



HISTORY OF UNION GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

BY JULIA LITTRELL, AUGUST 1980 (REVISED: 1991; 2002)

In the early 1900s, schools were few and far between. None were in or near the community which formed near Roxboro Road and South Lowell Road, where 12 families lived of which nine had children. These families formed a Union and asked the Board of Education for a school. They won the promise of a school if the community would furnish the land and half of the funds for the building. The Parrish estate donated one acre and a bachelor in the area gave another acre. The 12 families donated half of the funds for the building, and construction was begun. It was named the Union School, and began operations in 1914. Miss Lizzie Barnes was the first teacher, followed by Mrs. Lillian L. Terry, Mrs. Beulah Crabtree, Miss Mabel Parker, Miss Julia Carver, and others.

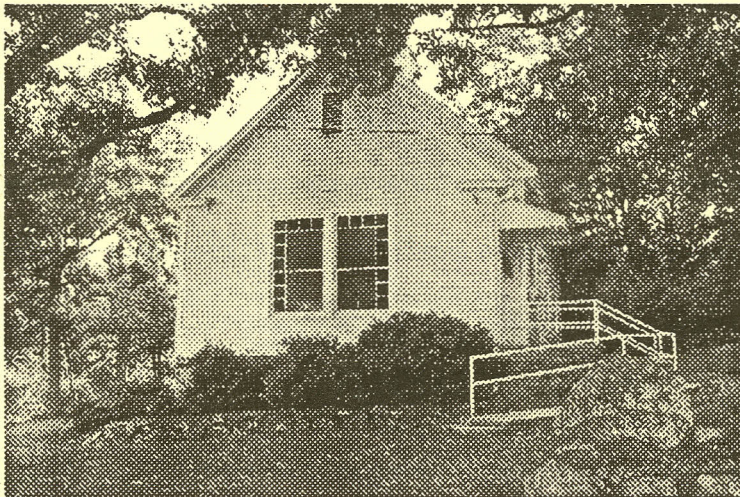
Almost immediately a Sunday School was begun using the building, with the faithful attendance of Mr. Bill Saunders, Mr. C.E. Crabtree, and Mr. O. H. Watson. Every year there was a Christmas tree, an Easter Fish Fry on the Little River or an Egg Hunt, and an August picnic. The first Sunday School Superintendent was O.H. Watson, who served for many years.

In 1924, the County Board consolidated the smaller schools. C.E. Crabtree bought the school property for \$75.00, and gave it to the Methodist Conference. The former school building was organized as a church and named Union Grove. C.E. Crabtree served as Sunday School Superintendent from 1924 until his death, followed by Anna Berle Green, L.T. McFarland, Gertrude Crabtree, Ralph Jones, and others.

Although the building was built as a school, from its inception it served as a place of worship, with Sunday School each week and a preaching service when a preacher could be secured. When the church was first organized, the roof needed repairs. As there was very little money in the community, the

Sunday School Superintendent, C.E. Crabtree, went with Bill Saunders, an Episcopalian, and got the needed money to cover the costs from a Presbyterian. The church was living up to its name, Union Grove.

The Reverend J.H. Starnes, pastor of the Bahama churches, preached once a month for \$3.00 per service from 1921 until the church became affiliated with the Methodist Church. He then served as pastor until 1927. Pastors since then have been: J.B. Hurley, J.W. Lineberger, M.W. Warren, W.G. Burgin, J.T. Greene, Kermit Wheeler, Warren B. Petteway, W.N. Bass, David Andrews, E. Ray Goodwin, Alison Simon-



ton, Jr., Frank E. Berry, Paul C. Gentry, Stanley E. Latorre, Charles R. Humphries, Richard Parsons, Douglas Stanfield, Charles K. Moseley, Terry Robertson, Ronald Snider, Julia Webb-Bowden, Roderic L. Mullen, Worth Pearce, David Smith, Steve Hall, and the present pastor, Para Drake.

In 1952, some of the church's land was deeded to the Union Grove Community Club for a cabin. With the opening of the Black Horse Run subdivision in 1987 and the resulting influx of new members into the church, the congregation felt the need for more space. So the church reacquired the land and cabin in 1990, refurbishing the cabin.

Until 1991, Union Grove United Methodist Church had no steeple. The family and friends of Paul Thomas Hall gave Union Grove its new steeple in February of 1991, in his memory and to the Glory of God.

Worship services at Union Grove begin at 11 a.m. each Sunday, except the third Sunday of each month when worship begins at 9:30 a.m. All are welcome, so please join us. We're the little church with a big heart.