

## History of Mount Zion Church

The land on which Mount Zion Church now stands was given to the Trustees of the Church in the year, July 4, 1828 by Benjamin Childress and Ann K. Childress. In the latter part of that year a log house was built by Benjamin Childress, slaves and after the job was completed, it was given to the Methodist Conference. The Trustees at that time were George W. Harris, Bushard Harris, David Martin, Sam O. Moon and Ralph Thomas. The Trustees and Officers and their successors were entrusted to care for and protect this house for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America, according to the Discipline and rules of the church. In trust and confidence they were required to permit the preacher and ministers belonging to the church to preach and expound the Word of God.

In 1840 the original log house burned. In the fall of 1840, a brick house was erected. The foundation was defective and had to be torn down.

In 1843, Benjamin Childress' wife, Ann Key Johnson died and the cemetery was started. Additional land was given for a cemetery by Mr. Childress.

In 1904, the Reverend C. E. Blankenship was pastor. During his ministry, additional work was done and improvements were made. The vestibule was built, the plain windows were replaced with stained glass, and the arch was added behind the Altar.

In 1906, the first Homecoming was held at Mount Zion under the Pastorate of Reverend T. E. Johnson. The visiting preacher was Reverend L. P. Bland.

In July 1913, Mrs. Elaine Earl and Mrs. H. P. Earl conveyed two acres of land to Mount Zion Church for burial purposes.

In 1925, during the ministry of Reverend Joe Patterson, the concrete steps and front walk were added.

No one had assumed the responsibility for the upkeep of the cemetery and by 1929, it was in very poor condition.

In 1930, the Reverend R. I. Williams was pastor and with his ideas and the help of the members - Ward Jones, Mr. Lane, Mr. J. C. Childress, Sr., Mr. Moore, Mr. W. O. Mahone, Mr. W. A. Dawson, to name a few, and any other available member, plus the help of the ladies - raked leaves, cut weeds, burned brush, and the appearance was restored.

The unmarked graves were located by Ward Jones and Mr. W. A. Dawson. Markers were bought with the Homecoming offering in 1931 and placed at each unmarked grave.

In 1955, the educational building and central heating system were added under the Pastorate of Reverend Ed Nottingham, III.

In 1961, under the leadership of Reverend Lawrence W. Easton and the members, the interior of the church was redecorated by the men of the church.

The present glass windows were added by members of the church in memory of their loved ones.

In 1963, the Methodist Youth Fellowship had carpet laid on the pulpit. That same year, more work was done on the church with the addition of two rest rooms, an educational room, concrete walk and steps leading to the educational building. The laymen and members are certainly to be commended for their leadership and work of the church.

In 1964, The Women's Society of Christian Service bought the oak flooring that is presently in the sanctuary. The floor was laid by a contractor. A "Special Offering" was taken up to pay the contractor for his work.

In 1965, the church and educational building was insulated and paid for by the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

In the fall of 1975, Mr. Binford Dawson suggested the construction of a picnic shelter to be used for Homecoming and other functions of the church. The shelter was built by Charles Baber, James Cookenour, Herman Patterson, Lloyd Pierce and other members. The shelter was dedicated at our Homecoming in 1976 by the Reverend James C. Sprouse. That same year, the interior and exterior of the church was painted by the members.

In 1977, new hymnals were presented to the church by the children of Mr. and Mrs. John Stanley Dawson. The hymnals were dedicated at Homecoming by the Reverend Eugene J. Parrish.

Down through the years, many fine gifts have been donated to the church. The Cross and Candleholders were given by the children of Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Dawson. Many other fine gifts from members and friends such as the organ, offering plates, Communion table, picture of Christ, to name a few.

Mount Zion has been on three districts - James River, Lynchburg and Charlottesville - There have been five charges - Charlottesville, Charlottesville and Scottsville, Scottsville, Green Mountain and at the present time, Schuyler-Green Mountain.

The membership has grown from 129 members in 1951 to 190 members at the present time.

To our knowledge, James C. Childress, Jr. is the only member whose descendants through the third generation have been active in the church.

By action of the General Conference in April 1968, Mount Zion Church, after unification with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, became Mount Zion United Methodist Church.

The present Trustees are Binford Dawson, William Mahone, James Cookenour, James C. Childress, Jr. and Herman Patterson.

*Paper written in 1970s*

*Present wood structure church  
built 1870 or 1871*