

HISTORY OF

EMMANUEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1864 - 2014



Emmanuel United Methodist Church

421 South Main Street Sumter,

SC 29150

Bishop Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop

Reverend Doctor Robin Dease, Hartsville District Superintendent

Reverend Doris R. Bright, Pastor

History of Emmanuel United Methodist Church

1864 - 2014

Emmanuel United Methodist Church was organized in 1864 as a "Bush Harbor" church. The Bush Harbor structure was a shed, built with poles and covered with moss. The original structure was located on the west side of South Main Street. (The land on the east side of South Main, where the church now stands, was purchased in 1900). The present Emmanuel Sanctuary and Assembly Hall were built in 1901. It is the oldest church building of any denomination that is currently being used for worship in the city of Sumter. Additions to the 1901 structure include the Ferguson Educational Annex (1952) and the Goodwin Family Life Center (1988).

Rev. Frank Whittemore was assigned as the first pastor to the Bush Harbor mission. A lot was purchased for \$200 and deeded to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A school was built, and it served for many years as the only place in the community where "colored children" could receive a primary education. **By 1890, fifteen members** from "Bush Harbor" congregation **had become ordained ministers.**

Plans for the then called, "Twentieth Century Brick Church" were conceived in the late 1890's, when **Rev. Wm RA Palmer** was pastor; and soon afterward, construction on the new church was started. **Rev. J. C. Martin** was pastor in 1901 when the cornerstone on the assembly hall was laid in September, and the cornerstone on the main building was laid in October of that year.. Led by Rev. Martin, the congregation marched across the street from the "Bush Harbor" to witness the laying of the cornerstone on the main building (sanctuary) in October, 1901. **Rev. W.M. Hannah** served Emmanuel from 1905 to 1912. During his tenure, the Twin Windows Club was founded. It paid for the windows in the church, and the congregation moved into the new place of worship during Rev. Hannah's tenure. **Rev. J.W. Moultrie** was pastor of Emmanuel from 1912 to 1915. During this time, the congregation paid off the \$6,500 debt that was owed on the church.

From 1915 to 1917 **Rev. J. F. Paige** was pastor of Emmanuel. **Rev. R. L. Hickmon** served Emmanuel from 1917 to 1927. He was followed by **Rev. J. W. Taylor**, who served from 1927 to 1932. During Rev. Taylor's tenure, a heating system was installed, and the lighting was changed from the old chandeliers to the new lighting system. From 1932 to 1934, **Rev. R.F. Freeman** was the pastor; he was followed by **Rev. S.M. Miller** who served from 1934 to 1939. In 1936, the church purchased the land where the Sunday School building now stands for \$300. In 1940 the **Rev. P.E. Mingo** served Emmanuel.

From 1940 to 1959, Emmanuel was very ably led by the eminent Rev. C. F. Ferguson, whose administration achieved many accomplishments, including the following:

- 1945 – The first financial effort to raise funds to build an educational building
- 1951 – Groundbreaking for the new structure (Bishop J. W. Bowen)

- 1952 – Building completed and dedicated on Easter Sunday
- 1952 – The parsonage was renovated
- 1952 – Hosted the Meeting of the Women’s Society of Christian Service of the Central Jurisdiction
- Annual Conference was convened at Emmanuel in 1948, 1952, 1958, and 1966; (Prior to this time, Annual Conference was convened at Emmanuel in 1884, 1904, 1911, 1922, 1930, and 1939)

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Rev. Theodore Fisher served from 1959 to 1962, and **Rev. W.M. Stokes** led the congregation from 1962 to 1970. During Rev. Stokes’ administration, the debt on the parsonage was paid off. Also a new heating and cooling system and a new roof were added. The church also purchased the Manning Avenue property; and the sanctuary and the parsonage were refurbished. From June 1970 to 1974, **Rev. James Bradley** led the Emmanuel family, and the mortgage on the church was paid off in full. The mortgage on the Manning Avenue property was paid in full under the leadership of **Rev. John E. Spears**, who served Emmanuel from 1974 until his sudden death in 1976. **District Superintendent Ernest Heape** carried the congregation forward until **Rev. Clyde Calhoun** was sent to serve Emmanuel in August, 1977. During this time Emmanuel was selected to become a pilot church under the Ethnic Minority Local Church Program. Also, during Rev. Calhoun’s tenure, Emmanuel participated in the Student Intern Program. The church also purchased a new parsonage and a church van.

In June of 1982, the **Rev. Dr. Willis Timothy Goodwin** began his service to Emmanuel. Under his leadership, Emmanuel initiated a Soup Kitchen feeding program, as well as a legal services program. A restoration drive was undertaken and culminated with the homecoming of Bishop James Thomas who is the first African American Bishop elected in the United Methodist Church, and who is a Son of Emmanuel. Dr. Goodwin ably led the congregation in numerous church and community service projects which moved Emmanuel to the forefront of Methodism in the SC Conference. To his credit, the Willis T. Goodwin Family Life Center now stands as an expansion of our church facilities; and it houses the Emmanuel Soup Kitchen which serves hot meals to scores of people (approximately 60 individuals) every week day and provides bag lunches on the weekend.

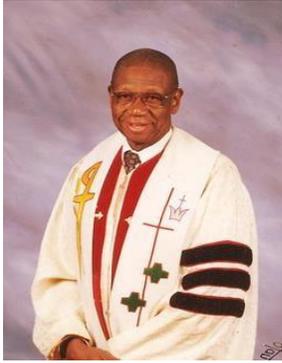
Rev. A. Clark Jenkins served at Emmanuel from 1990 to 1992. **Rev. Lee C. Bines** was pastor at Emmanuel from 1992 to 1995, and **Rev. Harrison D. Ervin** was pastor of Emmanuel from 1995 to 2000. During this time the church continued to modernize its facilities, installed new heating and air conditioning units in the Ferguson Education annex, purchased property next door to the church at 415 South Main Street, participated in the Conference Shalom Program, and expanded community outreach efforts.

Rev. Kay Adams Best served at Emmanuel from 2000 to 2002. She was Emmanuel's first female pastor and a powerful preacher. Under her administration, the church took on new vitality. Funds were raised to replace the roof on the church, and to pay for the Shalom House.. **Rev. Willie Wilson** was Emmanuel's pastor from 2002 to 2006 With his leadership, extensive work was done to repair and secure the stained glass windows.in the church; and the roof on the church was replaced. Emmanuel participated in the Natural Church Development Program, and worship, music and ministries were improved during Rev. Wilson's tenure. **Rev. Joyce Chiles Timmons** served at Emmanuel from 2006 to 2011. During this time, Emmanuel continued to grow spiritually. Major renovations were done on the interior of the sanctuary and on the parsonage.

Rev. Doris R. Bright, has served at Emmanuel since 2011. During her tenure, involvement of lay servants in leading and assisting with worship and ministries has increased; and study of the Word by members through regularly scheduled Bible Study groups is encouraged, Our congregation is determined to maintain a suitable place to worship and to engage in ministry now, and for generations to come. With God's guidance, we will continue to be a caring church who believes that **"Christ calls Emmanuel United Methodist Church to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of all persons."**

11/16/2014: Julia Wells, Church Historian

Pastors Who Served at Emmanuel United Methodist Church from 1982 to 2014



Rev. Dr. W. T. Goodwin



Rev. Kay Best



Rev. A. Clark Jenkins



Rev. Willie Wilson



Rev. Lee Bines



Rev. Joyce Chiles Timmons



Rev. Harrison D. Ervin



Rev. Doris R. Bright