

The history of the Methodist Church in Pasquotank, begins with the coming of George Whitefield to this area. Whitefield's sermons were heard throughout the Northeastern Counties of North Carolina from 1739 to 1765.

Joseph Pilmore came to the Albemarle in 1772. He is known to have preached on the waters of the Currituck Sound, and undoubtedly visited Pasquotank during this time.

In 1774 a Methodist Circuit was organized comprising the territory from Petersburg to Roanoke River in North Carolina; and at Baltimore, May 21, 1776. The Circuit was formally established by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury. The first preachers officially sent to the Circuit were Edward Dromgoode, Francis Paythreas, and Iham Tatum.

In 1784 The Methodist Episcopal Church was separated from the other branches of Methodism. The Church Circuit had 683 members on April 20, 1785, when Asbury and Coke came to Creek Hall at Louisburg, to establish the Methodist Episcopal Church in North Carolina.

The Methodist met in the courthouse building in Elizabeth City in 1804, and had congregated, at the very latest, in the Boyd's Neck Section by the year 1815, for on the Thomas L. Shannonhouse burial marker, located behind Union Church, the inscription states he had been of the Methodist faith for 27 years when he died in 1842. Mr. Shannonhouse resided in Boyd's Neck all his lifetime.

Union Methodist Episcopal Church, Salem Township, is located near the main branch of Great Flatty Creek on Boyd's Neck Road. The Church was founded in the year 1826, thereby have the distinction of being the oldest Methodist Church in Pasquotank County, and also the oldest Church Building left standing in the County, it being in continuous use for some one hundred odd years. It is one year older than Hall's Creek Church, erected in 1827, and two years the senior of the First Methodist Church building which was built in Elizabeth City in 1828.

As a sidelight to this historical Methodist Church, it is interesting to note that in March 1814, on petition of Thomas L. Shannonhouse, guardian of John Tooley, and Elizabeth Tooley

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Shannon, that the court appointed as commissioners John Mullen, Anthony Markham, Sr., James Overman, Benjamin Howett and Jacob Lister, with Thomas Jordan as surveyor, to divide the estate located on Flatty Creek, which was the Adam and Betsy Tooley Plantation. Elizabeth or Betsy, as she was perhaps better known, was the mother of Elizabeth City. It was she for whom the town was named. On a portion of this 65 acres, which John Tooley acquired as his inheritance is the site on which Union Church was built. The foregoing division of the Tooley Plantation is recorded in Division Book A, pp. 116, Pasquotank Register of Deeds Office.

The Trustees, or founders, of Union Methodist Episcopal Church, were: Thomas L. Shannonhouse, William Reid, Henry Hollowell, Robert H. Barcher, Thomas Reid, Joshua A. Pool, and Silbey Pilcher. On September 5, 1826, they purchased from John Tooley, a two (2) acre tract of land, lying on Great Flatty (called Milldam in deed) Creek for the token sum of one dollar. Quite evidently Mr. Tooley was generously donating this land to the church. This deed is recorded on pp. 46, Deed Book Y. Construction of the House of Worship was begun that fall. Mrs. R. H. Commander relates of hearing her Grandfather, Mr. John Cartwright, tell of donating both time and material in the building of the Church.

Miss Susan Shannonhouse, daughter of Thomas L. Shannonhouse, suggested the name Union for the Church since its membership consisted of Primitive Baptists, Episcopalians, and Friends, as well as Methodists.

Later Miss Susan, at the age of sixteen, met a tragic death on the Church ground. While riding horseback, she entered the Church Yard, suddenly a falling limb struck the animal causing it to rear up throwing Miss Susan to the turf, killing her instantly. Her grave is marked by a mound, located near her father's tombstone.

During the depression following the stock market crash in 1886, the Church's membership dwindled to a low ebb and the building was found to be in an ill state of repair. When it was suggested that perhaps Union should be abandoned, Mr. Elisha Lister arose and offered to furnish shingles for the roof that the leakage might be stopped until better times when the

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remainder of the structure could be repaired and the membership increased. His offer of the shingles brought praise and the volunteers to apply the shingles, from many good Methodist men of Union.

On October 27, 1906, James T. Chorey sold the lot on the corner of Boyd's Neck Road and the New Road to the Church for the sum of thirty-five dollars. This one and one-half acre plot is used as a cemetery. Trustees representing Union in this transaction were: W. H. Whidbee, J. L. Palmer, and Elisha Lister, Ref. Deed Book 30, pp. 376.

From 1826 until 1893 Union and the remainder of the Pasquotank Circuit, were in the Virginia Conference. In 1893, however, the Charge was transferred to the North Carolina Conference.

In 1923 Union Church was expanded, adding Sunday School rooms to the building. The Belfry was also added at this time.

In 1953 a Vestibule was constructed at the entrance of the building. It was graciously given to the Church in memory of Mr. W. D. Saunders, by his family.

Union obtained a separate pastor in 1954 and in 1955 erected a modern seven room parsonage, located on the Dry Ridge Road.

In 1957 Union was placed with Brite Meadows Methodist Church to form a two point circuit.

In 1958 Union once again obtained a separate pastor.

In the Conference year 1957-1958 three additional Church School rooms were added and rest rooms for men and women were added. The rest rooms were donated to the Church by Mrs. S. B. Underwood, Sr. of Greenville, North Carolina. Mrs. Underwood grew up in Salem Township near Union Church and her father was Mr. Elisha Lister. The rest rooms were dedicated August 31, 1958.

The oldest available records of Union Church (and all the Methodist Churches of the old Pasquotank Charge) including names of pastors, members, trustees, exhorters, births, deaths, and other miscellaneous data, is penned in two logs, which are kept at the Circuit parsonage. The date of recording begins with year 1857.