

WALLACE METHODIST CHURCH

301 SOUTH COLLEGE STREET
WALLACE, N. C.

HISTORY OF THE WALLACE METHODIST CHURCH

The history and progress of Wallace Methodist Church parallels and is a significant part of that of the town of Wallace. While the town was getting early charters the Methodist were getting deeds to the property on which their church buildings have always stood. In 1883 Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Boney gave the land and the deed was made for the church at Duplin Cross Roads. However in 1904 another deed was drawn "to eliminate a certain clause that appeared in the deed of 1883." The word "Wallace" replaced "Duplin Cross Roads" and the trustees were changed to T. J. Hall, J. K. Bryant and J. H. Westbrook.

Church records reveal that approximately a dozen earliest members and their children of 1884-1887 met in "Meeting Houses," which were probably homes of members as some refer to "Bryants". (*See also on Census*)

Among the membership to 1904 were the family names of Bryants, Sneedens, Butlers, Southerlands, Johnsons, Porters, Brices, Registers, Murrays, Wests, Halls, Boneys, Teacheys, Jenkins, McGowans, Westbrooks, Murphys, Corbetts, Mintzs, Shaws, and Gibbons.

Mrs. Davis Bryant who passed away in 1962 at the age of 95 years, and who had been a member of the Wallace Methodist Church for 74 years, stated that her father, the Rev. W. A. Forbes of Duke's Mission, Fayetteville District, was conducting a revival in the Wallace church at the time of the great Charleston earthquake that was felt for hundreds of miles. He prayed that the people would be shaken up, and after the occurrence of the earth quake, the Methodist felt that his prayers were answered for much progress in the church took place.

The Church Conference Record "10 Feb., 1895" written by Kirchuer Bryant says that the "Supt. of the Sunday School, Brother Davis C. Bryant, stated that he was conducting a Union School that was well attended and accomplishing good." In the same record the stewards reported that the church was "assessed \$35.00 for the support of the ministry". The members would be assessed to raise it. Brother Davis C. Bryant, William P. Brice and Mrs. Annie Boney composed the assessing committee and "monthly envelope system would be used to raise some."

Between 1896 and 1899, while the strawberry industry was getting a start, new merchantile establishments were increasing and the little town of Wallace was progressing in general the Wallace Methodist Women were busy taking the lead in a "Movement on foot to purchase an organ for our church", which was the manually operated kind, to go in the small white wooden frame church building. Mr. T. Q. Hall reported for Mr. Davis Bryant that the Methodist had more than 50 enrolled in their Sunday School, using their own literature, organized according to the discipline and in a flourishing condition. Mrs. J. W. Boney and Mrs. D. C. Bryant represented the church at a "ladies meeting" in Magnolia at which time they "were made collectors in the interest of furnishing a circuit parsonage". A ladies aid society was organized by the Wallace church, Burgaw Circuit, Wilmington District, Me. Church South.

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Continuing to grow materially, educationally and spiritually is revealed by the following quotas from former pastor's reports - 1905 W. Francke Sandford, "The church building at Wallace has been relieved of debt and is now ready for dedication. God is on our side. It is hard to judge accurately of the spiritual state of the churches; for it is not always easy to read men. True, "by their fruits ye shall know them"; but there may be deeper things than appear on the surface. In answer, I can only say that from such knowledge as I have been able to gain my congregations and churches appear to be about as spiritual as the average charges I have heretofore served. Both in public and private I give care to the instruction of the young people and children, deeming it one of the most important duties of the pastor." Following Mr. Davis Bryant as S.S. Supt. was A. L. McGowan who resigned in 1905 and J. N. Gibbons was elected. "The conference organ" was "the Raleigh advocate" and the Wallace Church had 53 subscriptions. In 1906, D. W. Murray was elected S. S. Supt., and Pastor Sandford continues, "Judging from present indications the spiritual state of the church is somewhat strengthened at some points, while at others no loss has been sustained.. Good meeting was held at Wallace, being a great interest and proving a blessing to the church and town. 10 persons were added to church membership on profession of faith. The mission collections paid off the assessment in full. The mission conscience is growing."

In 1907, W. L. Cunningham, Presiding Elder, stated, "I feel that the S. S. Superintendents have one of the most important positions in all of our work and the man holding such a position should often be on his knees and at all times in touch with God for one day these Superintendents have got to give an account of this talent lent to them by the Blessed Lord."

The Ladies Aid Society which had been called at times "The Golden Link Society" was organized into a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in 1907. This later became the Woman's Missionary Society, embracing both Home and Foreign Missions in 1940 when Methodism was united (North and South) ~~the women's work became the~~ Woman's work became the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

Going back to the earlier days we find a statement made in 1907 by C. T. Rogers, then pastor, that reveals some frankness that is needed today as yesterday - "I believe the church is growing stronger, although we have a great many dead heads." In 1908 J. J. Barker, pastor, stated, "We need more interest in financial matters well as the subject of prohibition now before the people in the state, On account of the floods some of our people have lost all their crops and collections have been cut off ~~some~~, we have a few faithful ones who will do more than usual."

From 1884 - 1887 the band of Methodist apparently had no regular pastor. However M. M. McFarland was the minister who presided when in 1884 the first seven adult members joined by transfer. Other ministers who were known to have supplied were W. A. Forbes and Charles A. Durant. These seven charter members were: Henry T. Bryant, Virginia S. Bryant, Davis Bryant, Carrie Bryant, Kerchuer Bryant, R. C. Sneed, and Mollie F. Bryant, Luke Butler, was the first member to be received by vows. The first Christening (before 1900) were of David Maxwell, Geddie, Susan Catherine Boney, Janie Elizabeth Geddie, and Gibbons Westbrook Murphy.

Under the leadership of the pastors mentioned above and these listed below, the Wallace church has had remarkable growth.

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J. R. Sawyer--1887-1889; A. J. Parker--1889-1890; R. L. Warlick--1890-1892; D. C. Geddie--1892-1896; D. A. Futrell--1896-1898; J. W. Martin--1898-1902; C. C. Brothers--1902-1904; W. F. Sandford--1904-1906; C. T. Rogers--1906-1907; J. J. Barker--1907-1909; Y. E. Wright--1909-1912; B. H. Black--1912-1916; M. D. Hix--1916-1919; J. R. Moose--1919-1921; T. W. Lee--1921-1925; A. S. Parker--1925-1929; Daniel Lane--1929-1932; P. O. Lee--1932-1935; E. C. Maness--1935-1938; P. H. Fields--1938-1940; C. T. Rogers--1940-1948; C. B. Dawsey--1948-1950; K. R. Wheeler--1950-1954; W. D. Caviness--1954-1957; A. F. McClung--1957-1960; W. H. Kirby--1960-1964; George W. Ports, Jr.--1960-.

The budget of the church has increased a thousand times over that of the first recorded. According to records available there has been only three church treasurers, T. Q. Hall, J. S. Cavanaugh and his son A. J. Cavanaugh. The membership has grown steadily. The first service was held in the brick church that replaced the wooden one on the same ground in 1926. It was dedicated in 1942 with services conducted by Bishop Clare Purcell. In the beginning the church was always on a large circuit, and as most of the churches had services only once a month and later twice a month. However, in 1948 the circuit was divided to make Wallace and Providence a two point charge. The church continued to grow so that in 1956 it was made a station appointment with a full time pastor. C. B. Dawsey was the first pastor to live in the new brick parsonage built in Wallace and furnished by the church in 1948. In 1950, under the leadership of C. B. Dawsey and K. R. Wheeler, the church sanctuary was completely remodeled and an electric organ, carpeting and other furnishings and appointments were given by various members. With continued growth, toward looking plans were begun for an adequate educational building. With this in mind in 1955 and 1956 W. D. Caviness, pastor; J. S. Blair, and H. S. Wait, Lay Leader; J. W. Sumner, Chairman of the Official Board; and A. J. Cavanaugh, Treasurer; plans were begun for devising ways and means to build the much needed educational building. Plans began to take shape and the house and lot adjoining the church property on the South were purchased in 1956 for \$11,500. The grounds and house were improved and five additional class rooms were made available.

On May 26, 1957, the church had a wonderful Homecoming celebration. The working committees were headed by Mesdames A. J. Cavanaugh, J. S. Blair, Osbert Fussell, A. J. Carr, T. B. Overman, Dave Campbell, J. W. Sumner, D. B. Townsend, N. M. Johnson, L. B. Fussell, T. G. Covington, J. H. Bryant, Francis Townsend, A. H. Carter, Jr., W. L. Hussey, M. G. Cording, H. S. Wait, W. H. Puckett, R. A. Buchanan, Elmore Jenkins, Joe King, John Sasser, Frank Jessup, J. O. Carr, R. J. Hursey, Miss Mary Bland Hoffler and Sam Jones, Marshall Cain, Dr. H. W. Colwell, J. H. Bryant, J. W. Sumner, Robert Watson, Schubert Williams, A. J. Carr, John E. Pope, J. S. Blair and A. J. Cavanaugh. Many former members and guests were present in the services, and for the bountiful and delicious dinner. Bishop W. W. Peele delivered the sermon. W. D. Caviness, Pastor, presided. N. M. Johnson gave the welcome, A. J. Cavanaugh introduced former members, Mrs. J. S. Blair gave the history. The Rev. W. C. Benson, retired Methodist minister, living in Wallace, the Rev. Kermit Wheeler, former pastor, and Jerry Juren, local ministerial student, spoke briefly. Clyde Brown and daughter rendered a solo and a duet and the choir sang the anthem, "Beside the Still Waters." A. J. Carr was chairman of the welcoming committee.

A. F. McClung during the years 1957-1960 continued to strive for a program and in January of 1958 the official board voted to secure the services of Windsor Associates - Mr. Henry Calvert representative, to assist in raising money and securing pledges for contributions over a 5 year period to increase finances so there could be a building fund for Educational purposes. A most successful Fellowship Dinner was held on June 17, 1958 at the Woman's Club Building, when Henry Rivenbark was chairman of the official Board. A. J. Cavanaugh, canvass chairman, presided and welcomed the group. The Rev. W. C. Benson gave the invocation.

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Mrs. J. S. Blair spoke on "Our Church History and Heritage", Mr. A. W. Burrows on "Our Church Outlook", Jesse Sumner and A. J. Carr on "Our Real Need - Christian Stewardship", and Thell Overman on "How to Make a Sacrificial Pledge". The pastor, A. F. McClung, conducted the program with an inspiring message. The members of the M. Y. F. served the supper and Mrs. Margaret Hall J. Glasgow, a Presbyterian, whose grandfather Hall was a pioneer worker in this Methodist church, kept the nursery during supper. The Canvassing Committee distributed books, "Building For The Future" and their campaign was very successful. A booklet entitled, "Building for God", was published after W. H. Kirby became the pastor in 1960. With his enthusiasm, abilities, hard work and full cooperation of the members - plus the leadership of the Building and Planning Committees the contract for the beautiful and functional Educational Building including a lovely chapel and church parlor was let to Godwin Building Co., Inc. of Warsaw, N. C. with Leslie N. Boney, who designed the main building in 1926, as the architect. Mr. Kirby stated "The years of dreaming and planning and prayer were realized on Sunday morning, January 7, 1962".

An adequate building has contributed to the excellent quality of christian training young people and adults are getting in the church. The spirit of the church is good, and its missionary outreach fine. As someone has said, "I am standing in one place, and yet by the miracle of missions my feet are treading the path of mercy around the world."

An organization of Methodist men has been functioning well for about 15 years. Men and women have had their prayer groups on each Wednesday. Five church commissions have been functioning well for sometime: (1) Missions, (2) Stewardship and Finance, (3) Education, (4) Membership and Evangelism, (5) Christian Social Concerns. We aid the orphans and the old. A church secretary is employed. Excellent choir of adults and young people directed by Mrs. Francis Townsend adds much to the worship services. Religious holidays have taken on more significance. At Christmas the spirit is that of giving, with "a giving" tree decorated in the church each year by the children with gifts for the orphanage, and a "white Christmas" by the adults for the needy. This church participated in establishing two new Methodist Colleges in the State, (at Fayetteville and Rocky Mount) and continues support of all the church colleges in the N. C. Conference. It is a part of the new church center in New York for the United Nations - a symbol of the churches "Work for World Peace with Justice and Freedom". A study panel was held on "Responsible Adults for Tomorrow's World" with follow up. Excellent church wide studies are conducted regularly on the Bible, mission fields and other timely subjects. "Trick or Treat" for the needy children of the world is sponsored each October. Two very outstanding sermons were preached by the Rev. W. H. Kirby. One of these on "My Life and My World" was given by him at two commencement exercises. The other, "Taking This Town For Christ" was a courageous sermon to the congregation. All cannot be said here about yesterday or today. However, we are here today enjoying the fruits of the labors of those who came before us, and in turn, striving to leave an even richer heritage for those who will come after us.