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Wesley Chapel Union History

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, Union

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A quick church history:

Wesley Chapel is one of the oldest Methodist churches in Union County and probably the Spartanburg District. According to Mrs. Fannie A. Vaughan (deceased February, 1997), her mother often told her that Wesley Chapel was once known by a different name. Five Winds was the name she thought it was called. However, there was a church in the Adamsburg area known as Five Forks. In August 1833, a building committee was appointed to build a "new meeting house" near the five forks on the Enoree Circuit. This indicates the church was older than 1833. In April 1834, John Ennis deeded two acres and 26 poles near a place known as Five Forks. This is the last record of Five Forks. It is probable that this church changed its name to Wesley Chapel in 1836. Wesley Chapel has the same trustees listed as those listed for Five Forks in 1834.

In August 1877, Wesley Chapel was reported to be in a dilapidated condition and a motion was made that a new church be built nearer to F. M. Harris. This also indicates they probably met in the old Five Forks Church. In March 1881, the trustees were authorized to sell the old church and property and apply the proceeds to the new church being built in its stead. It is believed that during this time the church met in the old Adams House at Adamsburg.

On December 29, 1884, Mr. J.F.J.G. Farr, after receiving the sum of \$20.00, deeded 6-3/4 acres of land to the trustees of the church. This is the land on which the present church now stands.

The oldest grave in the cemetery is that of W. R. Parr who was killed during the Civil War battle of Gettysburg in 1864. There are numerous graves in the cemetery which date prior to or just after 1900.

During the early years of Wesley Chapel's history, the pastor was a circuit riding preacher who rode on horseback or buggy from church to church on these long circuits visiting members and holding services. The members themselves conducted services when the circuit preacher was unavailable, which was often. Marriages and funerals were conducted by the circuit preacher if he could be located on the circuit and could arrive in time for the event.

Until 1946 Wesley Chapel was a one-room building with two front doors and open windows. The church was heated with a pot-bellied stove and the lights hung from the ceiling. Also, the church had big rocks for steps. There were no classrooms, but the membership divided into adult and children's classes and met in separate corners of the sanctuary for their classes. At that time Wesley Chapel had worship services twice monthly on Sunday afternoons. The church school met the other two Sundays in the mornings. Some members walked many miles to attend the afternoon services. For many years, Mr. Claude Hughes collected the offering in his hat. Miss Ella Vanderford was the church treasurer, communion steward and kept the church moving forward. She did her banking in a cigar box. If money was short, the minister was paid with eggs,

chickens, or produce from church members.

As the membership grew, Mary Ruth Vanderford organized the youth fellowship and the children's program, including Bible School. She was also the first president of the Missionary Society (now United Methodist Women). In 1947, three classrooms were added which greatly improved the church school. A basement was added to allow additional indoor activities. The men of the church did most of the work.

In 1950, the church was brick veneered with the entrance being changed to a middle door with a small porch. Memorial stained glass windows were also added at this time.

In 1960, the porch was enclosed to create a narthex, with a new front porch and steps added.

In 1961, the wooden cross behind the pulpit was given in memory of Mrs. Mae Reynolds by her children.

In 1963, five additional classrooms and two bathrooms were added.

In 1970, the lighted directory was given in memory of Carroll Sexton by Jean Patterson Sexton (now Mrs. Roger Deaton).

In 1974, the cemetery was upgraded and a perpetual fund was set up for its care. Frank Farr of Anderson and Wilson Farr of Augusta gave donations to set up the perpetual fund.

In 1977, a new parsonage was completed in conjunction with Lockhart United Methodist Church.

In 1979, William H. (Buddy) Phillips left Wesley Chapel to go into the ministry.

On March 15, 1994, a ground breaking ceremony was held to begin construction on the fellowship building. The building was completed in February of 1995.

Construction began in in early November 2004 to expand the sanctuary. This was completed the following March with the first Worship service being on Easter Sunday, 2005. The altar fixtures were marched in at the beginning of the service. Some of the pews were not ready, so folding chairs were used at the back of the sanctuary until the pews were installed the following week.

At Homecoming Sunday, September 18, 2005, the consecration service for the new sanctuary was held, and it was certainly a time of reflections. We shared the memories of those who made this celebration possible in past years and praised our Lord for the new building and all the blessings He keeps sending our way.

Recognize: Person who traveled the longest distance to be here.

The oldest person present.

The Youngest person present.