe organ and the project was completed in December, 1972, during the ministry of the Reverend J. A. Auman and the Reverend D. L. Miller, the first Associate Minister. In July 1973, church membership had grown to 1319.

In 1980, a new educational wing was completed, which included a youth room with a kitchen, a choir room, a library/conference room and nine classrooms. The balcony in the sanctuary was completed at the same time, and the new building completely furnished during the pastorates of the Reverend J. B. Parvin and the Reverend W. E. Braswell. Also during this time, Trinity financially supported the founding of the Pine Valley United Methodist Church, the newest United Methodist church in Jacksonville. In 1989, church membership was 1719. Since that time, a revision of the rolls reduced the membership to 1120. At the present, Trinity United Methodist Church has a membership of 1268

In 1994, a new ministry was begun which continues Trinity's tradition of a strong commitment to Christian education. On August 29, 1994, Trinity Preschool opened, with the mission "to nurture the spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of young children."

Though the history of Trinity has been recorded by dates of buildings, relocations, and additions, the true history of the people of God called Methodists in Jacksonville, North Carolina, has been written in the hearts and minds of the servants of Jesus Christ in this location, over this period of time. The true history of the life of this church is found in the records of the church school and thousands of worship services, the minutes of meetings, the records of weddings and funerals, and the records of baptisms and church membership. These are the records which show the persons who have come to know Jesus Christ because this Methodist congregation has been here, and has reached out in love to those who have known our presence.

In this Centennial Celebration, we look back in humility and gratitude to those who have preceded us, and we pray that we shall honor them in the future, following the same Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

November 26, 1995

FORMER TRINITY CHURCH PASTORS

R. T. N. Stephenson	1869-1870	N. M. Wright	1913
R. P. Bibb	1871-1873	C.T. Rogers	1914-1915
W. R. Ferguson	1874	C. E. Vale	1916-1918
L. W. Pigott	1875	E. W. Glass	1918
G. W. Hardison	1876-1877	W. J. Watson	1919-1920
W. P. McCorkle	1878	B. T. Hurley	1921-1922
M. H. Moore	1879	A. S. Parker	1923-1924
B. M. McCall	1880	J. H. Frizelle	1925-1927
J. T. Kendall	1881	L. A. Watts	1928-1932
R. L. Warlick	1882	R. M. Price	1933-1935
C. L. Smith	1883-1884	J. L. Joyce	1935
D. A. Futrell	1885	H. L. Davis	1936-1939
Z. Paris	1886	I. T. Poole	1940-1941
N. A. Hooker	1887	A. D. Leon Gray	1941-1945
J. C. Crisp	1888	L. L. Parish	1945-1949
Henderson Cole	1889-1890	W. R. Stevens	1949-1952
J. L. Keen	1891-1893	T. B. Hough	1952-1956
G. W. Starling	1894	T. R. Jenkins	1956-1960
Daniel Reid	1895	L. A. Tilley	1960-1964
Joseph Dixon	1896	J. T. Maides	1964-1969
W. A. Forbes	1897-1898	Paul Browning	1969-1972
D. B. Parker	1899	James A. Auman and Dan L. Miller	1972-1975
E. R. Welch	1900	James B. Parvin and Marshall Old	1975-1979
C. C. Brothers	1901	James B. Parvin and William Braswell	1979-1981
V. A. Royal	1902-1904	Richard T. Commander, Haywood A. Smith and Penny Dollar Farmer	1981-1986
R. R. Grant	1905-1906	Don Lee Harris, Bess Hunnings and Linda Goldman	1986-1990
W. H. L. McLaurin	1907	Clyde H. Dunn	1990-1993
J. C. Whedbee	1908-1909	William Spencer	1993-Present
W. E. Brown	1910-1911		
P. D. Woodall	1912		