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Capers Chapel History

Capers Chapel United Methodist Church

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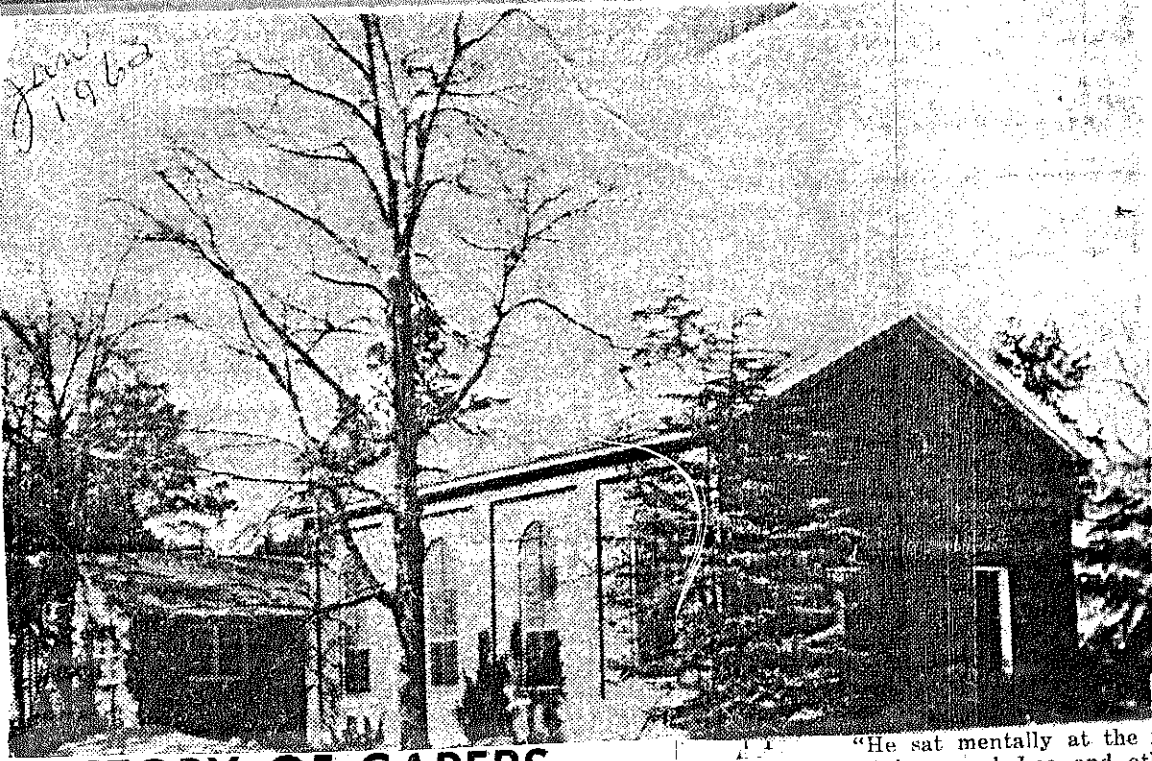
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Recommended Citation

Capers Chapel United Methodist Church, "Capers Chapel History" (2023). *Methodist Local Church Records*. 117.

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HISTORY OF CAPERS CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

By ANNE COLLINS

Capers Chapel Methodist Church, four miles from Chester on the Lowrys road, is one of the oldest Methodist Churches in the area.

As early as 1786, an appointment on Sandy River is mentioned. Francis Asbury preached there on January 29th of that year.

The progress of Methodism in Chester and York Counties was slow at first because of the predominance of Presbyterians. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, its advancement was more rapid.

Records show that Methodists, until 1838, used the Chester County Court House as a place of worship.

"The Methodists," according to ~~Dr. A. M. Sherzberg~~ in his book, Early Methodism in the Carolinas, had no church nearer than Smith's (now Capers Chapel) Chapel. Only a few members were in the village (of Chester.)

"Timothy R. Lipsey well represented that stalwart Methodism of that day. His emotional nature was strong; his sincerity beyond question."

Others listed as "noted Charter Asburian Methodists on Sandy River" were Robin Walker, Samuel Mobley, Mrs. Susan Stokes, F. J. West, and Mrs. Adeline Sledge.

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The old Smith Chapel was moved to the present site about 1855 and the name changed to Capers Chapel in honor of Bishop William Capers.

Samuel Leard records this story of Bishop Capers:

"An ancient lady of Georgetown told me she was present at his birth. The attending physician directed all his attention to the mother, whose case was critical, and told the attendants to lay aside the newborn infant boy, as it was dead or soon would be."

"The attendants thought differently and soon succeeded in restoring the child to life, and then said to the doctor, 'he will be a Methodist bishop some day.'"

"The doctor laughed at their prediction, but history brought its fulfillment."

Bishop Capers is described as being very handsome, "shaped in nature's most exquisite mold."

"In middle life, he was faultless as to form and feature, of medium height, graceful in person, with a voice of wonderful sweetness and power. He had keen, penetrating black eyes, seemingly searching your thoughts, and yet glowing with the warmth of the most intense feeling."

Capers was an excellent speaker, according to historians, and is credited with giving Methodist both caste and power among the wealthy and refined classes of South Carolina.

"He sat mentally at the feet of Asbury and Lee and others of lesser note, and drank in the very spirit of the martyrs until he was prepared to sacrifice all he held dear in life for the cause of his religion."

A chaste monument in Washington Street churchyard, Columbia, marks his grave.

Under the direction of the Rev. William Capers in 1830, Methodist missions were extended to the slaves. Within the bounds of the Charleston Dis-

strict the effort began, and soon was extended to all districts of the states.

Dr. Capers was born on January 26, 1795, and died January 29, 1855. He was educated at the South Carolina College (now University of South Carolina) where he studied law.

He was, however, ordained and admitted to the South Carolina Methodist conference in 1808. He was appointed bishop at Louisville, Kentucky in 1845.

The Capers family was distinguished "for piety, fine personal appearance, intelligence, and most of them as eloquent preachers of the gospel."

They were descendants of Major William Capers of Revolutionary war fame, who married Mary Singletary, daughter of John Singletary of St. Thomas Parish, in lower South Carolina.

The first church erected on the present site of Capers Chapel was torn down and the lumber sold to Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church. (It was at one time a Methodist church).

The present building was erected in 1881. Mr. J. R. Simrill (father of Miss Belle Simrill of Chester) was the contractor. The brick was made by hand from clay in the valley behind the church.

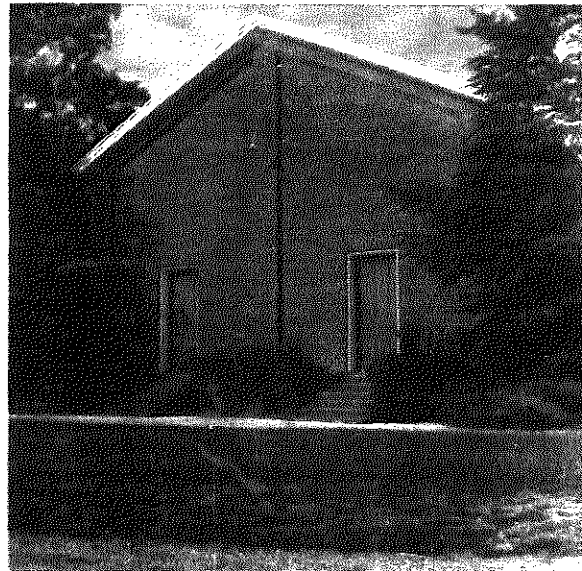
The new church building was erected through the efforts of the Rev. L. A. Johnson, then the pastor of the church.

Trustees at the time were Neely Hardin, J. O. Darby, J. M. Ferguson, Holmes Hardin, John Henry Hardin, and perhaps others.

The Chester circuit, of which Capers Chapel is a charge, was formerly embraced in what was called the Sandy River circuit. It extended from the old Smith's Chapel to within ten miles of Columbia.

In 1834, the name of the circuit was changed from Sandy River to the Winnsboro circuit. In 1853, the Winnsboro circuit was divided. The Chester circuit was formed in 1859.

The first person buried in the Capers Chapel Cemetery was Mrs E. G. West in 1857.



HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The old Smith Chapel Church, one of the oldest Churches in Chester County was moved to the present sight in 1855. At that time the name was changed to Capers Chapel, in honor of Bishop William Capers.

The present building was erected in 1881. Mr. J. R. Simril, father of Miss Belle Simril of Chester, was the contractor for the new building. The brick for the church was made of clay, from a valley near the church, largely through the efforts of Rev. L. A. Johnson, then pastor of the church.

Trustees of the church at that time were: Mr. Neely Hardin, Mr. J. O. Darby, Mr. J. M. Ferguson, Mr. Holmes Hardin, Mr. John H. Hardin.

Down through the years the many pastors and members have carried on the good work started so long ago.

In 1961 during the time the Rev. William K. Coble was pastor of the Church, erection of the Educational Building was started and is now being completed under the leadership of our pastor Rev. Robert Tanner.

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Preachers who have served Capers Chapel since 1832 (as far back as records were kept) are: John Robinson, A. B. Gilroy, William S. Smith, Whiteford Smith, W. M. Kennedy, Joseph Holmes, Joseph H. Wheeler, J. W. Townsend, William R. Smith, Samuel W. Capers (later Bishop Capers), A. M. Foster, William C. Patterson, Samuel Townsend, Laniel McDaniel, W. Barnes, D. G. McDowell, John Watts, John A. Porter, Payton G. Bowman, John Samuel Leard, J. W. J. Henis, J. S. Connor, E. J. Maynardie, William Martin, R. P. Franks, John A. Porter, William Smith, J. J. Fleming, James H. Ward, J. H. Robinson, James N. Cline, Miles Puckett, A. G. Stacy, John R. Pickett, J. E. Watson, P. G. Bowman, J. S. Nelson, J. G. Kilgo, J. W. Humbert, Thomas Mitchell, M. H. Pooser, L. A. Johnson (the father of the present church building), J. M. Boyd, D. D. Dantzler, J. C. Stoll, J. B. Traywick, N. B. Clarkson, G. H. Wardell, J. E. Mahaffey, G. M. Boyd, J. M. Friday, A. E. Holler, Dove Tiller, R. A. Young, J. H. Montgomery, W. G. Duncan, R. E. Sharpe, S. B. White, R. C. Boulware, F. G. Whitlock, G. T. Hughes, G. W. Burke, J. H. Brown, W. G. Newman, F. V. Roberson, Joe K. Brown, Clarence Pittman, W. K. Coble, and the present pastor, Robert Tanner. **OVER

On Sunday, January 20, 1963, the brick educational building recently completed at the rear of the church was used for the first time. It has six class rooms, two rest rooms, social hall and kitchen.

Church school enrollment is 46 and attendance Sunday was 38. The Rev. Robert Tanner is minister.

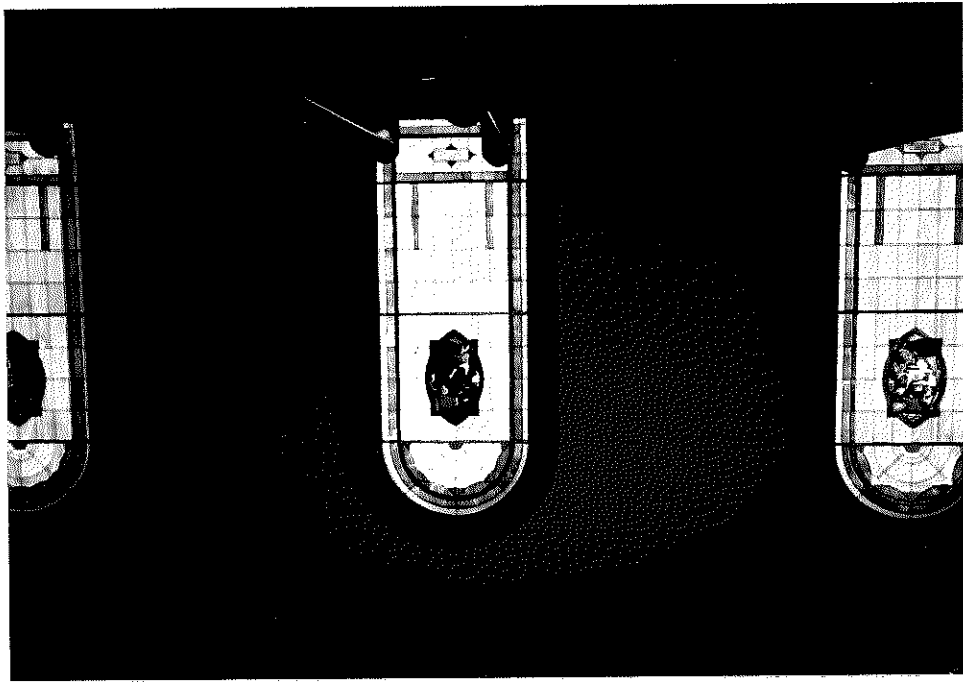
- The Chester News January 30, 1963

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- Warren Ashmore - 1992
- Frank Copeland June 1992 - Mar 1993
- Chris Byron Saelgrove Mar 1993 - 2007
- Irvin Plowden, Jr. 2007 - 2011
- Lols Jean Helms 2012 - 2012
- Charles Bryson Williams, Jr. 2013 - 2014
- Paige Danielle Wheeler 2014 - 2018
- James Daniel Curran 2018 -

* prayer garden with fountain by Rev. Chris Saelgrove + Frank Sealey

- 1989 porch construction Charles Jennings, pastor
Build Comm
Wes Bramlett, chairman,
Walker "Sheeter" Hardin
Jeland "Pete" Grant
- 1991 handcrafted lecture given by Earl + Jane Ellen Cameron
at the marriage of their daughter, Lee Cameron to
Paul Petitgout - William Jourdan was the craftsman
- 1999 * Fellowship hall ^{addition} with handicapped ramp
- 2000 * new church signed with lighted area - ^{old sign placed} at cemetery entrance to be used
for funeral announcements
- 2006 ~~exten~~ ~~sanctuary~~ sanctuary renovation - paint carpet new altar rail
pulpit area updated
pulpit furniture refinished new upholstery on already beautiful pews new choir chairs
- 2006 prayer garden, "Chris Saelgrove Prayer Garden" Building Comm:
- 2007 May - 2 handcrafted items given and dedicated to God's
Glory 1) communion table in memory of William Earl Cameron by
his family
2) baptismal font given in memory of Joe Hardin by his
family
John Seake was the craftsman of Seake's Angles, York, AC



Memo, 1993 - Capers College & M. Edwards

Whenever you enter the sanctuary we pray that these windows will aid in your focusing upon God and His grace through Jesus Christ.

As one enters the sanctuary we find the life of Christ incorporated in the window designs. Beginning on the left, we have the Nativity, Jesus as a boy carpenter, Jesus' baptism, Jesus teaching, Jesus with the children, In Gethsemane, the Crucifixion and concluding with the Ascension.

The new stained glass windows today are dedicated to the glory of God and in memory and in honor of loved ones (list later).

NEW WINDOWS

ORDER FOR THE DEDICATION OF CHURCH CHAPEL WINDOWS
Pentecost Sunday May 30, 1993.

Pastor: Then the LORD said to Moses: "Set up the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the first month. Place the ark of the Testimony in it and shield the ark with the curtain. Bring in the table and set out what belongs on it. Then bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps.... Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; place the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it. Set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it: consecrate it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. (Exodus 40:1-9 NIV)

The donor, or their representative stands before the window and says:--

We present this window to be consecrated to the glory of almighty God and for service to this church in loving (**memory or honor**) of (**Name**).

The people say together:

We accept this window as a sacred trust and will guard it and look upon it in loving memory of this loved one.

After all windows have been presented, the pastor says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we consecrate these windows to the glory of God in honor and memory of these, God's servants.

Let us pray: Most loving God, without you no words or works of ours have meaning. Accept the gifts of our hands as symbols of our devotion. Grant us your blessing, as we have consecrated these gifts to your glory, that they may be an enduring witness before all your people, and that our lives may be consecrated in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**