

A History of
Salem United Methodist Church
Covington, Georgia
1824 - Present

An Old Church for New Friends

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Salem (sā' · lēm)

Geographical name — **1.** A city of southern India southwest of Chennai (Madras), a trade center with an important textile industry. Pop: 366,712.; **2.** A city of northeast Massachusetts northeast of Boston, founded in 1626, and site of witchcraft trials (1692) and of Nathaniel Hawthorne's House of the Seven Gables. Pop: 38,091; **3.** The capital of Oregon, in the northwest part of the state on the Willamette River south-southwest of Portland, founded c. 1840, territorial capital in 1851 and state capital in 1859. Pop: 107,786; **4.** A town SE New Hampshire east of Nashua Pop: 25,746; **5.** A town west central Virginia west northwest of Roanoke Pop: 23,756. **Higher Education** — A college in Winston-Salem, NC and founded by Moravians, an early Protestant denomination from central Europe, who believed that women deserved an education comparable to that given men begun as a school for girls in 1772, boarding school for girls and young women (1802), Salem Female Academy (1866), and finally, Salem College (1890). **Catholic**— An abbey situated near the Castle of Heiligenberg, about ten miles from Constance, Baden (Germany), founded by Gunthram of Adelsreute (d. 1138) in 1136 during the reign of Pope Innocent II and Emperor Lothair. **Internet** — a search that yields 3,540,000 plus results. **Mathematics** — A programming system for the simulation of systems described by partial differential equations. **Noun** — peace, complete peace, perfect peace; commonly supposed to be another name of Jerusalem (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 76:2; Heb. 7:1, 2). **Naval** — a Heavy Cruiser of the Des Moines class and the flagship of the US Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and the Second Fleet in the Atlantic. Ordered by the US Navy on 14 June, 1943, USS *Salem* (CA 139) was laid down on 4 July, 1945 at the Bethlehem Steel Company's Quincy Yard in Quincy, MA, launched on 25 March, 1947, and commissioned at the Boston Navy Yard on 14 May, 1949. Although never firing her mighty guns in anger, her very presence served as a stimulus for peace during what came to be called the Cold War. **Surname** — rare: 1 in 50,000 families; popularity rank in the U.S.: #6422) **United Methodist** — name of 128 churches in 28 states including one established in 1824 on the Conyers-Porterdale Road (later renamed Salem Road) near the town of Covington, county of Newton, state of Georgia.

Youth Directors

Dana Everhart

Rick Rogers

Kevin Read

Hal Hall

Frank Bernat

Gail Seibert

Carol Rodock

Mike Rodock

Director of Children's Ministries

Janice Cavin

Janet Hayes

Kathy Bamsey

Christy Street

Carol Rodock

Jessica Wayne

Foreword

This year as we commemorate John Wesley's 300th birthday, we celebrate the 179th anniversary of the founding of Salem Church and the 100th birthday of the present sanctuary.

As you will learn as you continue to read, Salem Church has had a long and varied history. It is truly a combination of long-time, multi-generational members; and newcomers. Both Rockdale and Newton counties, once quiet farming country and small towns, are now Atlanta suburbs, experiencing record growth. All these changes present major challenges and opportunities for this community of faith that have not gone unnoticed by the members of Salem United Methodist Church.

Marika Kanipe, wife of our present pastor, gave us the impetus to tackle a "Heritage" project that included a Sunday of special worship, great food and celebration; redecorating our older buildings; and this history. As we had hoped, our modest efforts have already begun to gain momentum; and by the time this book is released in September, this old church will have been refreshed inside and out both by loving manual labor and by a growing excitement for what this century holds.

In 1953 Mary Sue Ramsey wrote a history of Salem Methodist Church (1), which was included in a scrapbook entered in the Church Development Program Contest for the best "Rural Church of the South". Salem won second place. Without the information Ms Ramsey compiled, writing this history would have been nearly impossible. Mrs. Ramsey referenced conference minutes held at the Emory University library which we were unable to obtain for verification or expansion. Another important source of information came from an update to Mrs. Ramsey's history prepared for homecoming 1977 (A) that referenced an article in the Atlanta Journal from August 26, 1880, but because microfilm records for that the paper do not extend to this date, this article has not been found.

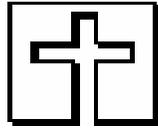
We hope that as we remember our heritage we will also find inspiration to continue God's work in this community.

The Heritage Sunday Executive Committee 2003

Mary Garner
Annette Harmon
Marika Kanipe
Beverly Casstevens

(1) A History of Salem Church and Community 1824-1852, by Mary Sue Ramsey, 1953. Additional materials from contest by Mrs. Claude Yancey.

(A) Mrs. Mary Sue Ramsey, Mrs. John Chestnut and Mrs. Hoyt Bailey are cited as contributors.



Acknowledgements

Mary Garner tackled the task of updating the original history written by Mary Sue Ramsey in 1953. She worked tirelessly to obtain more detailed and updated information from many individuals, visited libraries and newspapers and solicited contributions from current members and former pastors. Then, she carefully compiled it all.

Beverly Casstevens added archival research, served as copywriter and editor, and arranged for the printing and binding. With the help of Jan Curtis, Beverly also recently completed a complete survey of the Salem United Methodist Church Cemetery that is included, along with a report, in this volume.

Annette Harmon and Tom Anderson assisted with printing and copying.

The research of Elizabeth Summerhill at the Newton County Court House provided us with valuable details and information on Salem and events in the surrounding community.

Special thanks to those who contributed to the writing of this update including:

Betty Kincaid, Kenneth and Wanda Adams, Verla Bennett, Dave Bennett, Joan Gibson, Nathan Legrand, Carol Rodock, Linda Schell, Gladys Bloodworth, Gerre Byrd, Jack and Louise McGiboney, Dan Paschal, Frank Davis, Bill Pollard, Shirley Thomas, June Hilton, Nancy Penn, and John Addison.



A Brief History of Methodism in America (2)

John Wesley and his brother Charles were Church of England missionaries to the colony of Georgia, arriving in March 1736. It was their only occasion to visit America. Their mission was far from an unqualified success, and they returned to England disillusioned and discouraged. They did succeed in leading a lively renewal movement in the Church of England. And so, as the Methodist movement in Europe grew, their ministry spread to the American colonies with Methodists who made the voyage to the New World.

Organized Methodism in America began as a lay movement. To strengthen the Methodist work in the colonies, John Wesley sent two of his lay preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore, to America in 1769. Francis Asbury became the most important figure in early American Methodism, and his principles of Wesleyan theology, ministry, and organization shaped Methodism in a way unmatched by any other individual. In addition to the preachers sent by Wesley, some Methodists in the colonies also answered the call to become lay preachers in the movement.

The first conference of Methodist preachers in the colonies was held in Philadelphia in 1773. The ten who attended took several important actions. They pledged allegiance to Wesley's leadership and agreed that they would not administer the sacraments because they were laypersons. Their people were to receive the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper at the local Anglican parish church. They emphasized strong discipline among the societies and preachers. A system of regular conferences of the preachers was inaugurated similar to those Wesley had instituted in England to conduct the business of the Methodist movement.

The American Revolution had a profound impact on Methodism. John Wesley's Toryism and his writings against the revolutionary cause did not enhance the image of Methodism among many who supported independence. Furthermore, a number of Methodist preachers refused to bear arms to aid the patriots.

When independence from England had been won, Wesley recognized that changes were necessary in American Methodism. He sent Thomas Coke to America to superintend the work with Asbury. Coke brought with him a prayer book titled *The Sunday Service of the*

(2) This information was excerpted from official website of the United Methodist Church, www.umc.org, and is based on information contained in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2000*.

Methodists in North America, prepared by Wesley and incorporating his revision of the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. Two other preachers, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, whom Wesley had ordained, accompanied Coke. Wesley's ordinations set a precedent that ultimately permitted Methodists in America to become an independent church.

In December 1784, the famous Christmas Conference of preachers was held in Baltimore at Lovely Lane Chapel to chart the future course of the movement in America. Most of the American preachers attended, probably including two African Americans, Harry Hosier and Richard Allen. It was at this gathering that the movement became organized as The Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

In the years following the Christmas Conference, The Methodist Episcopal Church published its first Discipline (1785), adopted a quadrennial General Conference, the first of which was held in 1792, drafted a Constitution in 1808, refined its structure, established a publishing house, and became an ardent proponent of revivalism and the camp meeting.

Two other churches were being formed about the same time. Philip Otterbein, a German Reformed pastor, and Martin Boehm, a Mennonite, preached an evangelical message similar to the Methodist. In 1800 their followers formally organized the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. The other church, The Evangelical Association, was organized in 1803. These two churches were to unite with each other in 1946, and with the Methodist Church in 1968 to form The United Methodist Church.

In the first half of the nineteenth century revivals and camp meetings brought experience of conversion to many. Local churches and classes sprang up wherever a few women and men were gathered under the direction of a class leader, and were visited regularly by the circuit preacher. This system served the needs of town or frontier outpost, spreading the movement wherever lay people settled.

By 1845 Methodists, Evangelicals, and United Brethren had instituted courses of study for their preachers to ensure that they had a basic knowledge of the Bible, theology, and pastoral ministry. The earlier years of the nineteenth century were also marked by the spread of the Sunday school movement in America. By 1835 Sunday schools were encouraged in every place where they could be started and maintained. The Sunday school became a principal source of prospective members for the church.

To supply their members, preachers, and Sunday schools with Christian literature, the churches established publishing operations. The Methodist Book Concern, organized in 1789, was the first church publishing house in America. The Evangelical Association and United Brethren also authorized the formation of publishing agencies in the early

nineteenth century. From the presses of their printing plants came a succession of hymnals, Disciplines, newspapers, magazines, Sunday school materials, and other literature to nurture their memberships. Profits were usually designated for the support and welfare of retired and indigent preachers and their families. (Cokesbury continues this practice today.)

The founding period was not without serious problems, especially for the Methodists. Richard Allen (1760–1831), an emancipated slave and Methodist preacher who had been mistreated because of his race, left the church and in 1816 organized The African Methodist Episcopal Church. For similar reasons, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was begun in 1821. In 1830 another rupture occurred in The Methodist Episcopal Church. About 5,000 preachers and laypeople left the denomination because it would not grant representation to the laity or permit the election of presiding elders (district superintendents). The new body was called The Methodist Protestant Church. It remained a strong church until 1939, when it united with The Methodist Episcopal Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to become The Methodist Church.

John Wesley was an ardent opponent of slavery. Many of the leaders of early American Methodism shared his hatred for this form of human bondage. As the nineteenth century progressed, it became apparent that tensions were deepening in Methodism over the slavery question. In this matter, as in so many others, Methodism reflected a national ethos because it was a church with a membership that was not limited to a region, class, or race. Contention over slavery would ultimately split Methodism into separate northern and southern churches.

The Civil War dealt an especially harsh blow to The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Its membership fell to two-thirds its pre-war strength. Many of its churches lay in ruins or were seriously damaged. A number of its clergy had been killed or wounded in the conflict. Its educational, publishing, and missionary programs had been disrupted. Yet new vitality stirred among southern Methodists, and over the next fifty years its membership grew fourfold to more than two million.

The Methodist Episcopal Church did not suffer as harshly as southern Methodism did during the war. By the late 1860s it was on the verge of major gains in membership and new vigor in its program. Between 1865 and 1913 its membership also registered a 400 percent increase to about four million. Methodist Protestants, United Brethren, and Evangelicals experienced similar growth. Church property values soared, and affluence reflected generally prosperous times for the churches. Sunday schools remained strong and active. Publishing houses maintained ambitious programs to furnish their memberships with literature. Higher educational standards for the clergy were cultivated, and theological seminaries were founded.

Two critical issues that caused substantial debate in the churches during this period were lay representation and the role of women. First, should laity be given a voice in the General

Conference and the annual conference? The Methodist Protestants had granted the laity representation from the time they organized in 1830. The clergy in The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, The Evangelical Association, and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ were much slower in permitting the laity an official voice in their affairs. It was not until 1932 that the last of these churches granted laity these rights. Even more contentious was the question of women's right to ordination and eligibility for lay offices and representation in the church. The United Brethren General Conference of 1889 approved ordination for women, but The Methodist Episcopal Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did not grant full clergy rights until well after their reunion in 1939. The Evangelical Association never ordained women. Laity rights for women were also resisted. Women were not admitted as delegates to the General Conferences of The Methodist Protestant Church until 1892, the United Brethren until 1893, The Methodist Episcopal Church until 1904, and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until 1922.

The period between the Civil War and World War I also was marked by other theological developments and controversies. The holiness movement, the rise of liberal theology, and the Social Gospel movement were sources of considerable theological debate. The Methodist Episcopal Church demonstrated its regard for social issues by adopting a Social Creed at its 1908 General Conference. Social problems were also a spur in the movement toward ecumenism and interchurch cooperation. Each of the denominations now included in The United Methodist Church became active in the Federal Council of Churches, the first major ecumenical venture among American Protestants. The era closed with the world on the threshold of a great and horrible war.

There was significant theological ferment between 1914 and 1939. Liberal Protestant theology, an important school of thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was questioned. It was attacked by a militant fundamentalism and later by neo-orthodoxy, which accused it of undermining the very essence of the Christian message. Since all three of these theological parties—liberal, fundamentalist, and neo-orthodox—were well represented in the forerunners of United Methodism, it is not surprising that heated doctrinal disputes were present in these churches.

Despite the internal theological differences that the churches experienced, they continued to cooperate with other denominations and acted to heal schisms that had taken place earlier in their own histories. For example, a division that had occurred in The Evangelical Association in 1894 was repaired in 1922, when two factions united as The Evangelical Church. A more important union, at least by statistical measurement, took place among three Methodist bodies—The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Protestant Church, and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Representatives of these churches began meeting in 1916 to forge a plan of union. By the 1930s their proposal included partitioning the united church into six administrative units called jurisdictions. Five of these were geographical; the sixth, the Central Jurisdiction, was racial. It included African American churches and annual

conferences wherever they were geographically located in the United States. African American Methodists and some others were troubled by this prospect and opposed the plan of a racially segregated jurisdiction.

The majority of Methodist Protestants favored the union, although it meant accepting episcopal government, which they had not had since their church was organized in 1830. Following overwhelming approvals at the General Conferences and annual conferences of the three churches, they were united in April 1939, into The Methodist Church. At the time of its formation the new church included 7.7 million members.

From 1940 until 1967, there were at least three other important matters that occupied the attention of the churches that now compose United Methodism. First, they maintained their concern for ecumenicity and church union. On November 16, 1946, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, The Evangelical Church and The United Brethren Church were united into The Evangelical United Brethren Church, after twenty years of negotiation. At the time of union, the new church included about 700,000 members. The Methodist Church was also interested in closer ties with other Methodist and Wesleyan bodies. In 1951 it participated in the formation of the World Methodist Council, successor to the Ecumenical Methodist Conferences that were begun in 1881. As expressions of their wider ecumenical commitment, Methodists and the Evangelical United Brethren became active members of the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948, and the National Council of Churches, founded in 1950. These assemblies provided a means for their members to engage in cooperative mission and other ministries. The two churches also cooperated with seven other Protestant denominations in forming the Consultation on Church Union in 1960.

Second, the churches demonstrated growing uneasiness with the problem of racism in both the nation and the church. Many Methodists were especially disturbed by the manner in which racial segregation was built into the fabric of their denominational structure. The Central Jurisdiction was a constant reminder of racial discrimination. Proposals to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction were introduced at the General Conferences from 1956 to 1966. Finally, plans to abolish the Central Jurisdiction were agreed upon with the contemplated union with the Evangelical United Brethren in 1968, although a few African American annual conferences continued for a short time thereafter.

Third, clergy rights for women were debated by the churches. The issue was especially critical in the creation of The Evangelical United Brethren Church. The Evangelical Church had never ordained women. The United Brethren had ordained them since 1889. In order to facilitate the union of these two churches, the United Brethren accepted the Evangelical practice, and women lost their right to ordination. Methodists debated the issue for several years after their unification in 1939. Full clergy rights for women were finally granted in 1956, but it took a decade more before the number of women in seminaries and pulpits began to grow

significantly. When Methodists and the Evangelical United Brethren united in 1968, the right of women to full clergy status was included in the plan of union.

When The United Methodist Church was created in 1968, it had approximately 11 million members, making it one of the largest Protestant churches in the world.

Since its birth, United Methodism has experienced a number of changes in its life and structure. It has become increasingly aware of itself as a world church with members and conferences in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. While its membership in Europe and the United States has declined noticeably since 1968, membership in Africa and Asia has grown significantly.

An increasing number of women have been admitted to the ordained ministry, appointed to the district superintendency, elected to positions of denominational leadership, and consecrated as bishops. In 1980 Marjorie Matthews was the first woman elected to the Church's episcopacy.

The Church has endeavored to become a community in which all persons, regardless of racial or ethnic background, can participate in every level of its connective life and ministry.

United Methodism has struggled with a number of critical issues. It has created and refined theological and mission statements. It has discussed and acted on matters of social importance such as nuclear power and world peace, human sexuality, the environment, abortion, AIDS, evangelism, and world mission.

The History of Salem United Methodist Church is best understood in the context of the history of Methodism. It is a unique expression of John Wesley's movement that began as an effort to revitalize and empower the laity within the Anglican Church, and grew to become a worldwide church. The principals of faith in action that grew from his belief of faith in action; the organization that "connects" all Methodists of all throughout the world; and his concepts of God's grace at work throughout our lives can be seen and experienced in the recollections of our past, our experiences today and our hopes for the future. (B)

(B) The Timeline provided in Appendix A places the history of Salem United Methodist Church in the context of key events in the Methodist movement in America.



A Log Building by the Spring

Salem Church was organized in 1824. The first building was a log structure built on a five-acre plot near what is now called Salem Camp Ground spring. The deed in the Newton County Court House is dated September 18, 1824 and was drawn by Noel Pitts of Jones County, and specified as land lot 137, 10th District. Green B. Turner, who eventually became one of the wealthiest and most prominent citizens of Newton County, donated this wooded lot. This parcel includes part of the present Salem United Methodist Church Cemetery. The Conyers-Porterdale Road also ran through what is now the cemetery, west of the present Salem Road.

Court House records do not provide a precise date for the construction of the first meeting house, only that in 1827, the building was already there (Deed Book B, Page 319).

It is known from family records kept by the Plunkett family that Eli Bennett was one of the founders of Salem Church. He was born in 1790, in Virginia, and came to Newton County, Georgia in 1822 as a local preacher, preaching at Salem for a number of years. He was also Justice of the Peace. According to hand written conference minutes he died in the Civil War Battle of Resaca in Georgia. There are a number of descendents of Eli Bennett and pioneer members of the church who are still attending Salem today. (C) Bennett went from being a “local preacher” in 1834 to Elder in full connection in 1836. (3)

Greene Turner was among those involved with founding the church along with Rufus, Presley and Isaac Christian.

Salem was in the Yellow River Mission, Athens District, South Carolina conference, which included what are now Walton, Henry, Newton, Rockdale, Fayette, and Clayton counties. The Georgia Conference did not become a separate conference until 1830.

Little is recorded about Salem or it’s pastors until 1852. This is not surprising considering the overall conditions in the area as well as the state of Methodism at the time. There was tremendous growth in membership, however, outside a few major cities, large circuits and missions of as many as 30 churches spread across hundreds of miles presented challenges to

(C) Appendix A provides genealogical information on some of these families.

(3) *Methodist Preachers in Georgia, 1783- 1900*. By Harold Lawrence, Tignall, GA: Boyd, 1984. Additional details on Eli Bennett and other preachers can be found here.

clergy and forced changes in worship styles. The following was written about the Yellow River Mission in the period 1823-1830:

“The Yellow River Mission joined the Monroe Mission on the north. It was so named from one of the branches of the Ocmulgee, which rises in Gwinnett County, and flows southward ... No part of the country was remarkably fertile, but all was sufficiently so to attract many settlers. Wealthy cotton-planters sought the richer lands of the West, but plain, provision-raising Methodists sought these cheaper lands, nearer their old homes. Andrew Hammill [a circuit rider of that time] gathered up a church of 350 members.”(4)

Other circuit riders that served the Yellow River Mission were Daniel B. McDaniel and Morgan C. Turrentine.

We probably know little about them because of they were not members of the community, only meeting with the members once per month or so. These early pastors were separated from family for months and earned little from missions, and later circuits, because none of the churches felt much obligation to support an itinerate pastor. \$15 per month was considered sufficient. Many either died young like Andrew Hammill at age 39, or became local pastors. Local pastors were supported by their communities with provisions as well as money and could also maintain, with the help of wife and children, a farm of their own.

When the mission became a circuit, the names of John Howard, Lovick Pierce, William J. Parks, John W. Glenn, James Bellah and Morgan Bellah are listed as circuit riders; all of whom seem to have had independent means of supporting themselves and their families. James Bellah may have served Salem as his last appoint, although only briefly because of failing health:

“He was sent to the Yellow River Circuit which included a large part of Newton, all of Henry, Butts, Jasper, and one appointment in Monroe. There were twenty-eight appoints, and the preacher, by riding every day, could fill them in one month. James Bellah had now worn himself down in the work, and after a short time on the circuit his health failed and Morgan Bellah, his brother, succeeded him ... He received for his year’s labor \$160. How could any man of family have lived on such a salary? Out of it he was compelled to furnish a house for himself, a horse, pay his

(4) *A History of Methodism in Georgia and Florida, 1786-1865*, by George G. Smith, page 223.

traveling expenses, and indeed provide for all his wants. Of course this would have been simply impossible; and as it was but a fair sample of the salaries of most of the preachers, there can be no wonder that they had farms of their own, and that their good wives supported the family while they were absent for near a month at a time on their labor of love. If one was not able to provide for his family a home, and had no other resources than his own labor, he was forced to a location, and so there were a large number of gifted men in the local ranks who would have continued in the pastorate if they could have been even insufficiently supported.” (5)

Not having a member of the clergy available except on a monthly basis also changed an important aspect of Methodist worship. John Wesley held that communion should be observed as frequently as possible, certainly at every worship service. Since only ordained clergy could perform this sacrament, communion became a monthly, and for larger missions and circuits, a quarterly occurrence. Love Feasts also became common, not as communion, but as a way for the faithful to “break bread together” as is described in the book of Acts in the New Testament. Today, many Methodist churches, especially in the South, continue with monthly communion. Especially in communities where Moravian churches are found, Methodist communities also continue holding Love Feasts during the season of Advent.

This variety of practice may seem odd to some non-Methodists. As a “liturgical church”, the expectation is for uniformity of practice in all churches. John Wesley’s theology allowed for adaptation to circumstances, within the bounds of those basic Christian beliefs common to all Christians along with those that are distinctively Methodist. Practice and belief were to be grounded in scripture, but also illustrated by tradition, realized in experience and confirmed by reason. (6) Everything we do as Methodists should, therefore, be evaluated using these four things, commonly called the Wesley quadrilateral. It is not surprising then that our current UMC motto is “Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors”, nor that Methodists have long been leaders in ecumenical programs. Specifically stated,

Beyond the essentials of vital religion, United Methodists respect the diversity of opinions held by conscientious persons of faith. Wesley followed a time-tested approach: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.” (7)

(5) *Ibid*, page 286.

(6) The United Methodist Book of Discipline 2000, paragraph 104, pages 78-84

(7) The United Methodist Book of Discipline 2000, paragraph 102, Section 2, page 51.

Between 1865 and 1870 a new church building was erected. It was described as being exactly west of the present sanctuary, which would place it in Section One of the cemetery. The location of the road and the new church relative to it are not known. The lot for the church was donated by David Crawford. The last service held in that building was a Chrismon service, December 24, 1902. The Sunday School was in charge of the program and Chrismon tree. The Sunday School Superintendent at this time was W. G. Treadwell. Those participating in the service were John Zack Almand, Annie Mae Treadwell (Mrs. Ratcliffe), Tom L. Burns, J. P. Cooley, Stella Pruitt, Mattie Nelms (Mrs. Will Harrison), Alberta Plunkett (Mrs. John B. Gordon), Elmo Cowan, Jeff Ramsey, Eli Treadwell, and J. W. Burns. The church register for 1903 lists Salem as having 285 members.

The trustees during this period were George M. Cunningham, Jr., J. M. Mann, Rufus Christian, G. B. Almand, Lorenzo Smith. Stewards were H. A. Ogletree and Steve Brown. (8)

The Conyers Circuit was organized about 1896. Salem Church was admitted to this circuit in 1901. The other four churches have not been identified. According to the report of the circuit's quarterly conference, Salem paid the pastor \$119.00 as their share of the \$625.00 which this circuit of five churches paid.

At the first quarterly conference of 1903 held January 7th, the circuit conference report describes a resolution that was passed asking trustees of Salem Camp Ground to transfer a two acre site for a new church in exchange for the site of the then current church. This was granted and work was immediately begun on the building that is still in use today. The original structure included a narthex with Sunday school classrooms on either side, a nave, and two more Sunday school rooms behind the chancel. The children's classes were in the room where the paraments, vestments, banners and audio-visual equipment are kept (the pulpit side); the teenagers in the storage closet on the other (gospel) side of the narthex. In order to build the new church, trees had to be cut down. Today one stump remains under the foundation to remind us of the work and faith the residents of this area exhibited 100 years ago. At the time it was completed, the value of the church was placed at \$2,500.00.

Trustees and stewards for the 1902-03 year were W. S. Ramsey, G. B. Almand, R. B. Vaughn, W. G. Treadwell, William Boyd, E. H. Plunkett, W. D. Elliott, W. S. Almand, C. D. Ramsey, Sr., O.P. McCord, and J. A. Dempsey.

(8) Deed Book W, pg 217, Newton County Court House.

Rev. F. R. Smith reports in a quarterly conference report of the circuit (now lost) for 1902 that,

“For the most part, the membership has been quickened. Some of the feuds have been settled ... Our attendance is very good, our people are interested and love to come to church.”

In this year 2003, it is appropriate to look back at the membership of Salem in 1903, specifically at the names of families serving in a variety of positions in the church:

Almand, Bailey, Boyd, Burns, Christian, Cowan, Ficquette, Hollingsworth, Kirkland, Loyd, Melton, Plunkett, Ramsey, Smith and Treadwell.



The Salem Circuit

The Salem Circuit was organized in 1905, with four churches: Salem, Prospect, Union, and Snapping Shoals. At this time Salem Church paid the pastor \$265.00. Through the generosity of Professor J. P. Cooley a library was started at Salem that same year.

Among the few records that we have found at Salem are the circuit quarterly conference reports for the years 1919–1934. According to these records, by 1919 the circuit consisted of Salem, Almon, Prospect, and Snapping Shoals plus Salem Campground. The pastor was provided with a parsonage valued at \$120. The combined value of all church buildings of the circuit was \$11,000, the campground \$7,500, and the combined membership was 886. The pastor-in-charge earned \$1,360, and his assistant, \$160. It was reported that Salem church bought half interest in a piano with the campground taking the other half. Mt. Tabor joined the circuit in 1921, Ebenezer in 1922, while Snapping Shoals was moved to the Newton Circuit, returning in 1924. During that period, Ebenezer may have left the circuit. Some records refer to Almon, others to Shiloh. We believe these are two names for the same church.

Throughout this period, the quarterly conference reports reflect the ups and downs of the churches and their pastors. The “bad weather” was often cited as reasons for poor attendance, as were the state of the roads and sickness. At times the Sunday Schools were well attended, and at others not. Salem bought a new stove. Quotas were set and met for subscriptions to the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*; and concerns before, and relief after,

collections for benevolence and missions were met. Collections fell when the economy went into depression. The Epworth League was begun, only to fail and (as we know from other sources) begun again with great success. Every report included a listing of new members (and how received), and those that had left (with the reason) or died. Pastors expressed concerns about “being faithful” to the instruction of the children.

Rev. Pendley focused on family and individual covenants for prayer, bible reading and study as well as growing the Sunday schools and worship attendance. His assistant, J. K. Kelly, Jr. reported on Sunday school collections and revival results. Most reports began with their assessment of the “spiritual condition” of the churches.

Rev. Tumlin who followed Pendley was a man of “fewer words” at least on paper, and of less salary, being paid only \$800. Struggling with Sunday school attendance, he had his moments of despair, however, he also had a sense of humor when struggling to get programs started, saying:

“We organized two Women’s Missionary Societies last year but they both seem to have lapsed into a state of unconsciousness.” (9)

Rev. Christian was much like all pastors during their first few months in a charge when he confessed in his first conference report, the 2nd quarter of 1924, that “I do not speak with absolute certainty” about the various items in his report. A Young People’s Missionary Society at Salem seems to be the bright spot in his early months.

Rev. Fruit was much appreciated for his youth and enthusiasm, and introduced a sermon specifically for the children in some of his services. He also benefited from the benevolence of the Ladies Aid Societies of the Salem and Shiloh, receiving a “pantry shower” and a new refrigerator.

Rev. Burnette was the first to be able to report that Sunday schools were established in all of the churches of the circuit in his 1st quarterly conference in 1932, and praised 4 out of the 5 churches (no names mentioned) that “out of the kindness of their heart presented the pastor with a small purse as appreciation for his services during revival.” By the end of his service, the circuit numbered 625 members, his salary was \$973.

On the second Sunday morning in July 1946, four new Sunday school rooms (where the choir room, choir directors office, and the restrooms along the hall behind the chancel are now located) were dedicated, followed by a barbecue dinner. This Sunday marked a record attendance of 270 at Sunday school. This annex was built at minimum cost because most of the

(9) 1st Quarterly Conference Report, 1922-23, held at Salem Church, February 2, 1923.

construction was done by church members. Prior to this time the women's class was on one side of the sanctuary; the men's on the other side. Sunday School was held every week, even though there was a preaching service once monthly.

There was a pot-bellied stove in the center of the sanctuary for heat until the gas line was put in the 1950s. To fund the gas lines, they sold the church and parsonage gas tanks, netting \$249.72. It cost \$268 to install the line in both places.



A Full Time Church (D)

By the end of 1952, the Salem Circuit had a total membership of 501. Salem had 292, Prospect, 135; and Snapping Shoals, 73. The total budget was \$4,575, and the churches owned the parsonage together (see section on "Parsonages.")

In May of 1953, the members of Salem voted to become a station church. That became a reality on July 1. On July 5th, the occasion was celebrated with a Homecoming and Revival. The Ladies Bible Class, assisted by the Methodist Youth Fellowship donated a new piano, which arrived that week. Previously only four services per month were held. Now they could have morning and evening services each Sunday for the 294 members. The pastor, Trevor Turner, served full time while attending Emory School of Theology (now Candler Theological Seminary), earning \$900 on the circuit, but received a raise to \$1,500 after the change. The total church budget was \$1,879.90, and stewards were expected to visit members to collect their tithes and offerings. At this time the value of the church building and land was estimated at \$7,000. This was the first time Salem did not have to share the pastor with two or more churches and they could see a big difference in the interest and activity of the people of Salem. Expanded services included a midweek prayer meeting. (Trevor Turner explains how this came about in his letter in the "Memories of Long-Term Members and Former Pastors" section.)

Trustees and Stewards of Salem in 1953 were: W. C. Bates, Forrest Bates, Doyle Bailey, Sidney Bailey, John Berry, Charlie Berry, Alton Johnson, Aaron Kemp, Roy Moore, Slade Ellington, J. M. Hollingsworth, George Ramsey, Carl

(D) The tables located at the back of this book show the changing membership and finances of Salem Church as well as some of the leadership since 1953.

Standard, Leonard Standard, Raymond Thomson and Douglas Yancey.

When Salem became a full time church, they not only had an enlarged budget, but also were faced with a \$2,350.00 parsonage debt. Many projects were adopted to raise money for the purpose of paying off the parsonage debt, including: raising calves, chickens, pigs, cotton, corn seed, and hay; canning fruits and vegetables; making a quilt, dish towels, aprons, and doilies: doing odd jobs; giving first hour's wage each week and making woodwork articles. This was sponsored by the Men's Bible Class and called the "Lord's Acre Project." They closed with an auction held at Salem Club House (now the fire station) on October 12th, 1953. The ladies also had a "Talent Dollar" program. They were loaned one dollar to use as their talents directed them, to make products to sell. From \$58.00 drawn from the Ladies Bible Class treasury for this purpose, \$318.32 was returned. The parsonage debt was paid in full in 8 months and 21 days. Not only did the church profit, but also a bountiful spiritual harvest was reaped by all.

A choir was organized by Mrs. J. T. Jayner and bulletins were used in Sunday worship for the first time the fall of 1953.

Mrs. Douglas Yancey wrote in 1954,

"This move [to a station church] awakened the whole Salem community and its' people. They became aware of the fact that they had more opportunity and more responsibility as far as the church was concerned. As long as the Salem Church was on a circuit with two other churches, and had only two preaching services a month, interests seemed to keep lagging downhill. Quite a different story now can be told." (E)

In 1956, the annex behind the sanctuary was remodeled and more Sunday school rooms were added including a kitchenette. In 1966 the front porch was added, along with central air and heat, and the sanctuary redecorated. The steeple (which is made of aluminum) wasn't added until 1977. The Educational unit was constructed in 1977. The debt on it was paid off in 1992, in part due to a bequest from the estate of H.W. and Betty Childs. A dedication was held September 20, 1992, with Bishop J. Lloyd Knox presiding.

(10) *Studies in North Georgia Methodism* by John R. Sills, for the Commission of Town and Country Work, North Georgia Conference.

(E) A history was included in the scrapbook entered in the Best Rural Church Competition by Salem. Salem won 2nd place and \$100 which was given to the building fund.

From the mid-19th century until the mid 20th century, there was an assumption that frequent pastor changes were good for growth especially for populations that were relatively stable. (10) Today, the trend is for longer stays because populations are more mobile, less stable; and to give pastors time to not only start programs, but establish them in the tradition of the church.

During the period 1984-1987 the church buildings were improved by addition of siding, painting, upgrading of air conditioning and heating systems. An acoustical ceiling and new lighting were installed in the Fellowship Hall. Other improvements included the purchase of a new 15-passenger van, and a new stove, icemaker, and larger refrigerator for the kitchen.

In the trustee meeting notes of November 1992, it was reported that a handicap door and ramp was installed at a cost of \$2,101.53.

In 1995 eight acres were purchased from Salem Campground to be used for a future building. In 1998 a capital fund drive was held to build the Family Life Center (FLC). Rev. Dr. Mac Brantley joined Rev. Alan Smith (senior pastor) and Rev. Gail Seibert (Associate Pastor) in leading the ground breaking ceremonies. The \$1.5M facility was completed in 2000, and dedicated July 30 of that year. The FLC is 17,890 square feet, and has a capacity of 988. The facility houses a basketball gymnasium, full stage, 7 classrooms on two levels, a commercial kitchen, the church library (which was moved from the old education/administration building), and large storage facilities. It is used often for church activities and civic events. It can be rented for many activities, such as wedding receptions, Mothers of Multiples' sales, kindergarten graduations, etc.

There is a stained glass window in the upper back of the center, which was donated by Gladys Bloodworth. Her husband, Marion was raised in this church and volunteered as Minister of Evangelism from 1990 until his death in 1995. They had bought it from a church in Iowa (where he served until his retirement) that was being torn down, and had it in their solarium in their house in Conyers until the planning of the FLC.

The Ann Byrd Memorial Library was originally in the Education Unit, but was moved to the Family Life Center when it was completed. Unfortunately Ann's life was cut short by an automobile accident. The following information was written by her mother, Gerre Byrd.

The Ann Byrd Memorial Library was a process prompted by the death of "Annie" in 1986. It was due to the efforts of Iris Standard; the approval of Pastor Mike Cavin; and the loving members of Salem UMC that this plan came to fruition.

Annie and her two brothers spent many years enjoying the enthusiasm and support of the whole church through the activities of the Youth Program at Salem. They each had many glorious adventures in canoeing, drama, annual

trips to various points of interest, and an abundance of Christian teaching and living examples surrounding them. Annie was proud to serve the Youth Group as pianist. She loved participating in The Least Likely Angel, and singing a “solo” in We Are The Reason, which the youth performed for Salem UMC and other churches. During Sunday School, Richard Cousins, challenged Annie’s thinking, and it was clear to her parents that she was beginning to understand and value her Christianity.

Her parents wanted to show their gratitude to Salem UMC and its members for remembering Annie with the library memorial. They were allowed to decorate the library from top to bottom. Their good friends, Ronnie and Margaret Dimsdale, provided much of the labor toward the completion of lovely library.



Worship

By Beverly Casstevens

Records of services at Salem in the 19th century have not been found. The history of the area suggests that a single Sunday worship service was where it all began. An ordained minister was probably not available every week until Salem became a station church, so the laity or a sometimes a “supply” pastor who was “local” to another church helped with services. From the quarterly conference reports dating from 1919, pastors encouraged the churches in the Salem Circuit to establish weekly prayer meetings. It is unclear how consistently these were held.

The order of worship, from the bulletins we have been able to locate that are as old as 1950, conformed to *The United Methodist Book of Worship* in content, if not in specific sequence. Over time, as with most thriving churches, more worship opportunities were created. Since the 1980s (during Rev. Hodges’ appointment) there have been two Sunday morning worship services, with Sunday school in between. During the week, two prayer groups meet, one during the day at the church, and the other in the evening at the home of Joye and Steve Hancock. A contemporary praise service was held between 1999 and 2001, and as is mentioned elsewhere, became a Sunday school class.

I don’t know that any one person could provide all the details of worship at Salem, however, I will attempt to give you a flavor for how Salemites praise God and strive to learn more about him and his will for our lives when we gather as a congregation.

Observing special Sundays such as World Communion Sunday with special programs or activities has been sporadic, however, Salem is faithful to all requests by the church to ask for special collections. All Saints, Trinity, and Pentecost have been observed regularly. Celebration Sunday (also called Commitment or Pledge Sunday) is a big occasion each year and includes dinner, and in 2003, entertainment. As a matter of fact, like most good Methodists, Salemites enjoy eating together, and generally try to do it as often as possible, whether after Sunday morning worship, or as a “Family Night Supper” on Sunday evening.

We have held three levels of *Disciple*, a spiritual formation class called *Companions in Christ*, and been privileged to have many fine study groups on specific topics or books of the Bible, often under the auspices of the United Methodist Women. These occupy week nights as a rule.

Over the years, decorating the sanctuary for special occasions has been a hallmark at Salem. Elizabeth Holcombe was the creative source for many of these (1996-2002), with the able assistance of her husband, Adam; and parents, Edie and Bill Hudgins. Pat Daniel, Beverly Casstevens, Joan Tidwell, and Carol and Dan Paschal have also worked on decorations. August 2003 was Camp Meeting Month, and Pat’s altar decorations were wonderful, and put us in mind of days gone by. With the building of the Family Life Center, decorating has expanded to that facility as well, especially during Advent. Pat Daniel and her helpers continue today.

This church also has a long tradition of gardeners. In the 1940s and 50s, Irene Smith was responsible for sanctuary flowers. (12) She was not a professional florist, but she did see her garden as her ministry, planning what to plant according to what types of flowers and colors were needed for the different seasons and occasions. She is quoted as having said:

“As long as the Lord lets me grow flowers, I’m going to use them to decorate his house.”

We continue to be blessed by gardeners like Irene. Mary Coleman (with the help of her husband, retired Col. Al Coleman) has a magnificent garden. Her roses win prizes at shows around the region. Her flowers, and those of Louise Grier, have graced the tables of many a dinner and reception. Both of these women have an eye for flower arranging as well as a talent for making things bloom.

Salem enjoys celebrating the church year. Advent begins with a Hanging of the Greens service that involves the UMYF, and in 2002 featured a full choir, duets, solos and flute. A live Christmas tree has been used at Salem since at least 1902. A cantata by the CANCEL Choir is a highlight of the season. Christmas Eve has had as many as three services, but in recent years, two. The earlier of the two is family oriented with much singing, while the 11:00 p.m. service is timed to end near midnight, and includes communion as well as special music. Both services end with a candle light ceremony and the singing of *Silent Night, Holy Night*.

Lent begins with an Ash Wednesday services, and Holy Week with a procession of palms on Palm Sunday. Our children usually make up the procession with some help from their parents and other willing adults. Palm Sunday sometimes includes a cantata or a dramatic reading of the passion story. Beginning with Palm Sunday, the decorations (or lack thereof) are dramatic and help set the tone for the various services. The cross is draped in red on Palm Sunday, black from Thursday thru Saturday (the Easter Vigil), and white and gold on Easter. In keeping with tradition, all other decorations are removed during the Easter Vigil.

A traditional Passover Seder on Wednesday in place of our usual Wednesday Night Supper gives us the opportunity to experience a meal similar in religious content to the Last Supper. We are able to experience the giving of the new covenant as symbolized in the breaking of bread and the giving of the cup of wine, and be in fellowship much as the apostles were that last night together with Jesus. He celebrate a traditional seder complete with matzoth, bitter herbs, roasted egg, charoset, karpas, salt water and lamb; followed by a kosher-style feast prepared by Debbie Davis. Maundy Thursday is a service of confession and communion, followed by stripping the sanctuary. Good Friday services include readings from both Old and New Testament and ends with a Tenebrae service. Some years have included a prayer vigil that lasts from the end of the service Friday evening until midnight Saturday.

Easter Sunday begins at Sunrise in the cemetery. In recent years, a torch is kindled and the light shared among the participants. The torch goes with the congregation to a breakfast prepared by the United Methodist Men, and from there to the front of the church where it is used to light the acolyte's tapers and thus the altar and Christ Candle. The choir processes for both services and the service generally brims over with special music, ending with communion.

Sunday nights have been the occasion for special types of services as well as a more casual, traditional worship time. Members of the congregation formed a group named Timothy's Burden in the mid-1990s. With guitar, drums, and keyboard; the group plays country, folk and even rock & roll music with a Christian theme. The group lead the service twice a month.

Rev. Alan Smith did a series on worship over the centuries. Each Sunday evening through Lent was a different century, and everyone had to behave accordingly. Another special study done by Rev. Smith explained the basis and beliefs of other religious groups including Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists, Scientologists, and Mormons, among others.

Rev. Kanipe had been attending the Academy for Spiritual Formation for two years. This group met at the Hinton Rural Life Center, and part of their study included quite times of meditation and reflection. As Randy (as he generally prefers to be called) tells it, he and several of the other pastors decided to "play hooky" one afternoon, and ended up at a general store around the pot belly stove, eating meatloaf sandwiches and pick'n. You see, several of them played an instrument, including Randy, who plays banjo. Of course, they were "caught

red handed” by one of their instructors, but apparently suffered no ill effects except perhaps for the excess calories they all consumed from the Moon Pies and RC Colas.

What impressed Randy about the experience was the fellowship. Swapping stories. Talking about life. Handing out advice and pats on the back along with the sandwiches and pies. When he returned to Salem, he decided to bring the country store with him, and so, the stage of the Family life Center became the inside of the store, and “Ya’ll Come” is held the second and fourth Sunday nights of the month. Each “Ya’ll Come” is centered around a topic that affects most of us at one time or another and features lots of pick’n and grin’n around the telling of the tale as acted out by the members of a praise team, the core of which is Timothy’s Burden, or by a special guest or two. A tin bucket is passed around as an offering plate at the end, and everyone shares some “comfort food” like the Moon Pies and RCs. Attendance has grown with each Sunday night, and we have visitors from other churches as well as the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*, who are interested in what we are doing.

We now have a Second Sunday night worship service in the Family Night Supper. Folks bring snacks and we fellowship and share. Many services our current pastor, Joe Peabody, Jr., invites back pastors that previously served Salem UMC or pastors that grew up at Salem and went into the ministry, to speak.



Sunday School Classes

The adult Sunday school has expanded from the traditional Wesleyan Ladies' Bible Class and Men's Bible class to all of the classes below.

Otis Nixon Class was formed approximately 1966 (before Gene Nease left). Otis was a Newton County Clerk of Court for approximately 40 years and served in the state senate for two terms. He and his wife Nell made many contributions to our church. Iris Standard was our first teacher and taught until her death in 1995. Sara Stokes and Sherry Parker shared teaching duties until Chuck Kelly took the position. Now Sherry shares the teaching with Dan Paschal.

Joy Class was formed in 1959 for couples and younger adults. Many original members still belong to this class. Needless to say, it is not considered a young adult class any longer! Among those who have or are still teaching this class are Susie Kemp, Mary Sue Ramsey, Nellie Bailey, Myrtice Yancey, Rev. Ted Haggard, Joe Davis, Jack Green, Rev. Phil DeMore, Martha Flora, Carol Standard, Dennis Wilson, Richard Cousins, Fred Vick, Ronnie Dimsdale, Ross Freeman, Viola Humble, John Stiller, All Coleman, Ray Fuss, Sherry Parker, Joyce Vick, Art Roy, and George White

The Betty Hodges Class was organized by Betty Hodges, wife of Rev. Judd Hodges, in the fall of 1980. The class was originally called the "Spares and Pairs" and was designed to appeal to young adults, both married and single. It quickly became a popular class due to the teaching of Betty, both in Bible studies and everyday advice. In 1983 the class voted to change its name in honor of the creator of the class. Some of the original members of the class are still in attendance, though it now appeals to the middle age adults.

Gatekeepers started 18 years ago as a class for middle school students. As they grew, they remained together. Vickie Bridges and Randy Kirkus were the first two teachers. It is currently taught by Scott Fuss.

Praise Class started as a contemporary worship service in 1999 between the 8:45 and the 11:00 services. When Gale Seibert, the associate pastor, left in 2001, they continued to meet together as a Sunday school class.

Seekers Class was started by Dot Palmer on August 20, 2000. It is strictly a Bible study class, as they started in Genesis and are going through the Bible. The plan was for it to remain small in number so that everyone could have a part in discussion. Dot and Eda Egger are the main facilitators in the group, but other members share teaching responsibilities. The members freely admit they often stray into discussions prompted by the book or passage they are studying and bring in materials that expand the discussion.

Seekers Too was born as an offshoot of the Seekers Class in January of 2003. The original Seekers Class had grown in size to the point that members of the class sometimes found it difficult to join in the discussions. This second Bible study/discussion group is lead by Frank Davis and Wes Taylor. Over the last six months the class has grown to approximately 12 members. The class goal is to examine the Bible and seek out relevancy to today's society. In their own words, "We believe that to understand our world in a biblical sense, we first need to try to understand the world as our biblical ancestors did. By understanding their experience, we can apply biblical guidance in everyday life. This is an extension of WWJD. What Would Jesus Do? It is a profound question that begs an answer in every situation. One of the main goals of the class is to look at what Jesus did and make sense of it in today's world."

Heart Chasers was a class of students from the Cloister Creek Educational Center, a school for students with severe learning disabilities or physical disabilities. Students came from all over the United States, Canada, and Panama and ranged in age from 17 to 30. Scott Fuss and Todd Hilton were the teachers, aided by Krista and Dorothy Robinson and Kevin Miller. The school disbanded at the end of 2002 due to the sale of the residence and the students went their separate ways.

Two other classes are no longer functioning. The Together Class was formed when the attendance in the Ladies' and Men's Bible Classes became small, and ended in the 1990s. The Alive Class was made up of young married couples, and was disbanded in 2000.

We currently have the Otis Nixon Class, Joy Class and the Seekers Class and Praise combined into one class that meets after the Contemporary Worship service. The service starts at 9:30 on Sunday morning with the class immediately following.

In addition to the adult classes there are:

Infant and Toddler Nursery
3 and 4 year olds
Kindergarten and 1st grade
2nd and 3rd grade
4th and 5th grade
Junior High (6th through 8th grades)
Senior High (9th through 12th grades)

One of the most important Sunday School needs identified by our current pastor, Randy Kanipe, would target young adults who are too old for the Youth Fellowship, but too young for the established classes.

Sunday school superintendents between 1880 and 1903 included: (F)

John Rogers	Roland Vaughn
Tom Shaw	Rufus Christian
Grey Treadwell	John Boyd

Superintendents since 1903 include:

W. G. Treadwell
William Boyd, Jr.
J. Will Cowan
Coe Ramsey
Tom Treadwell
Frances Hollingsworth
Mrs. Grady Jones
Olive Burnes
Mrs. James Turner
Jack Standard
Alton Johnson
Leonard Standard
Dee Stanley
Phil Standard

- (F) Our records for this period are probably not complete, so there may well be other superintendents. In addition, prior to Salem becoming a station church, the circuit had an overall superintendent. These individuals are not listed.

Gladys Bloodworth
Margaret Dimsdale
Billy Hadaway
Frances Rogers



The Parsonages

In 1906, one acre of land on the Conyers to Porterdale highway, about one-fourth mile south of the church was purchased from J. C. Nixon for the sum of \$50.00 to build a parsonage for the new Salem Circuit. A five room, wooden frame house was built on this lot. This was valued at \$1200.00. Rev. J. T. Eakes was the first pastor to occupy this parsonage. (This was where Flash Foods gas station currently stands at the corner of Browns Bridge Road and Salem Road.)

This parsonage was sold for \$1,800.00, and proceeds were used for a new parsonage built north of and adjacent to the Salem Campground on Salem Road in 1946. The cost of this five-room parsonage was \$8,500.00.

Trustees signing the deed to the Salem Road parsonage were J. H. Ogletree, W. S. Ramsey, H. A. DeLoach, J. G. Brown and W. G. Treadwell. (11)

When Salem left the Salem Circuit in 1953, another order of business for the special quarterly conference held June 1, 1953 was the disposition of the circuit parsonage. It was decided that Salem would take the current one, and the new Oak Hill circuit would build a new parsonage. Salem bought out the equity of the other churches, giving Snapping Shoals and Prospect \$1,600, and Almon (Shiloh) \$750.

In 1972, a Parsonage Study Committee was formed to look into the state of the Salem Road parsonage. Extensive repairs were needed and the pastor and his family would need a place to live during the work. It was decided to build a 1750 square foot, three-bedroom house behind the old house. After construction was completed the old parsonage was sold to the highest bidder and moved to another location.

In 1995, a residence was needed for an associate pastor. It was decided to use the Salem Road parsonage for the associate pastor and buy a larger four-bedroom house on Dunning

(11) Deed book 35, page 314, Newton County Court House.

Keep in the Double Gate Subdivision (off of Brownbridge Road) for the use of the senior pastor. A dedication and open house was held for it on February 22, 1996.

At the present time, Salem does not have an Associate Pastor, so the (new) Salem Road parsonage has been sold to Salem Campground and is used as part of their campmeeting.



Youth Ministry

The Epworth League was organized in the spring of 1902, but for lack of interest and leadership it was soon discontinued. It was reorganized while the Rev. N. P Manning was pastor in 1926. This was the forerunner of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMFY). During some years the League was not very active. During the time Salem was a circuit church, they met every Sunday, alternating between the churches in the circuit.

UMFY generally meets on Sunday evenings from 5:00 to 7:00 with snack suppers provided by volunteers. Meetings consist of recreation, program, and benediction. A youth council consisting of youth and adult counselors and parents meet periodically to decide on activities, missions, service projects, etc.

Activities in the winter have included skiing, a 30 hour famine to raise money for the hungry, and usually a retreat at either the campground hotel or FFA camp (although not every year). In the past few springs there have been mission trips to Louisiana to put together supplies for disaster victims, and one to Florida to glean citrus for the poor. Many activities have occurred in the summer, including Six Flags, Whitewater, movies, Atlanta Beach, lock ins, etc. Major retreat trips have included Panama City for Live it Up and Epworth by the Sea. Summer missions include the Red Clay mission week, which served local residents' needs out of Snellville. In the fall there has been Trackrock mountain camping and horse back riding and the Wesley Walk for Others.

Youth have traditionally been in charge of fifth Sundays worship service and have had a Christmas skit. Youth have served at the Snapping Shoals EMC BBQ as well as the many dinners hosted by various groups in the church. Other service projects have included helping with Santa's breakfast for the children, helping with VBS, helping with the All Saints party, adopt a highway, helping senior citizen with home projects, painting projects, collecting canned good for the local food banks, working in local food banks, soup kitchens, collecting for Salvation Army, etc.

Fundraisers in the past include: selling ice cream at Salem Camp Meeting, selling calendars, wrapping paper, magnetic fish symbols, as well as hosting car washes, theme dinners, Balloon Sunday, and Flamingo Insurance. This last fund raiser originated by Rev. Frank Bernat gave members the opportunity to buy Pink Flamingo Insurance for \$5. If they didn't buy the insurance or could not present their insurance card when a flock of pink flamingos landed in their yard, they had to pay the youth \$10 to remove them.

When Carol Rodock assumed responsibility for this program, she not only brought her own talents to the job, but those of her husband, Mike, as well. His love of basketball and fellowship, has given us an "Open Gym" program and 3-on-3 tournaments that touch young people outside our current membership.

Olympic Torch

Brian Kumm grew up at Salem and served as a youth leader, working with Gail Siebert. was selected as a Community Hero and was an Olympic Torchbearer on July 17, 1996. He was selected based on the community spirit that he had displayed. He had been involved in mission work and working with the homeless.

Many of his supporters the night of his run with the Torch were members of Salem United Methodist Church. There were over 200 people on his section of the route who were cheering him on as he ran with the Torch and passed it on to another Covington resident. The UMYF was well represented as they showed their support for Brian and later put signs in his front yard letting him know how much they cared.

Brian is the son of Ronald "Corky" and Carole Ann Kumm. He is a graduate of the State University of West Georgia and is currently working as a Recreation Leader with the Gwinnett County Recreation and Parks Department in Norcross. He is a member of the Praise Band for the River of Life Fellowship and volunteers with New Beginnings Ministry in Lawrenceville. He has been on two mission trips to Africa with New Beginnings.



Children's Ministry

Children's fellowship groups are divided in older (3rd-5th grades) and younger (age 3-1st grade). Hand bells, children's choir, snack supper, games, crafts and bible study are typical activities. Crafts are made for shut-ins and nursing home residents at least once a year. Hand bells are a new addition and the children have performed once this year. The choir usually sings on fourth Sundays of the month during the school year. Older children have usually had a winter retreat at FFA camp or Salem. This sometimes has been a confirmation retreat. In the spring there are Easter egg hunts, processional with palms, special music, and an end of school party. In the summer, besides Vacation Bible School, there have been water play days, story times, Atlanta History Museum, Coca-Cola museum, Capitol museum, Scitrek, Atlanta Zoo, Dauset Trails, gold mining in Dahlonega, Atlanta Beach, Imagine it Museum and Olympic par, Puppetry of Arts, Chuck-e-Cheese, movies and roller skating. Fall and winter brings Pumpkin patch, All Saint's party, Berry's Christmas tree farm, preparation and presentation of annual Christmas play, lock in and St. Mountain part at Christmas time.

Fundraisers for children: Carnations for Mother's and Father's Day to benefit the Camp Glisson Scholarship fund, selling donuts, soft drinks, etc. Service projects include sending cards to the military, gifts for nursing home residents and shut-ins, cleaning of nursery toys, etc.

The children's council purchased the big screen TV in the library as well as the current playground equipment out of a designated fund. New furniture for children's church was also purchased from this fund. Future plans for purchases include and other TV/ VCR and additional new furniture and curtains.

We are blessed to have had Carol Rodock and most recently, Jessica Wayne responsible for children's programming. Many of the youth directors have gone on to become full time ministers, including Dana Everhart, Rick Roberts, Hal Hall, Kevin Read, and Frank Bernat.

Elizabeth Holcombe, Beverly Casstevens, Janet Beasley, Carol Rodock and Jessica Wayne have worked with the children in recent years, helping with music, dance and drama for Vacation Bible School; and putting on musicals and plays during Advent.

Vacation Bible School

The first VBS was held in June 1947. The attendance averaged over one hundred. With so many churches in the area now, the attendance is usually 70 to 80. Since the majority of mothers work in today's society, VBS is now held in the evenings rather than during the day as it was through the 1960s. This enables mothers and fathers to help, and children can attend who would have otherwise been in daycare. Large numbers of adults volunteer for this wonderful program. A number of them do not have children or grand children in the program. VBS presents Salem with another opportunity to bring children from the surrounding community into our church, and we have been blessed by them and hope we have given them a special blessing as well.

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- (12) Information obtained from the UMW 25th anniversary program as well as from the 1953-54 scrapbook made for the Rural Church of the Year contest. This wooden bound book still exists in the church archives.



United Methodist Women

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was founded in 1878. In 1902 the first Missionary Society was formed at Salem. Records show that it was active for a period of years, but for some unknown reason became inactive. The Foreign and Home Missionary Societies for the Methodist Episcopal Churches were merged in 1910. In 1920 the Wesleyan Service Guild was founded. This was a business and professional women's auxiliary to Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Society. In August of 1934 the Women's Society for Christian Service (WSCS) was organized at Salem by Miss Bert Winters, Rural Conference Worker. There were 10 members who pledged \$15. It became very active in local mission work by helping needy families with food, clothing and cash donations when needed and visiting the shut-ins. In 1972 the WSCS and the Wesleyan Service Guild became known as the United Methodist Women. (12)

Most of our budget is to meet local mission needs and pledges to missions per Atlanta, Decatur, Oxford District. A scholarship is given for School of Mission and Spiritual Retreat at Simpsonwood. Three hundred dollars are divided by those who wish to attend. Usually three mission studies (four hours each) are done each year. Members are encouraged to take part in a reading program. We buy new books each year for this program, and any books that have been on the program more than five years are donated to the regular church library. Awards are given at the fall district retreat to those who read books in four categories (Education for Mission, Spiritual Growth, Social Action, and Nurturing for Community) and the Response and Outlook magazines.

A candle lighting ceremony is part of the fall general meeting to honor deceased members. A Love Light service to honor our love ones is held on the first Sunday of Advent. We also honor the high school, college, and technical school graduates in June. At the beginning of each year a member of the church is honored for significant service to the church. In past years we have hosted a Santa Breakfast for the children.

Most of our funds come from pledges from members of the circles. Fund raising events include—a baked potato and salad luncheon on a Sunday in January, a bake sale at the Snapping Shoals EMC BBQ, and the Love Light service in December. In 2002 recipes were solicited from the congregation and 550 were printed in a beautiful, well-received cookbook. In 2003 a dinner theater was held, featuring Don Lance impersonating Elvis, attended by 180 people. A church wide fall festival will be held, and the UMW will be responsible for crafts and a bake sale. These events help raise money for such projects as purchasing playground equipment,

folding tables for the old fellowship hall, tablecloths for the round tables and Christmas decorations in Family Life Center, dishes and silverware, blankets and teddy bears given to the police and ADO for children in need, school supplies given to needy children, school bags and kits to UMCOR, paint for refurbishing the older areas of the church. In 2003 Stuart Johnson donated money in memorial to his wife, Barbara, to the UMW that will be used for a water fountain next to the choir room.



United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men was organized by Rev. Charles Thomas about 1967.

Today they meet on the second Sunday of the month for breakfast. They are divided into four teams: Executive, Spiritual, Evangelism, and Missions. Each team is responsible for three meetings a year, deciding on the program, recommending projects related to that theme, and preparing the breakfast.

Beginning in the late 1990s, a few men began meeting with the pastor, then Rev. Alan Smith, every Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m. The original idea was to form a Promise Keepers group, however, God had other ideas, and the group became a support and prayer group for the pastor. It continues today.

The UMM sponsors several activities during the year:

- Valentine's Banquet is an occasion for the men of the church to offer a special evening for the ladies of the church. In the past they have served a delicious meal and even handled the cleanup.
- The UMM are often asked to pitch in on various projects and requests during the year such as BBQ pit cleanup; playground maintenance and equipment installation; and hot dog/hamburger lunches on request.

In the past (1996-2000) Frank Davis and the UMM sponsored the Mexico Mission Trip. In 2001 they laid block walls for a new church building to serve Reynosa, a border town near McAllen, Tx. In addition a Vacation Bible School was held for the children. That time we partnered with Marietta First UMC.



Keepers of the Grounds

Shortly after the Family Life Center was constructed, 25 maple trees, 2 dogwood, and 10 crape myrtle needed to be planted. A workday was held to plant them. After this was accomplished, the congregation became involved by selecting a tree or bushes to adopt in honor or in memory of someone close to their heart. The charge for adoption allowed for funds to purchase needed supplies, such as pesticides. An album was designed with photo of plantings and the names of the donors and honorees associated with each plant.

A group of individuals most interested in the further beautification became the Salem Garden Club. Monthly meetings were held and occasionally had a speaker. In 2002, it was apparent that many weren't interested in coming to a "garden club meeting", but were showing up to "dig in the dirt." It was then that they decided to call themselves what they really were—"Keepers of the Grounds." Evelyn Brown was the first president, but she gives the credit to Dave Bennett who continues to faithfully care for and improve the church grounds. The Trustees presently do the groundskeeping.



Salem Seniors

Senior citizens of Salem began meeting April 23, 1984. They have been meeting ever since on the first Tuesday of the month. They enjoy the companionship of others, and each meeting features a guest speaker. Being asked to address this group is quite an honor. Presentations are sometimes informative with respect to issues that effect seniors, or just entertaining as when someone shared their astronomy hobby with the group. Some meetings have themes such as Luau Day where everyone wears their favorite "beachwear" and food follows the theme. Other lunches are catered.



Salem Community

It is believed that Salem is short for Jerusalem, and that fact has long been a source of pride for Salem people. However, at one time in the history of Salem, it bore another name. When the state of Georgia seceded from the union, President Lincoln cut off all mail deliveries and a post office known as Pace was established at Salem. The mail was brought by mule and wagon from Conyers three times a week. The name Pace was dropped after the war and Salem has continued as a rural route of Covington ever since.

Mrs. Yancey wrote,

“The first settlers of Salem were mostly cotton and corn farmers. They raised only enough meat and food for their own families. Not many of the early settlers went into town very often, and when they did go, they went in oxcarts, which was the mode of travel at that time. The shopping centers were Conyers and Covington. There has been for many years, a country store located in the vicinity, which is near enough for most families to obtain the necessities of life.

The establishment of Salem Methodist Church in 1824 was the means for the growth of Salem community. The present church is more up-to-date on the inside than on the outside. There are venetian blinds for the windows, nice light fixtures, and beautiful pulpit furniture. In recent years, four Sunday school rooms have been added in the rear of the church, and a set of concrete doorsteps has replaced the old wooden ones of yesteryear at the front.”

In 1828, the Salem Campground was established. Many families from miles around came and spent the entire week under brush arbor tents to be near enough to attend the services. Many improvements have been made through the years at this historic place. The brush arbor tents were converted to little wooden houses, and now, these have been made into modern tents or summer homes. All the tents have running water, electric lights, refrigerators, stoves, and the electric fan has replaced the old palmetto fans of yesterday. The tents are built around the tabernacle in the center of the campground. The spring on the campground was a source of water at Camp Meeting time, brought in buckets that had been filled with a gourd dipper. Later, the water was pumped to the hotel and each tent through a modern water system. The

open spring has long since been enclosed and a plaque can be found on the brick and iron wall telling the history of the spring. The story goes that the foot sore, weary confederate soldiers would camp around the spring when they were marching from one army post to another.

A wagon road skirted the west side of the campground and just across this road stood Salem Methodist Church and a schoolhouse. History points out that it was here that many prominent citizens of Georgia received their first rudiment of education in that school. Many prominent people connected with the religious, cultural and civic life of Georgia learned their three “R’s” in this log cabin school that sat where Salem Cemetery is now located. Among these was William Elliott, who was register of the United States Treasury during the presidency of President Woodrow Wilson.

Mrs. Yancey continued,

“Throughout this modern new Salem, is a paved road, which is our pride and joy; for by having this road, mud and dust has been eliminated, not to mention the comfort in which one rides now, compared to the discomfort our forefathers traveled in. Telephone service has also been added and the majority of Salem homes have telephones installed in them. Several up-to-date country stores are found in our community. In these stores you may buy meats, fresh vegetables, drugs, and any other line of commodities found in any general store through the country.”

Some long time residents say they knew everyone, and no more than ten cars passed their house in a day.

In 1921 the Salem Home Demonstration Club was organized by the Newton County Demonstration agent. At that time the meetings were held in the homes of different members each month.

In 1939 a clubhouse was built at a cost of \$5,000.00—the money coming from cash donations of people who were interested in Salem and by projects. With donations of cash and work the clubhouse was completed in a few months. When completed it was debt free and was dedicated to the use of Salem people and to the glory of God. It was located across the highway from Salem Church and was where most public meetings were held. It was where most social events for the church were held. The Farm Bureau, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and occasionally the WSCS also held meetings there. Today the building houses the Salem Volunteer Fire Department. Art Hargrove is the fire chief.



Members in Christian Service

Coe Hayden Christian and his brother, Thomas Jefferson Christian, sons of one of the original members of this church (Presley Christian) served as pastors in the North Georgia Conference. Rev. Coe Christian served as a circuit rider, a small town preacher, a big city preacher, and a Presiding Elder for a period of forty-two years, retiring due to ill health. The 1953 history includes a quote attributed to him on his 82nd birthday,

“If I had a thousand lives, I would begin them all in ministry, for there is nothing like it for me. I’ve passed the liking state. I love the work, and wish I were able to preach now.”

T.J. (Jeff) Christian served this circuit in 1924-1925. His reports appear in the quarterly conference journals still in existence. He lived to be 82 years of age and was one of the most beloved members in North Georgia, servicing for 50 years. Upon retiring after last serving as Presiding Elder, his stated reason was to leave the leadership of the church in the hands of younger men.

Charles Elliott worked his way through Emory University, graduating in 1906. From there he went to Young Harris as a preacher and teacher. For a year or two he served as president of Sparks Collegiate Institute. He was pastor of Wesleyan Monumental Church of Savannah at his death. He is buried in the Salem Cemetery.

Mae Treadwell, dedicated her life as a missionary, serving in Mexico.

Marion Bloodworth joined the North Georgia Conference in 1954 and was appointed to a circuit of three rural churches near Athens. He attended Emory School of Theology. He served in the Iowa Conference for 30 years. Upon his retirement in 1988, he returned to this area and Salem church. In 1990 he volunteered as Minister of Evangelism and served until his death in June of 1995.

Meldred Lavoe (Boggie) Bloodworth is his brother and is currently a Pentecostal minister in Virginia Beach, Va.

Carl Standard was in the dairy business with his brother Leonard for a few years. He was called into the ministry in the early 1950s. He was a lay leader here at the time this church became a station church and did a “grand job in stimulating interest among the laymen to take a more active part in our church. He led jail services, prayer services, encouraged the Lord’s Acre project and brought new life into the activities of our church people.” (Quote from 1953 scrapbook, report of Pastoral and Lay Leadership.) He taught a class of Junior boys and girls and the Men’s Bible Class and was the MYF Advisor for several years. He graduated from Emory at Oxford and from Emory School of Theology. He first served The Oak Hill Circuit, which consisted of four churches. His first full time service was at Prospect UMC. From 1962 to 1970 he was at South Bend UMC, from 1970 until his retirement in 1990 he was at First UMC Peachtree St.

Sidney Bailey went to Southern Tech after serving in the Air Force during the Korean conflict. He worked as a maintenance supervisor at Delta Airlines before entering the ministry in 1978. He holds a Bachelor and Masters degree from International Seminary at Plymouth, Florida. He and his father (Doyle) were the first father and son to serve together on the Board of Stewards. He and his wife, Ruth, became ordained ministers. Not only is he Senior Associate Pastor at Covington Praise Assembly of God, but also is currently chaplain at Rockdale Hospital, and conducts funeral services at Wheeler Funeral Home for those who have no minister (and others who ask).

His brother, Clarence Ancel Bailey was a local pastor who served Salem for many years, but was unable to complete seminary. He was very active in working with youth. He currently is a police officer in Conyers.

Greg Meadows was born into this church. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology Design from Georgia Southern in 1989. Shortly before graduation he decided to go into the ministry. Salem was Greg’s first step, recommending him at a special charge conference for candidacy. In January 1990 he entered the seminary at Candler School of Theology. He was hired at Sam Jones Memorial First UMC in Cartersville as associate and youth minister serving until 1993 when he served the Emerson and Oak Grove circuit. Upon graduation was ordained a probationary Deacon and moved to Thomson First UMC as Associate Pastor. In June 1996 he was ordained a full connection Elder. Since 1999 he has been the senior pastor at Waleska UMC.

Rick McMahan started attending Salem in 1993 after moving from Stone Mountain. He had a degree in biology from Georgia State and was a high school teacher. While at Salem he was on the youth council and taught the Gatekeepers class. He started Candler School of Theology in 1995 and preached at the Mountville circuit of the LaGrange district. He graduated in 1999

(13) Information about Iris was provided by one of her daughters, June Hilton.

and went to Franklin, Ga. He was ordained a full connection Elder in June 2002. In 2003 he was moved to the Wesley Chapel UMC in Dahlonega, Ga.

Brent Bohanon started attending Salem when he was 15 years old, and became a Christian the next year. The experiences with the youth choir and Dana Everhart were a big influence on his conversion. He is currently at First UMC in Lawrenceville serving as Director of Programs. He previously was Youth Director for eight years. He is attending Erskine Theology Seminary in Due West, S.C.

Iris Standard (13) was very sensitive to God's calling on her life, and immersed herself in service to her church. She began and led many Bible studies throughout the years. She was blessed with the gift of storytelling, and used this talent to relay God's message to all who would listen. She was able to speak with authority as well as compassion, and many hurting souls found solace in her words. She was chosen to teach the Otis Nixon Sunday school class in 1964, taking over the reigns from her father, and continued as teacher until her death in 1995. Wherever and whatever the need, Iris would take it upon herself to make a difference. If anyone needed a ride, Iris was there. If anyone needed counsel, Iris was there. If anyone needed food or other sustenance, Iris was there. If anyone was sick, or in need of visitation, Iris was there. Wherever the need was greatest, Iris was there. She was always a shining example of God's unfailing unconditional love. The various pastors throughout the history of Salem benefited from Iris's gift of giving. She was asked to deliver the Sunday morning message as a lay speaker on several occasions. And for quite a few years, Iris was asked to deliver the Easter sunrise message at Porterdale United Methodist. When she spoke, you knew that her words were truly God-inspired. She had a unique talent of knowing what the people needed to hear. Without any notes, she was able to speak directly to the heart of her audience. (The Standard family name first appears in the 4th Quarterly Conference Report, 1923-24 when B.H, Mary Will, Nellie Maud and Lottie Standard joined the church.)

Her love and devotion to her family closely followed Iris's love of God. Iris and Leonard were the parents of three children. June, Phil, and Judy were blessed to call her mother. Iris passed on a very rich heritage that will continue to bless generations to come. Iris listened to God's calling on her life, and many individuals have been blessed because she did.

(14) "Family and faith fire the spirit of camp meeting", *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 1996.

(15) *A History of Methodism in Georgia and Florida, 1786-1865*, by George G. Smith, page 239

“When her life on Earth had ended, this eulogy they did give. This world is emptier because Iris died, but much fuller because Iris lived.”

Beverly Casstevens has been a member of this church for seven years. She instigated the Passover Seders we have held for the past several years, and also introduced Salem to a Moravian Love Feast. She is very talented musically and has supplied special music on numerous occasions, either singing or playing the flute. Beverly has served as an un-paid Assistant Pastor, working with both Rev. Alan Smith and Rev. Randy Kanipe, planning and leading worship services. She joined Timothy’s Burden in 2003 and plays the mandolin with this group of musicians. She attended Candler School of Theology starting in the fall of 2003, and is now an Elder in Full Connection.



Salem Camp Meeting

The history of Salem would not be complete without mention of the camp meeting. The list of preachers for this event would read like a Who’s Who of Georgia and southeastern Methodism, including quite a few Bishops. Former President Jimmy Carter even participated, and Salem was brought to national attention following an article in Smithsonian Magazine.. (14) The camp meetings are conducted under the auspices of the Oxford district of the North Georgia Conference, and has been an most important week each year for many people, not only Salem people, but people from all over Newton County as well as Henry, Rockdale, Walton, and many other Georgia counties.

Camp meeting were introduced in Georgia in 1903, and became an institution throughout the state with each county having at least one if not more camp meetings annually. (15) The history of Salem’s camp meeting began in 1828 at Salem Church. It’s said that Salem Camp Meeting is one of the oldest religious organizations in the state, and has always reflected religious influence upon the morals of Georgia’s sons and daughters. The camp meeting was inaugurated at Salem church for two years, then moved to Honey Creek for several years. Later, it was moved to Covington where it was held two or three years, and to Ebenezer before coming back to Salem in 1835.

The campground and the forest around it were literally alive with people from 1828 through 1865. They came in wagons, oxcarts, and buggies and brought their cows to provide milk and

butter for the vast crowds of guest and their families while encamped for the camp meeting. People lived in “tents” while the camp meeting was in session. No tent would have been complete in those days without the chicken coop behind it.

In the beginning two rows of tents encircled the tabernacle, with a path between for the convenience of the worshippers. There were about 75 tents at that time. One of the oldest “tenters” is the Ramsey family. Our mayor, Sam Ramsey, is on the Board of Trustees for the campground. Most of the trustees are descendents of the original campground trustees. Also a member of this family, Betty Kincaid, is a member of our church. She has attended the camp meetings every year for 71 years. Her parents (and probably her grandparents) met and fell in love during camp meeting. It also served as a reunion with family and friends. Several of our members have had perfect attendance awards for the classes and services at camp meeting.

When it was brought back to Salem in 1835, it was built as what was then known as a “brush arbor”, the entire top of the tabernacle being covered with brush cut from the trees of the surrounding forest. It continued to be a brush arbor, yearly covered with newly cut brush, until 1845 when the present tabernacle was built. Many of the hand-hewn timbers that were built into that tabernacle are still standing, and are in perfect condition, 158 years later. The tabernacle is on the National Historical Building survey of the Library of Congress. The entire campground is on the National Historic Register.

In 1850 a fire almost destroyed the tents. When they were rebuilt, they were built in a single row circling the tabernacle just as it stands today. The early tenters brought water from the Salem spring in buckets that had been filled with a gourd dipper. Many of today’s tents are as modern as the home; all have running water and bathrooms. At one time church members built a “tent” for the use of the community. It was discontinued due to lack of chaperones for the youth.

Before the Civil War, the meeting was held for two weeks, beginning the Friday before the first Sunday in September. Meetings were suspended the last two years of the war. During his famous “march to the sea,” Sherman’s army came within three miles of the campground, turned to the left, and passed over the Yellow River, by what is known as the tin bridge, on to

(16) “Mrs. Longino to donate historical treasures to Salem”, The Covington News, Thursday, July 31, 1986.

(17) *Constitutional and Parliamentary History of the Methodist Episcopal Church* by James M. Buckley, Eaton & Marvis, New York, 1912.

(G) Old Emory Church was built in 1941. Many leaders in the Methodist church attended, pastored or preached here. No longer an active church, the building has been restored and is used for Advent and other special services. Kitty’s Cottage is now a museum.

Covington. Since the Civil War, the meeting has been shortened to one week. In the 1970's the date was changed to the Friday before the second Sunday in August, to accommodate the neighboring farmer by putting it between fodder pulling and cotton picking times. No that the school term starts earlier, camp meeting now starts the Friday before the last Sunday in July.

In the 1930s, when churches throughout this section were much scarcer than they are today, the additions to the church membership resulting from one of these meetings often reached as high as one hundred and twenty souls. Open air revivals were generally more common during the pre-Civil War era when the population was growing rapidly, but few churches had been built. One such occasion at Bear Creek , Newton County resulted in nearly 300 people being converted. Since WWII, converts have declined. In the old days, churches were scarce, and many hundreds never heard the gospel preached except at campmeetings. People laugh about Ray Stevens' song about the "squirrel went berserk in the First Self Righteous Church in the sleepy little town of Pascagoula." A squirrel really did fall on someone from the rafters a Camp meeting in 1987. Wonder if that caused all the religious conversion as described in the song?



Kitty's Cottage

Many long time members of Salem will remember the small, white frame cottage that sat at the end of the row of tents next to Salem Road just beside the parking lot on the north side of the church. Originally built in Oxford on the plantation of Bishop James O. Andrews for the 19 year old mulatto girl whose decision not to be freed, split the Methodist Church in the United States into separate Northern and Southern churches in 1845. Although the division of properties and other administrative matters proceeded smoothly, the debates in the years leading up to the split were more heated and embittered than any before or since.

As was mentioned previously, the Yellow River Mission was far from big cities and wealth, but Covington proper was an important economic center, and the birthplace of Emory University was in the adjacent community of Oxford. So, it seems that one of the pivotal events in Methodism happened just down the road, and the Salem community held custody to some of the artifacts of this period for some time. The cottage was bought by the Salem Campground Association and moved to the campground in 1938 some time after the

Bishop's plantation house burned, but moved again in 1994 to a location immediately behind Old Emory Church (G) in Oxford. Mrs. Frances R. Longino donated Bishop Andrews' Family Bible and his mother's spinning wheel to the campground for display in the cottage where the Bishop's horseshoe shaped desk was already on display. (16)

At any rate, it is worth spending a few moments on this controversy. As we struggle today to come to terms with the aftermath of so many events that have impacted race relations across America, perhaps an understanding of the history of one of them will be of benefit.

The Methodist church had made clear its opposition to slavery as early as 1780. (17) Rules & Regulations of the 1784 General Conference included explicit language that all who continue to buy or sell slaves shall be expelled and traveling preachers "who now have slaves and will not free them if the law allows shall nor more be employed". Further, they "shall not partake of the Lord's Supper with Methodists." As the years passed, however, the church began to soften their stance, exempting clergy in slave states (1804). Bishop Asbury went so far as to spearhead the removal of all anti-slave language from the 1812 conference, only to have strict language included again in the very next conference (1816) prohibiting slave holders from having any official status in the church, and then stricken again in 1820. By the conference of 1836 abolitionist were so aggressive that they were censured, and a resolution "to condemn modern abolitionists" was passed. The conference of 1840 included a ruling against slave testimony when against a white man. This ruling apparently served to strengthen the resolve of abolitionists to get the slavery issue back in front of the conference, and so the stage was set.

First during the conference of 1844, a Bishop Harding of the Baltimore Conference was suspended for not freeing slaves owned by his wife. Then, Bishop Andrews' case was heard. Andrews argued that he was a slave owner "but not by his own consent." He had inherited Kitty and she had rejected the offer of freedom since it meant either returning to Liberia or leaving the state as prescribed by Georgia law. He also had inherited a young boy from his (late) first wife's mother, who he insisted should not be freed until he was old enough and capable of taking care of himself. Finally, his second wife had slaves which became his by the laws of community property at the time. He had, however, drawn up a deed of trust placing their ownership in his wife's name only. He further contended that he had never bought or sold a slave, and so had not violated the letter of the most stringent of conference ruling.

The conference ruled against Bishop Andrew and he resigned. The United Methodist Episcopal Church South was officially formed at a convention in Louisville Kentucky in May of 1854, remaining separate until the reunification that created The United Methodist Church in 1968.



The Music Program

by Linda Standard Schell
Organist

When I was asked to write about the music at Salem, it started me thinking. My first memory was of me standing on a table singing “Open up Your Heart and Let the Sun Shine In”. I was 6 years old. This was back when we had Sunday night singings. We had an old (probably not old then) upright piano, and Frances Underwood was pianist. I can also remember Monroe and Bobby Hayes (Shirley Ruth White’s brother) “knocking out” that piano. I was told Mary Lou Williams played before them.

On Sunday mornings we would gather at 10:00 a.m. for assembly and sing songs and have devotional for 15 minutes before we divided and went to Sunday School. Leonard Standard led this singing for as long as I can remember. After a number of years we started having a children’s assembly while the adults had theirs. Pat Daniel, Diane Kirkus Buckheim, and myself played for this. We moved up from this to “play in church”.

When Dean Kring came to pastor Salem, he naturally brought along his trumpet. He was very good and he could sing too. He told us he had been offered a job with the Lawrence Welk Show, but had to turn it down because of his ministry. Just last year Laurie Gray Ramsey and I talked with him at the barbecue reminiscing about his trumpet playing. I’ve always said “If you can follow Dean, you can follow anybody.”

Our first choir director was Doug Robertson, as well as I can remember. Charlotte Nease, Gene's wife, and Rev. Wayne Fears continued the choirs until we could afford to pay a director. Billy Boyd was the first paid director (1964). He taught us to sing different parts and to perform cantatas. Billy sang at Mark Burrough's wedding not long ago and still has a beautiful voice. He sang at our wedding in 1968.

Carol Standard came on board as choir director when she married Phil and is still here today. I think they had just been married about a month when she was asked to take this position. (Maybe Phil knew we were about to need a director). Carol was the first to introduce us to taped music. She has also varied our music by adding other instruments to play along.

Keith Adams, Jeff Adams, Kim Austin, John Jordan, Frank Davis, Beverly Casstevens, Arlene Woods, and others I'm sure, have all been gracious enough to help us. We've also been fortunate enough to have had some strong solo voices in our choir, to many to even try to mention.

We've also been fortunate enough to have been given our first piano and organ by Mr. and Mrs. Otis Nixon (1965). That piano is still in the old fellowship hall (choir suite). The first organ was replaced with an organ from the First Baptist Church in Covington, when they purchased a new one (1985). Our organ was given to East Newton Baptist Church in Covington. Now we have an even newer piano and organ (2001), thanks to many of you who contributed.

With the first purchase of a piano and organ, came the need for both pianist and organist. Pat and I go way back, about 45 years or so, with others in between, such as Diane Buckheim, Laurie Ramsey, Jan Standard, Bill McLaughlin, Cindy Israel,, Carol Lamb, Carole Ann Kumm, Andrea Cleveland, Cindy Vick, Ann Byrd, Dave Berry, Lamar Savage, and Laura Savage. I can remember one Easter Cantata that Pat and I were to play when Billy Boyd was director. Pat was pregnant with Denise at the time, and wouldn't you know she decided she was ready to be born. We ended up calling Johnny Farmer, who was organist at Prospect Methodist Church, and he was willing to come and play.

Our Children's Choirs started many years ago. We would try to sing for Sunday service once a month. I used to lead them and Jan Standard played the piano. On Easter Sunday we would let them process in to the Easter Parade song. (They looked so cut in their Easter clothes.) This was back when we just had one Sunday morning service. When she left, Keith Adams was ever so willing to help me. He played the guitar, which made it a lot easier for the kids to sing, because could lower the key. He played for MANY years. Elizabeth Holcombe acquired this fun job after me, and Janet Beasley does it now. They both have done a fine job. The children have done several fun musicals. I could never understand how they could learn so many new songs with so many words. They would go to the nursing

homes in Covington and later Conyers also, to sing about twice a year. The people in the nursing homes loved it and so did the kids. (Talk about something touching your heart!)

Many years ago we had an ensemble consisting of Rufus, Peggy, and Annette Maxwell, Pat Daniel, and Carl Standard who would sing at Sunday night services. More recently, an ensemble consisting of Elizabeth Holcombe, Bill and Edie Hudgins, John and Mary Butler, Wand Sutton, and Carole Standard sang often for church services.

Hand bells were introduced to us by Dana Everhart. He was able to get donations for the bells and was the first director. When he left Laurie Ramsey directed the youth choir and Carol Standard directed the adults. Later Beverly Jackson was hired as director, serving for 12 years and bringing new ideas that really motivated the group. Now Marika Kanipe has started three hand bell groups: children, youth and adults.

When Rick Roberts came to us as Youth Minister, he along with his guitar,, brought out our love of country music. Everyone enjoyed his music. At the family camp-outs, he and Keith and sometimes others, would lead our nightly sing-a-longs around the campfire. These were fond memories.

Our youth choirs were very strong at times. Under the direction of Dana Everhart and Rick Roberts, the choirs went on tour trips to Florida and Pennsylvania, respectively, singing at different churches along their way. The kids that made these trips will never forget the experiences and new friends they made!

To those of you who came to the Elvis Show, it probably brought memories of “our own Elvis impersonator”, Hal Hall. He was Youth Pastor before Frank Bernat. He was a little shorter than Elvis, but he had a beautiful voice and he knew all of his songs. He did his Elvis concert for us one Sunday night and even did it a Salem Camp Meeting for their talent contest. If he hadn't made it as a preacher, he could have been a famous Elvis impersonator.

Timothy's Burden was a big asset to our music. The two Franks, Bernat and Davis, started this group in 1996. The Sunday Night sings were well attended—a full house! Their outreach has grown, involving the community through performances at the Heartland Festival and other church and community functions.

(18) According to the “Projects begun and completed 1953-54” in the scrapbook made for the Rural Church of the Year contest, a Girl Scout troop was organized, sponsored by the WSCS.



Outreach and Nurture Programs

Our purpose is to provide opportunity for members to serve in an outreach capacity to the community and nurture to those within the church. We are thankful for all who have answered the call to servant leadership and encourage others to join our efforts.

Mexico Missions

by Frank Davis

Salem Church was called to international missions in 1996. In that year the Methodist Men led an effort to send a team of hands-on missionaries to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico to erect the walls of a new church. We teamed with twelve other churches in the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Men to complete the building project. Salem Church sent a team of men, women, and youth to work on the project, witness, and lead Bible study for the local children. We were gone for nine days. Was it HOT! Of course it was, but Salem's team performed admirably under tough conditions in an unfamiliar country. Much of the adversity came from being in a country very different from ours in extraordinarily difficult conditions. God provided all that we needed to bring us through the trip. Over 15

* Member of Salem United Methodist Church

weeks of intensive construction and witness through words and actions many hearts were won and friends made.

If you don't believe in miracles, making a mission trip under these conditions will change your perspective. Men and women alike, with God's help, discover talents that they never suspected they had. It must be said that only two of the 18 or so people on the trip had ever actually laid a concrete block in a wall before this first trip. We all had to learn new skills and adapt old ones to get the job done. Everyone found a role to play and with God's help, we prevailed. God's work through Salem Church, and the other twelve teams, made it possible for a community previously lacking a place of worship to come together in their own sanctuary. All of those who went, and our congregation back home, were richly rewarded knowing that we had answered the call in such a marvelous way. More miracles were to come, subsequent to the 1996 mission, Salem Church was blessed with the ability to send five more teams for a total of six teams from 1996 through 2001.

Our teams constructed the walls for churches in Nuevo Laredo, Cerritos Nueva, Cienega de Flores, Chamacureos, Tampico, and Reynosa, all in Mexico. All of these churches were erected one brick at a time, with love and respect for the community and in honor of our Lord and Savior in service to his kingdom. As this is being written, Salem Church knows that God is pleased with all of those who worked so hard to make these missions possible.

Girl Scouts (18)

by Nancy Penn

In 1986 Nancy Penn* and Karen Jenks became leaders of Brownie Troop 707. Membership included thirteen girls from Kindergarten to fourth grade from Livingston Elementary School. The number of Girl Scout troops from Daisy (kindergarten) to Senior (high school) increased at Salem each Year. Salem continues to sponsor several troops and many workshops for Girl Scouts and their leaders. Newton County Girl Scouts held Tricking Springs Day camp from 1988 to 1993 at Salem Campground with the help and support of Salem United Methodist Church.

In January 1996, members of Salem helped Denise Clegg, church member and member of Senior Girl Scout Troop 1256 earn her Gold Award, the highest award that a Girl Scout can earn. Denise is the daughter of Mike Clegg and Susanne Lindsey. Church members donated fabric, cut blocks, stitched and helped to piece 20 baby quilts. These quilts were donated to Newton County Family and Children Services to be given to children who had to be taken from their homes.

Several Girl Scouts at Salem have earned the Silver Award. They include:

Denise Clegg*	Troop 1256	May 1992
Jamie Zmistowski	Troop 129	May 1992
Amanda Penn*	Troop 707	May 1995
Jennifer Fleming	Troop 129	December 1995
Priscilla Harmon*	Troop 1405	March 1996
Priscilla Pritchard	Troop 1405	March 1996
Kristi Williams	Troop 1405	March 1996
Lyndsey Hudson*	Troop 707	May 1996
Penny Taylor	Troop 129	May 1996
Kathryn Zmistowski	Troop 129	May 1996
Elizabeth Sawyer*	Troop 8012	May 1997

Boy Scouts

by Ken Adams

Troop #240 was organized in the 1950s by Doyle Bailey. It was in force until 1956. In 1965 Kenneth Adams and Sanford Tolleson organized a Cub Scout Pack that only lasted one year.

Boy Scout Troop 151 was being sponsored by and held at the old Salem Road Fire Station. The Scoutmaster was Rick Peterson. The Fire Station decided not to sponsor the troop so Mr. Peterson approached Rev. Judd Hodges about Salem Methodist Church sponsoring this troop. The Council on Ministries approved this. Rev. Hodges approached Kenneth Adams about moving the Salem boys who were members of Troop 804 at Prospect Methodist Church to the new troop at Salem. Nine boys came to the Salem troop from Prospect along with Steve Garner, adult leader. This was in 1979.

Steve Garner later became Scoutmaster. Along with several adults from Salem, they built the troop to thirty-five members. Each year they went to summer camp at Mountain Rest, South Carolina where they achieved merit badges and learned to care for themselves.

In the meantime, Johnny Schell and Gary Bloodworth organized Cub Pack 151. These cubs later became scouts and many of them Eagle Scouts.

Many projects have been done by Scouts for the church, cemetery, and Salem Campground. Many fine young men have been produced from these organizations.

Wesley Walk

We recruit walkers, volunteers, and donations to the Wesley Walk for Others each year in October. This helps support the Methodist Children's Home in Decatur, and also provides for adults at the Wesley Centers.

Blood Drive

An American Red Cross Blood Drive is held in the Family Life Center three times a year. This is open to the community, and is truly a gift of love and life. We collected 50 to 64 units in the last five drives.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers

We worked with the Salvation Army in Covington by manning the Salvation Army Red Kettles at Christmastime. This assists in providing toys and glad tidings for needy children in the Covington area.

Shelter Needs

Clothes, bathroom and personal items are taken to the Atlanta Day Shelter for Women and Children. Furniture is given to the Atlanta Furniture Bank, and soupspoons are given to the Trinity Soup Kitchen for men on Washington Ave in downtown Atlanta.

We currently help support the Rainbow Homeless Shelter in Covington and the Rockdale Emergency Relief in Conyers.

Food Banks

We have food barrels set up around the church and Family Life Center to collect food to be taken to Food Banks in Newton & Rockdale Counties.

Summer Lunch Program

We make 100 – 150 sandwiches each week throughout the summer and pack lunches and distribute in conjunction with Rockdale Emergency Relief lunch program.

Backpack Buddies

We supply nutritious food items for the weekend for children who may not have adequate food.

Samaritan's Purse

Samaritan's Purse is a ministry under the leadership of Franklin Graham, organized through the Billy Graham Crusade. Members of our church first heard about it at the Ross Bell Evangelistic Crusade held at the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers in 2001. That year Martha Williams presented the program of Christmas "Shoebox gifts" to the Joy Class. Thirty-seven shoeboxes filled with gifts appropriate for boys or girls of certain age groups were collected to be sent to children all over the world. They could have toys, articles of clothing, articles for hygiene, and \$5 to cover the cost of shipping and handling.

Kairos Prison Ministry

Kairos is a Greek word meaning “God’s special time”. Kairos is an interdenominational prison ministry. Each participating prison holds two weekend retreats per year. There is a reunion group which meets once a month between retreats. The outside team consists of 30-40 men or women committed to witnessing to 42 pilgrims.

For five years, 1998-2003, Salem UMC has supported this ministry in different ways. During the retreats, which run from Thursday to Sunday, Salem members, along with those from other churches sign up for various times on the 24 hour prayer list, promising to pray at that time all four days. Salem members have also attended the closing session of the retreat. Some members have baked cookies that are given out during the weekend. The children in the kindergarten and first grade classes write many letters, which are much appreciated by those who receive them. Bill Pollard has worked with the Hancock team for five years.

Iris’ Angels

by Shirley Thomas

In March 1999, while serving as assistant chairman of the “Outreach Committee” I recommended the formation of a sub group that would be responsible for contacting SUMC shut-ins. The main purpose of the group was to provide love and concern for Salem members who were confined to their homes or to a nursing home. The hope was to reduce the loneliness and depression that all shut-ins tend to experience. The names of the initial group of 18 shut-ins were provided by Alan Smith, pastor at that time. Thirteen women and one man signed up to serve on the committee. The group decided to call the committee “The Salem UMC Care and Concern Group.”

Responsibilities included: 1) Visitation 2) Telephone calls 3) Sending cards. The shut-ins were divided into two groups: Group A included individuals unable to leave their home or nursing home due to illness or mental problems. Group B included individuals unable to attend church activities unless driven and assisted by a caregiver. The list of shut-ins grew whereas the committee members decreased.

The committee was assisted by a 5th grade class at West Newton Elementary School. Each month, Mrs. Sweat’s class made lovely cards or ornaments with special verses to be presented to each of our shut-ins. Very unique cards and gifts were provided by this class at Christmas, Easter, Mother’s and Father’s Days.

Through her working association with the Wal-mart Garden Center, Evelyn Brown graciously presented the committee with poinsettias and Easter lilies to be delivered in 2000 and 2001.

During a council meeting in January 2003, Randy Kanipe, our new pastor made a recommendation to change the committee's name to "The Salem UMC Iris' Angels", in memory of Iris Standard. Iris was a kind, loving caregiver to so many, so it was appropriate to make the change. The Church Council authorized Iris' Angels as a sub-group of the Nurture Committee.

Iris' Angels are subdivided into three work groups to:

- 1) Teams of angels make personal visits, telephone calls, and/or sending cards,
- 2) Ellen Brown sends cars to any church member in the hospital or sick at home for an extended period of time, as well as to the family of members who have died.
- 3) Bess and Ross Freeman make personal visits, telephone calls, or send cards to church members on their birthdays.

Nurture

With a church the size of Salem, it is not unusual for several people to be in hospitals spread over the metropolitan Atlanta area. Rev. Kanipe found himself in situations where he had several church members having surgery or in the hospital at the same time that there was a critical situation or funeral. Rev. Kanipe with the help of Nancy Taylor, who has extensive experience in the Stephen's Ministries, trained a group of volunteers to help in these situations. On March 9, 2003 members of the congregation who had completed a training session were commissioned by Rev. Randy Kanipe to stand in his place until he is able to attend personally. The Assistants to the Pastor visit funeral homes and hospitals in the absence of the pastor and can go into ICU. Among this group are Dot Palmer, Eda Eggar, Don Stewart, Beverly Casstevens, Louise Godfrey, Don Stewart, Harry Melton and John & Mary Butler.

It was an honor on March 9, 2003 for the Iris' Angels and the Nurture Group (previously Assistants to the Pastor) to be anointed with oil by Reverend Dr. MacArthur Brantley, Chairman, North Georgia Conference Council on Ministries in a special commissioning service during 11:00 o'clock worship. The service commissioned the people so named to serve communion to shut-ins or those church members in the hospital.

Shepherding Group

The idea of a shepherding group is that a small group will “shepherd” new members of Salem UMC in their growth at Salem. This includes, but certainly is not limited to, helping to a match our newest members with their areas of interest. Additionally, and very importantly, a shepherding group is able to meet regularly to learn, study, pray and socialize together. Since a shepherding group is intentionally a small group, those in such a group know and support each other in our various walks with God.

The intention of the Shepherd groups was to form a number of small groups, organized by neighborhood that would have several functions: 1) to assimilate new members in the church-each member would be invited to join the shepherd group in his or her area, 2) to foster prayer, fellowship and study in a small group setting, 3) to enjoy the social activities that go along with such groups including attendance at special events such as the “Old Church celebration held each December in Oxford, Ga.

Partnership with West Newton Elementary

Since the school opened they inform us what kind of coupons they are turning in for school equipment. It is printed in the bulletins and boxes are provided to receive them. In return, we are allowed to use some of their equipment.

(H) A listing of the cemetery as of August 2003 is included in this history as Appendix D.



Salem United Methodist Church Cemetery

In the summer of 2002, Jan Curtis began talking with Beverly Casstevens about her concerns about the state of the Salem UMC Cemetery. Maintenance to the grounds was minimal and virtually no deeds were kept for plots. There were no records of burials such that genealogists and historians had to literally walk the entire cemetery in search of a specific grave. Together, they began recording information on all graves and generally bringing order to the records and the property. Like good Methodists, they set about establishing a committee, along with rules, regulations and procedures to ensure that the cemetery was better maintained and future internments would be handled in a more responsible manner.

Salem UMC Cemetery is a National Historic Site. Salem Spring and the Salem Volunteer Fire Department are just north of the cemetery. The property north of the cemetery is the property of Salem Campground, and land to the west is the property of the descendants and family of Franklin Gray.

The cemetery is divided into three sections. The original and largest section (One), acquired in 1906 from R. B. Vaughn, is immediately west of Salem Road, and continues to a driveway that is ingress and egress to Salem Road. Prior to 1906, the cemetery was a “public” cemetery for are people of both European and African ancestry. West of the driveway is Section Two, which was a gift in 1947 from Franklin Gray. Section Three was acquired from Salem Campground in 1990, and is north of the driveway.

The Conyers-Porterdale Road, also known as Salem Campground Road, is believed to have run through the cemetery north to south, bisecting what is now Section One. The current Salem Road right-of-way would ordinarily encompass part of the cemetery, specifically the entire first row of graves in Section One. The historical status of the property and the fact that the area is a cemetery makes it highly unlikely that the Georgia Department of Transportation or any county authority will disturb the property.

Survey, Legal Work and Improvements. Beginning in the fall of 2002, work was begun to improve the property. Trees were removed. Drainage pipes were replaced. Soil and gravel were added to the driveway. The western property line was cleared of debris, trees and brush. The soil that had accumulated from grave openings was redistributed, and rainwater runoff was improved.

A survey was completed in April 2003 and is the basis for proposing a new western property line that will provide adequate space for fencing as well as additional grave sites or a second driveway. Title searches are underway, and the Cemetery Trustees hope to quick claim some boundary properties to allow us to complete the clean-up and install fencing.

Census and Database. (H) In 2002, a census was completed. All information was entered into a computer database. (For the computer savvy among us, we are using Access, which is best suited for relatively small databases.) Names, dates, monument and plot descriptions, location, deed number, and inscriptions are included in this database. Plot owners and addresses are being added as well as accounts payable information for future plot sales. By setting up this database, we can more easily record, update and protect information. A backup copy can be recorded to disk and kept in the church's safety deposit box. We can also print out a variety of reports.

We have already placed a binder in the church office that details the census. You can look up information by an individual's last name or look at each plot and its location in the cemetery. Also in this binder are historical documents including the trust agreement as well as an aerial photographs taken in 1978 and 2002.

Some interesting facts obtained during the census. The oldest grave dates to 1821, however the monument is so eroded that little else can be deciphered. There may be older graves, however, their monuments are so weathered that we have not yet been able to read any of the inscriptions on them.

The family names most common are Plunkett, Smith and Treadwell. Other frequently found names include Almand, Berry, Christian, Edwards, Hardeman, Lane, Loyd (or Lloyd), Melton, Sawyer, Standard, and Stowers.

We identified over 929 gravesites in 400 plots. Since some of us are good at planning ahead, not all of these are currently occupied.

We have a large number of veterans including Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam. It seems that some of our World War II veterans sometimes fudged their birthdays to qualify for service. Since the family markers always show them to be born later than their Veteran's Administration marker, we did not think the discrepancies were accidental in all cases.

We believe there are over 50 unmarked graves. These have been identified by a number of ways: sunken areas, mounds of earth, marker fragments, mortuary markers (supplied by funeral directors) that are no longer legible, or rock/stone used as coping. More work needs to be done to verify these. More recent unmarked graves may be present since the more common use of outer casket containers and vaults minimize sinking, one of the most common ways of identifying grave sites. In a few cases, people have told us that they know the identity of the individual so that we have been able to record this in the database, but this is rare. We are considering placing a simple marker as we are able to positively locate these graves.

Locating Plots and Graves. One of the more difficult jobs is producing a layout of the plots, especially in Section One. The plots in this section are oriented west-to-east, but vary in size and arrangement, which is why an accurate layout is important for locating plots and graves. Section Two graves are also oriented west-to-east, but the section is somewhat easier to map. Plots in this section have a more orderly arrangement, and are less variability in size. Section Three consists of two rows of single grave plots oriented north-to-south.

The Cemetery Trust. The first step was to review the trust agreement for the cemetery, and form a committee to determine how to proceed. The cemetery trust agreement was established in 1988 with approximately \$20,000. The trust stipulates that cemetery trustees be members of SUMC, and be elected at Charge Conference, but not that cemetery trustees and church trustees must be the same group. It is true that the initial cemetery trustees were church trustees, but our research found correspondence seeking guidance from the District Superintendent about ensuring a separation of the two groups shortly after the trust was established.

Because trustee positions require a significant commitment of time and attention, we recommended that we amend the trust to specifically stipulate a group of five cemetery trustees: three individuals will be put forward by the Nominating Committee to serve three year staggered terms. The fourth would be selected from the church trustees and serve as a liaison between the two groups, and the fifth person will be the current senior pastor.



Memories of Long Time Members and Former Pastors

Rules and Regulations. We developed a set of rules and regulations that expand upon those already in place. These rules will help us maintain the cemetery, reduce risks and liabilities, and help us more easily manage internments. All plot owners and funeral homes, grave diggers and any other interested parties receive a copy

Deeds. One of our biggest jobs is to identify plot owners or their heirs for the entire cemetery. We need to do this for a number of reasons. There appear to be available gravesites in Sections One and Two. (This is in addition to the plots that were laid out in Section Three and for which we have better records.) We won't be able to know this for sure until all plot owners in Sections One and Two have been identified. Some progress has been made in this area, however, only about 20% of the owners/heirs have been identified.

The following is told by some of the "boys" who helped to tear down the old church. As the ceiling was being torn off the inside, a white object, about the size of a small goat, jumped out of the wall and ran off toward the cemetery, and was seen no more. What this white object was, the ones who saw it didn't know. They only knew they were so frightened they could hardly work after seeing what they thought must surely have been a ghost!

Mary Sue Ramsey, 1953

When my mother (Sara Ann Meadows) asked me to write down my experiences growing up in the Salem United Methodist Church, I didn't know where to start. The church has always been part of my life. I remember sitting with my Granny, Una Mae Hollis, at a very young age in the worship service. I know we were in church, as they say, "every time the doors were open". It was in the church that I felt at home. I did not enjoy school and was not much of a sports person. But the church just seemed right. I know it was Sunday school teaches throughout my childhood and teenage years that taught me the stories of the faith. Lillian Jeffries, Shirley Ruth White, Dee Stanley, Randy Kirkus just to name a few, shared their faith with me. As a sixth grader I entered UMYF somewhat reluctantly. I was not one for putting myself into a group. It was here that I grew, both in faith and in

leadership. I had the chance to be president of the UMYF for most of the next six or seven years. The UMYF was there because the people of the church saw it as important. Moms and Dads supported it. Members of the congregation supported it. One of the most profound things I remember, as a pre UMYF child, was seeing my dad (Randall Meadows) give a second check to help pay for something the youth were doing. The church, through the UMYF, enabled me to be open to the call God had for me. The people of Salem UMC brought into my life Becky Bridges, Buddy Lamb, Fred Vick, David Hicks, Dana Everhart, Dale and Marsha Reddick, Joe and Diane Hampton. These persons as well as many others influenced me, shared with me and loved me. Looking back now, it was during my time in the UMYF that God was calling me into fulltime ministry in the ordained clergy. Most of you know I fought the call. These years of serving as president of the UMYF had put me on every committee within the church and I never missed a meeting. It was the activities I witnessed there that had me running from the call. But you know that has also been helpful, because unlike some of my colleagues, I have never expected the church to be without flaws. The church is made up of sinful human beings who are in need of grace. This does not change the moment we become a member of the congregation. We need God's grace and guidance. It was those difficult times within the body of believers at Salem that I learned that. So I say thank you to you the congregation that nurtured me, taught me and loved me. You made it possible for me to receive Christ and to proclaim Christ, and for that I will always have a special place in my heart for you.

Greg Meadows

Salem was my first full-time church after I graduated from seminary in June, 1966. The previous pastor was Gene Nease from Oklahoma. He graduated and returned to Oklahoma six weeks before I moved to Salem.

The church wanted to renovate the parsonage while it was empty. At that time it was located on the campground property on Salem Rd. and was replaced by a brick house in that same location. The crew refinishing the beautiful pine floors failed to turn off the pilot light on the furnace, and there was an explosion that blew out the windows, cracked the furnace, and put a layer of soot on everything in the house. A man on a ladder against the outside of the house said the ladder moved away from the house. Also a colony of bats in the attic flew out. Fortunately, no one was hurt, and the insurance company repaired and

cleaned the house at a cost of around \$6000. That was a lot of money in 1966, when minimum salary for a seminary graduate was only \$4,500 per year.

The parsonage was like a new house. The Salem people worked hard to provide a warm welcome for us.

A major task during the two years I was pastor was to build a kitchen, fellowship hall, and seven Sunday school rooms. The need was before us with a class meeting in the vestibule, one meeting in the sanctuary, and another in the Druid Hills Cottage on the campground.

I remember planting dogwood trees near the church and parsonage. Also we organized a new Boy Scout Troop that later moved to Prospect UMC.

**Charles Thomas
(1966—1968)**

I came to Salem in June 1974 and left in 1979. We had wonderful growth and fellowship while serving Salem. We grew out of the sanctuary and the educational rooms and had to lengthen the sanctuary and redo the entire chancel area. The spot light in what is now the middle of the ceiling is the light that shown down on the pulpit. This will let you know the additional space we put on. We were also able to build the two story educational;

Building, which has 7000 square feet in it at a cost of (as I remember) \$175,000. Jerry Bilbro was the contractor from Griffin, Ga. I found a place in Atlanta that sold used restaurant equipment for the kitchen.

Iris Standard had a Tuesday afternoon Bible study for the ladies. Sometimes she let me attend. She always brought her mother, a dear child of God. Her mom's favorite scripture was: "Be still and know that I am God."

I always remember the barbecues. McEver Packing Company furnished 90 fresh hams and Brasher Bently and his crew would cook them all night long. They would make three or four hundred gallons of stew. Those stirring paddles would wear you out. If it wasn't stirred constantly, it would burn and you would lose it all.

We lived in the new parsonage on the other side of the campground. It had only been lived in one year before we came. It was a beautiful place after living in some seminary parsonages. Jean and I are fine and living in our home on Lake Hartwell. I retired three years ago and still preaching from time to time. I thank the Lord that I still can. Your pastor, Randy, was my associate when I served Jonesboro First. For an x-boy scout he has turned out okay. Pray daily for your pastor, that God will give him wisdom.

God bless you all.

**Dean Kring
(1974 - 1979)**

When I reflect on my time in preaching in the beautiful sanctuary of Salem UMC, the memories are filled with joy. Many people came to worship there because of the outward appearance of the beautiful church that reminded them of the little churches they grew up in.

You can reflect on the weddings and funerals and special services as well as worship with fondness. But when I reflect upon my time as pastor there, I have to begin with the fact that the congregation first became pastor to me before I became pastor to you. You cared for us through Janice's cancer recovery the first summer we were there.

It was a joy to worship there and I remember with great joy when Bishop Knox came and burnt the note on the renovations.

One of the services I will always remember was connected with a stewardship campaign. We had a pig pickin after worship. During worship I preached on overalls as "it was time to go to work."

I am proud to have preached in the sanctuary of Salem United Methodist Church from 1991 to 1996.

**Mike Cavin
(1991 - 1996)**

In terms of the record, the years of 1984 to 1988 were not the kind of growth years that might have been expected, given the beginning of a rapid growth period in the Rockdale-Newton County area. The ministries of the church were quite comprehensive, with excellent programs for children, youth, and older adults. There was a strong music ministry and worship was well attended and enthusiastically supported. Regular visitation was conducted by a strong team on Monday evenings. Revival meetings and Bible Studies helped keep the spiritual tide flowing high. Fellowship dinners and other special activities kept the facilities and the congregation in constant engagement. The record will show that the membership hovered in the 750 to 780 range. Days of high celebration were led by active lay and clergy leadership and the enthusiasm was high. Weddings, both among Salem family members and others from outside the congregation, were the frequent high occasions.

The “Salem Seniors” on special outings, the youth on special ministry trips to various places, the choir with their special seasonal emphases, the men’s club breakfasts and projects, and the very active athletic program, which involved much inter-church competition, all made for great fellowship and ministry opportunities. Another highlight of those years was the annual barbeque for the EMLC shareholders meeting. Of course, no history of the times would be complete without the mention of the Salem Camp Meeting, annual event in which the church always shared morning worship services, usually attended by former pastors and friends.

During these years considerable improvements were made to the physical facilities. One project was the addition of vinyl siding on all of the exterior surfaces of the Sanctuary and all adjacent buildings. The Fellowship Hall, the center of much of the church activity, had a face-lift with new suspended acoustical ceiling tiles and an upgrading of the kitchen. A new Boy Scout Hut was added to serve a growing scout and Eagle Scout program. The parsonage interior was given a face-lift with a new color scheme and new furnishings and draperies. The Pastor’s Study was refurbished and redecorated.

It was also during these years that Dana Everhart, Youth minister for two years, and Greg Meadows, a “favorite son” of Salem, advanced toward the ordained ministry. Both are actively serving North Georgia Conference churches at the present. Land, speaking of the ordained clergy, this is one pastor who is extremely grateful for the opportunity to lead this wonderful congregation for four years.

**Ralph Watson
(1984 - 1988)**

In June, 1968 I was assigned as the pastor of Salem United Methodist Church. (I was the first pastor assigned to Salem after it became United Methodist as this designation came at the 1968 General Conference in Dallas, Texas.)

While arriving at Salem Lu and I were excited at this appointment. I still had a few weeks of seminary left at Candler before graduating in August, 1968. At that I time I became full-time! I was the second pastor assigned to serve full-time and my salary was \$6,000.00. Minimum salary was \$5,200.00 so I felt as though I had gotten a great first appointment! I quickly realized Lu and I had been greatly blessed.

We enjoyed our six years at Salem. In 1968 Salem was still very rural. A few subdivisions were beginning up Salem Road but most of those were in Rockdale County. There were still plenty of family farms and lots of dairy cattle. The people were hard working and enjoyed their community. The cemetery was sacred and the church was well-kept.

When we arrived the church was in the process of completing a building program, which involved the addition of a fellowship hall, kitchen and several Sunday School rooms. I wondered how they had gotten along without them. The addition was dedicated on Campmeeting Sunday by Bishop John Owen Smith.

Much of my time was spent playing with the kids as well as the youth. (I was 25 at the time!) Just about every Sunday night after church we would take the youth to Shoney's on Memorial Drive which was the closest restaurant opened on Sunday night. The relationships with those "kids" is special to me to this day!

On March 9, 1971 our first baby was born. Leslie Ann was the church baby and everyone loved her so. The church had a church-wide shower for us before she was born and men and women attended and we received so many things. What a blessing it was to baptize her in the Salem sanctuary.

In 1971 a parsonage was built behind the existing parsonage. After the parsonage was built the old parsonage was moved off the lot. It was the shortest in distance we ever moved...less than 25 feet! The parsonage cost \$27,000.00, and was paid off in less than three years. Clifford Savage, the church treasurer was making extra payments from excesses in funds and announced one night at Board Meeting what he had been doing. He didn't like debt! We loved the house but it took two hours to push mower the grass, which the local pastor was expected to do!

The church experienced good growth these years as many new people moved to the area. People worked well together and welcomed the new folks. As it grew it continued to have a good feel about it and people looked out for one another and included the new as well as the old.

As the pastor of the church I felt much love and support from the people. Much of my visitation was done at Roy Moore's Store where I stopped in about everyday to see what was happening. I spent much time drinking a Coke and rocking a little bit!

Salem was my first full-time appointment. I couldn't have asked for a better place. I got to preach twice a Sunday. I had no paid staff. I typed the bulletin. I answered the phone. I set up the meetings. I took the flowers from the church to the hospitals or to shut-ins! And I loved every bit of it. As I look back I am glad I got to be one of the many pastors of this wonderful church.

May God continue to guide its future.

Phil DeMore
(1968 - 1974)

Ministry at Salem Methodist Church—Trevor & Lois Turner

It was June 25, 1952, just five days after our marriage that Lois and I packed all of our earthly belongings in a 1946 Ford to begin a ministry on the Salem Charge near Covington, Georgia. Lois and I met three years earlier in Culpeper County while I was assisting a pastor of eight rural Methodist Churches in that county. At the time, I had just finished my first year at the University of Virginia and she had just moved with her parents from the city of Fredericksburg into the suburbs in Spotsylvania County. We fell in love from the outset but waited until we both graduated from our respective schools.

Having been appointed to a student pastorate in Georgia while attending the Candler School of Theology was a wonderful opportunity for me, but it was not my first student pastorate. After serving the ten weeks during the Summer of 1949 in Culpeper County, the District Superintendent of the Charlottesville District offered me a pastorate in eastern Albemarle County beyond “Monticello,” Thomas Jefferson’s home about ten miles from the University of Virginia where I was beginning my second year of college. I was just 19 years of age at the time. I spent three years serving two churches, Buck Island and New Bethel Methodist Churches, known as the Woodridge Charge. The advantage of the new appointment in Georgia was a parsonage!

After a tearful goodbye to Lois’ parents and other members of her family, we drove across Virginia to the home of my parents who lived near Hollins College, north of Roanoke, Virginia. July 1st was moving day for the preachers, so we left very early that morning and after another emotional goodbye, made our way south to Salem, Georgia. It was about 5:00 PM when we arrived in the Salem Community and stopped at Slade Ellington’s Store to ask directions to the Parsonage. I was dressed in a sports shirt and obviously, my appearance showed that we had traveled 500 miles that day. The church members were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new Pastor. They knew I was coming from Virginia but had few details about me. The former Pastor, a father and grandfather, had vacated the Parsonage that morning. Slade was doing something behind the counter while Mrs. Ellington and Mrs. Burns were seated chatting. After Slade gave me directions, Mrs. Burns asked, “Are you moving the preacher?” I replied, “No maam, I am the Preacher!” Never had they seen a Pastor so young!

We had no idea what kind of house we would be expected to occupy. Much to our surprise, the parsonage was located on the west side of the Salem Camp Ground, a beautiful white cottage that had been built some six years earlier with both side and back porches. There was a large living room, two bedrooms, a dining room, kitchen and a bathroom. The living room, bedrooms, dining room and kitchen were adequately furnished. There was a garage for the car and a well-kept lawn on all sides with large shade trees.

The word was out that we had arrived and before we could completely unpack the car, Johnny Farmer and a group of teenagers showed up at our door. They offered to help us get settled. Within a week, we had worked up a plan for them to help us paint the interior walls of the parsonage. Before the day was over, ladies from the

Women's Society of Christian Service came bringing us our evening meal and filling our refrigerator with fresh meat and vegetables. Within a couple of weeks after our arrival, our pantry shelves were full of canned goods and daily, someone was placing fresh vegetables or fruit on our back porch. Much of the time, we did not know who the generous donor was.

The parsonage was quite comfortable from the first few days and, quickly, Lois made this house into a home. However, one morning when we were about to have breakfast, first Lois and then I began to feel things biting our legs. We looked down and fleas were jumping everywhere. I immediately called W. C. Bates who was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and informed him of this invasion. The mystery was solved when I found out that Rev. Warwick, my predecessor, kept hunting dogs under the house and the place was infested with fleas. Since the dogs were gone, we became their next victims! Mr. Bates and his son came armed with equipment that spread the same insecticide dust that they put on cotton to kill the boll weevil and killed the fleas. We never had that problem again.

We soon found out that we did not have to mow the lawn. This was done by the grounds people who kept up the Salem Camp Ground campus. The J. T. Jaynes who were the caretakers of the camp ground property and managers of the hotel located on the campus made sure that the upkeep services to the camp ground was extended to us. On one occasion, Lois baked a chocolate pie at the same time a young man was mowing our lawn. As a gesture of appreciation, she took the pie out to offer some to him and a working companion. She showed him the pie and he reached out, took the whole pie, sat down under the shade of a large tree and the two consumed it to the last morsal!

My schedule for the next seven weeks was unbelievable. The first year, I served Prospect and Snapping Shoals Methodist Churches in addition to Salem. In the mornings, there was Vacation Bible School, in the afternoons I visited the sick and home bound, and in the evenings conducted three Summer revivals, one in each of the churches. It was the custom that the Pastor be the speaker at the revival the first year of his appointment to the Salem Charge. In addition to preparing the sermons for the revivals, I had 4 services a month at Salem and 2 services each for Prospect and Snapping Shoals requiring the preparation of 8 sermons a month. The only time I had to prepare was to arise about 5:00 AM each morning and equip myself spiritually and intellectually to carry out this regimen. I was truly following the schedule John Wesley set for himself!

Even though Salem Church, which was located on the east side of the Salem Camp Ground, and the camp ground programs were separate entities, Lois and I considered ourselves very fortunate to live in the shadow of this great institution of Methodism, a southern tradition. Located on the camp ground was Kitty's Cottage, the house Bishop Andrew built for a slave he owned in an attempt to prevent the Methodist Church from dividing prior to the Civil War. Salem Camp Ground began in 1828 as a gathering place to hold Summer revivals during "laying-by time" when the cotton was maturing but not ready to be picked. The Pavilion which was a wooden structure that held 1,000 persons when we were there, which was the centerpiece of the campus. In addition to a hotel, there were cottages all around the Pavilion called "Tents" because originally the area was

filled with tents. For generations, prominent families of the area would come and occupy the "Tents". Although Lois and I lived on the west side of the campus, we were invited to stay in the hotel during "Camp Meeting" which always began on the 2nd Sunday of August each year and lasted for a week. The Jaynes were good neighbors. They and their children were active members of Salem Church and we treasured their friendship. We were always included in the activities sponsored by the Camp Ground. and were regularly nurtured spiritually and socially by great speakers from throughout the South who came to speak at Camp Meeting and other events.

Not only did I have a busy schedule, but Lois became involved as well. She was beautiful and people loved being around a cultured Virginia lady. She was a good listener and won the hearts of both the young people and those not so young. During the three years we were at Salem, she kept busy with all the activities involving the women and children of the church including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, MYF and the WSCS. Also, she was leader of the Brownie Scouts. When Lois arrived in Georgia, she needed a driver's license. Roy and Helen Moore who ran a store just across the street from the Church, and were active members, soon became our close friends. Helen indicated that Georgia State Troopers would come by and stop in from time to time. In those days, a Trooper could issue a license. One morning Lois received a call from Helen to come to the store and meet a Trooper friend of theirs. She did and he took her out for a test drive and issued a license that very day! When I started my classes at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, I was able to arrange with three other student pastors of the area to carpool and I needed to use my car only one day each week. On the days I didn't drive, Lois would take me up Salem Road to US Route 278 where I could meet the other guys and she would have transportation during the day to do the things with which she was involved.

Doyle and Clareece Bailey had two children, Ancel and Brenda, in the Methodist Youth Fellowship and were active in all aspects of the Church. The first Thanksgiving Holiday that we were to be away from home, the Bailey's invited us to share Thanksgiving dinner with them. Their older son, Sidney, was in the Air Force and away from home and we were able to compensate for the vacant seat at the Thanksgiving table. On the following Sunday, I expressed to the congregation just how grateful we were for the way the people of the community had accepted us Virginians into their homes. After the service, Mary Sue Ramsey, who was the church historian, came up to me and said that by having us to minister to them was like reliving the early history of the Church. She pointed out that when Salem Church was organized in 1824, Green B. Turner donated the five acre lot to build the church. One of the founders of the Salem Church was Eli Bennet, another Virginian, who came to Newton County in 1822. Being a Turner from Virginia made us especially welcome. From that time onward, Doyle and Clareece became surrogate parents to us that has endured more than fifty years.

The Sunday evening before Christmas, the young people of Salem Church provided a special Christmas program for members of all three of the churches on the circuit. The church was packed and we shared Christmas greetings with everyone because Lois and I planned to drive back to Virginia to be with our families over the holiday. We left that very evening and drove all night and arrived at my home by mid morning. After a couple of days with my family, we arrived on Christmas Eve at Lois' home. It was a wonderful Christmas. However,

on the way back, the engine on our car threw a tie rod and we were stranded. George Ramsey, a member of Salem Church and a used car dealer, volunteered to come to our aid and have the car towed back to the community. At the next auto auction, he bid for a 1951 Ford that was in excellent shape and with the trade-in of my other car, I was able to have transportation at a minimum price. George had a reputation of not getting along with the Pastors at Salem, but I found him to be like the irriatant grain of sand in the oyster shell. If he criticized, it was usually constructive. Like the grain of sand that turns into a pearl, he became, for me, the "pearl" of Salem Church.

After being Pastor of the Salem Charge for six months, I became aware of the potential opportunities that could be realized at Salem Church if it became a station church rather than being a part of a circuit. The members had readily responded to pastoral leadership and there were almost no dissenting opinions that the church was incapable of being on its own. When I approached the leadership of the church, there was no doubt that they could increase the salary to match what the other two churches were paying. The two hurdles that stood in the way were to convince Dr. E. G. Mackey, the District Superintendent to place the other two churches on another charge, and to raise the funds needed to buy out the other churches' financial share in the parsonage. This was the boldest move Salem Church had made since the Salem Circuit was organized in 1905 with four churches; Prospect, Salem, Snapping Shoals, and Union. Originally, it was on the Yellow River Circuit which included Clayton, Fayette, Henry, Newton and Walton Counties, a vast area for the Circuit Rider on horseback!

Dr. Mackey was very cooperative and took the proposal to Bishop Arthur J. Moore and the cabinet of the North Georgia Annual Conference. In March 1953, he informed me that the plan to make Salem a station church had been approved and that I would remain at Salem. I felt that God had opened a wide door for Salem to serve the community as it had never done before! It was a perfect time for this change to take place because at the 1952 General Conference of the Methodist Church, sweeping changes were made to the organizational structure of the local church as directed by the Discipline. For the first time, all administrative functions of the church were under the direction of The Official Board. Administrative duties were assigned to four Commissions; Missions, Membership & Evangelism, Education, and Finance. The Official Board was composed of the Pastor, Church Lay Leader, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Church Treasurer, President of the Women's Society of Christian Service, the Sunday School Superintendent, the President of the Youth Fellowship and the Chairpersons of the four Commissions. The WSCS collaborated with the Commission on Missions to sponsor mission projects in the community and other parts of the world. The Sunday School and MYF were intregal programs of the Commission on Education. The functions outlined in the Discipline for the Commission Membership & Evangelism and the Commission on Finance had no organizational structure in place at Salem Church to make them effective. Therefore, on July 1, 1953 when Salem Church officially became a station church after 119 years of being on a circuit, I set out to organize the church as had never been done before.

Through Divine Guidance, I learned of the Town and Country Church Development Program sponsored by the Sears-Roebuck Foundation and administered through the Town and Country School of Emory University while attending the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. It was a competitive contest that provided a monetary reward to the winners. I presented this program to the leadership of Salem Church and they readily accepted the challenge! Myrtice Yancey, who was the reporter of the Salem Community for the local newspaper, was chosen as the Chairperson of this project because it required the development of a scrapbook to provide illustrative information of what the church would accomplish over the next two years. She spent countless hours and did a magnificent job! There were 66 Projects and 74 Activities that took place during this time frame involving an untold number of manhours. Three major results came from this project. First, we won an award as being the second best rural church in Georgia in competition with scores of rural churches from many denominations throughout the State of Georgia. Second, we were able to put in place the new organizational structure of Salem Church which greatly enhanced the stature of the church, especially in the areas of membership, evangelism and finance. For example, it had been years since the church membership roll had been examined and those removed who had joined other churches. The roll was updated and the evangelic effort over the two-year period was phenomenal in receiving members on profession of faith. One revival brought in 20 new members! Another example was that church funds were not in a banking account. Through the work of the Commission on Finance, a bank account was opened, standard accounting practices were put in place, an annual budget was established and members were provided with offering envelopes in order to keep records of giving for income tax deductions. And, third, a comprehensive Salem Scrapbook was created giving in full detail the fantastic transformation of Salem Church from the time it became a station church until my departure in June 1955 to enter the military service as an Army Chaplain. I see no need to elaborate on what was reported in the Salem Scrapbook that clearly portrays the last two years of my three-year ministry. During this same time frame, I was a full-time theology student at Candler and graduated in June 1955 with a Theology Degree. As a matter of fact, I was the first pastor to have an appointment at Salem Church for more than two years since M. B. Sams who served from 1909-1913.

There were many spontaneous things that happened at Salem Church during my tenure that revealed how much the Holy Spirit was working among us, but space does not permit my sharing all that I remember. However, one vivid incident happened one Sunday just before I was to preach, a young man got my attention from the back of the church. He stood and asked if I would allow him to speak. He attended the services occasionally but not someone who had a responsible position in the church. I granted him permission to speak and he shared with the congregation that he had just been miraculously saved from a terrible automobile accident that totally demolished his car. In front of that congregation, he made a recommitment to Christ and from that day forward he became a pillar of Salem Church! His name was Morris Allen. Twenty years later, our son Stephen, who was born while we were at Salem Church came into the Salem community to drop some things off at the home of Doyle and Clareece Bailey. By this time, he was a theology student at Candler preparing for the ministry. By chance, he stopped at the house of Morris who happened to be in his front yard to ask directions to the Bailey's home. Steve was about the same age as I was when I first came to Salem. Morris looked intently at him and then

down at the Virginia license plate on his car and asked, "Could you by any chance be Trevor Turner?" Steve answered, "No, but I am his son!"

The last Summer I was at Salem, I received orders from the United States Army to go to Fort Slocum, New York for ten weeks to attend the basic course of the Chaplain School. After arranging the Summer program, Carl Standard, stepped in to take my place at Salem Church as a licensed local preacher. No one in the community knew what I am about to tell you except Roy and Helen Moore. In the first two years I was at Salem, I received a salary of only \$125.00 a month which was to cover food, clothing, gasoline, payments and repairs to our car, our offerings to the church, household supplies, educational expenses that my scholarship did not supply, and the expense of Lois giving birth to Stephen, our firstborn, along with his personal needs. In addition, there was the expense of going home at Christmas with gifts to be with our families. We had no credit cards. Obviously, before the end of each month, the money would run out. To have food on the table and gasoline in the car, we would have Roy put what was needed on a charge slip. Over a 24 month period, we owed Roy and Helen more than \$400, over one fourth of a year's pay. Never once did they mention what was owed or asked how they would be repaid. However, God took care of us and during that Summer, because I was not only paid officer's wages and travel expenses between Georgia and New York, but I was given a per diem allowance for being on temporary duty away from home. Lois and Stephen, who was one year old, stayed with her parents in Fredericksburg, Virginia. This resulted in my being able to return to Salem with enough money to pay back Roy and Helen in full!

I am not able to conclude this report without mentioning the fact that during my tenure, two men, Marion Bloodworth and Carl Standard went from Salem Church into the Methodist Ministry and both were distinguished pastors over many years of service. I know of no other rural Methodist Church in the United States that aspires to this honor within a three-year period. Furthermore, there are scores of persons outside of those I have already mentioned who were such good friends and meant so much to Lois and me for their dedicated Christian service. At the risk of leaving persons out that have escaped my memory, I want to recognize Leonard Standard, who was our Sunday School Superintendent; Iris Standard as President of the Women's Society of Christian Service and teacher of the Ladies Bible Class; Douglas Yancy who served as a Trustee and supported Myrtice in all her endeavors; Ann Christian who was truly instrumental working with the MYF; Aaron and Susan Kemp for the furnishings that came out of Aaron's cabinet shop; Irene Smith, who decorated the altar with flower every Sunday throughout the year; The Miller Family, especially Manson who converted his truck to pick up children in the neighborhood for Sunday School; Hoyt and Nellie Bailey who were involved in many activities; Hulda Kirkland, who was the matriarch of the church family; Eleanor Holifield and Annie Mae Radcliff, for their work with the Girl Scouts; the Underwood, Treadwell and Alton Johnson families that come to my mind as being very dedicated. And, especially, Jack McGiboney and Louise Johnson, the first couple in which I had the privilege of performing their wedding ceremony in Salem Church with Peggy Jaynes as the organist. There are others that at this time I cannot recall but God knows their love and commitment.