

A Few Significant Dates Related To Arkansas Methodism 1836 - 2012

- 1836 Arkansas Territory gained statehood.
- 1815 The Tennessee Conference sent the first preachers, William Stephenson and Eli Lindsey into Arkansas on the Spring River Circuit.
- 1816 Methodism began to spread over the new land. Circuit riding pastors were sent into the new area of Arkansas by the Missouri Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
- 1818 Arkansas Methodism was one area of the Missouri Conference called the Black River District. Total Methodists were 536.
- 1820 Camp meetings began to be held where there was no church buildings. Hundreds of people came by wagons and walked for miles.
- 1830 A few Methodist, objected to the idea of the power of the “episcopacy,” the hierarchy of Methodism. This group became the Methodist Protestant Church.
- 1831 One of the earliest temperance movements began, a forerunner of the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement and the Anti-Saloon League. Anti-alcohol leaders held “Temperance Celebrations”
- 1832 The one Methodist district became two, the southern half becoming the Little Rock District and the northern half becoming the Arkansas District.
- Pastors in the Little Rock Conference began work in Indian Territory.
- 1833 Bishop Joshua Soule presided at the first annual conference that met in Arkansas Territory Spring River, which was still a part of the Missouri Conference He is the first bishop to ever set foot in Arkansas
- 1835 The Arkansas District was renamed the Batesville District.
- 1836 The “Arkansas Conference” of The Methodist Episcopal Church in AR was organized in Batesville. Bishop Thomas Asbury Morris traveled on horseback with several circuit riders through the Black River swamp. The Conference also included the upper 2/3s of Louisiana and the Indian Territory. The conference was now six districts.
- 1837 Andrew Hunter from Ireland came to teach in Indian schools in AR. Appointed to the AR Senate by President Abraham Lincoln to serve in the state’s Senate, turned down the opportunity to be nominated for Governor.
- 1840 General Conference created the Indian Mission Conference.
- Salaries of early preachers were \$60 a year.

- 1844 Methodism was torn asunder chiefly over issues related to slavery. Southern Methodists sent elected delegates to help develop a “Plan of Separation.”
- 1845 The Methodist Episcopal Church, South split away from The Methodist Episcopal Church
- 1851 Parsonages or “parson’s houses” began to be constructed of a log cabin with one room and a back porch. Two additional buildings consisted of a kitchen and a smoke house.
- 1854 The state was divided into two conferences:
- The Ouachita “Wichita” Conference in the south became the second conference authorized in Arkansas. It later became the Little Rock Conference.
- 1865 Federal troops took over many church buildings and schools in the ME South to be used as hospitals, barracks and storage of army supplies. Many were burned and later restored.
- The Negro Methodist Episcopal Church was formed along with the Freedmen’s Aid Society a mission to assist newly freed slaves.
- 1866 Name of Ouachita Conference changed to Little Rock Conference, One of the first parsonages was built at Warren.
- 1867 The Little Rock Conference passed a resolution against the indulgence of tobacco.
- 1868 African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized.
- Bethel Institute was organized and later became Shorter College in 1903.
- 1870 A third conference named the White River was organized in the north east part of Arkansas. The north west remained the Arkansas Conference.
- Quitman College was established in Cleburn County, built a two-story building in 1881, but was closed in 1887.
- The conferences in Arkansas adopted as their printed voice, “The Western Methodist.” published in Memphis.
- 1876 Central Collegiate Institute for young men (later Hendrix) was begun in Altus.
- 1877 The first women’s Missionary Society was organized in Russellville.
- Philander Smith College in Little Rock was established for “Negro” youth.
- 1880 The Parsonage and Women’s Home Missionary Society collected funds to build homes for itinerate preachers.

- 1882 “The Arkansas Methodist” newspaper began, and changed its names several times.
- 1885 Catch the Vision, a fundraising program, was started in Arkansas to provide money to start new churches.
Arkansas Methodists sent missionary Crowder B. Moseley to Japan.
- 1890 Hendrix College, formerly Central Collegiate Institute, was moved from Altus to a permanent home in Conway.
- 1889 Women organized Women’s Foreign Missionary Society across the state.
Galloway College (for young women) opened in Searcy.
- 1892 The “History of Arkansas Methodism” by Horace Jewell was published.
- 1894 Miss Esther Case, was the first woman to go out as a missionary from this state.
- 1896 Sarah Allen Babcock became the first woman to address an Arkansas annual conference, speaking before the White River Conference.
- 1898 The Little Rock Conference organized the first Methodist Orphanage.
- 1897 Arkansas Methodists sent missionaries John and Beulah Cline to China.
- 1902 The Methodist Orphanage opened in Little Rock to provide short term care and permanent homes for children.
- 1905 Other missionaries were sent abroad. Alfred and Mabel Wasson went to Korea; W.E. Sewell went to Cuba.
- 1907 Through 1915, Arkansas Methodist news was published in connection with the “The Western Methodist.”
- 1910 The first Evangelical United Brethren Church was organized in Wye in Perry County.
- 1913 Arkansas Methodists gathered its historical materials. These were placed in a vault at the Arkansas National Bank of Fayetteville.
- 1914 A third conference named the White River Conference was organized in the north east part of Arkansas. The north west remained the Arkansas Conference.
- 1916 The news of Arkansas Methodism was again published through the “Arkansas Methodist” newspaper.
- 1917 The Great War, World War I, raged in Europe for nearly three years. Army barracks and a hospital was set up on the campus of Hendrix College as many students enrolled in the Student Army Training Corps.
- 1918 Little Rock Conference women establish a Committee on War Relief Work and the Conference appropriates money to assist in the work of military chaplains, Fort Roots and Camp Pike.

1918 The first building in Memphis was donated to the Methodist Hospital Board.

1920 Sixty one black churches and preaching places were abandoned by Negroes moving to the north.

By the 1920's, the Epworth League was a major force for Methodist Youth, providing summer assemblies.

1921 The Wesleyan Service Guild was formed for church women who had jobs outside the home and could not meet during the daytime.

1922 The first public rally in Arkansas of the Ku Klux Klan was held in Little Rock. A. C. Millar's editorial's in the "Arkansas Methodist" consistently attacked lynching and injustice for Negroes.

1922 The final charter for a new western Methodist assembly was chartered as Mt. Sequoyah Assembly in Fayetteville.

1923 The "Cokesbury Hymnal" became a favorite for Sunday evening services and morning classes.

1924 Methodists raised money to erect a "magnificent" new hospital facility in Memphis.

The Little Rock Conference approved the plan to fill every pulpit with its adoption of "lay speakers, a service in every community every Sunday."

1925 Philander Smith College has seven major buildings.

1929 Galloway and Hendrix College merged to form one college for both young women and young men.

The crash of the Stock Market leaves Methodist Churches in debt. Loans to finished churches came from private individuals. The Arkansas Conference Women's Society held an "Ingathering of Treasurers" giving up watches and jewelry for missions.

1930 Members of small and open country churches begin to leave home for the larger communities forcing many local churches to close

Membership in Arkansas Methodism climbed to over 127,000 members.

1931 Esther Mooty is thought to have been the first woman to be ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church.

1935 The Little Rock and North Arkansas Conferences published, "Centennial History of Arkansas Methodism: A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in the State of Arkansas," by James A. Anderson.

1936 Methodists in Arkansas gathered at Batesville to celebrate the 100th year "Centennial Celebration" the Arkansas Methodism."

1939 The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Methodist Protestant churches united to form The Methodist Church. The Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church was formed for black Methodists.

- 1940 Arkansas and Tennessee Methodist continue to expand the hospital in Memphis adding two new large buildings.
- 1941 The attention of Arkansas Methodists are diverted to World War II. Hendrix students were the first in Conway to register. Students and faculty members serve in the war.
- Community hospitals over Arkansas came to be owned or sponsored by the church.
- 1943 Rev. Fern Cook, came in from the Methodist Protestant merger. She was the first woman in the North Arkansas Conference to be sent to a regular appointment, the Hardy-Mammoth Spring Charge.
- By now every district in the state had a camp for families and young people in the summers.
- Army Specialized Training Corps was stationed on the Hendrix campus. Over 30 ministers serve as chaplains over the war zone.
- 1946 Camp Aldersgate in Arkansas opened on an abandoned turkey farm.
- 1950 Hendrix College continues to expand with the addition of Staples Auditorium and Greene Chapel.
- 1952 Racial restrictions at Mt. Sequoyah Assembly were abolished.
- 1953 Methodist Protestants reported 1,117 members. A “Stationing Committee” sent preachers to local churches.
- 1956 Methodist ministers widely support segregation in schools by leading prayer services and attending school sessions.
- 1960 The Lay Witness Mission and Good News organizations influenced Arkansas Methodists to become more intensely fundamental.
- 1963 The Methodist Foundation was chartered to invest and manage money, stocks, and properties donated or given to the Methodist Church.
- 1968 The Methodist Church, and the Evangelical United Brethren Church united to form the United Methodist Church.
- 1970 Myer’s Ranch, later named Nawake and finally Mt. Eagle Retreat Center was purchased by the North Arkansas Conference as a major campground.
- 1972 The Southwest Conference merged with United Methodists in the closest geographical conferences.
- 1976 The Joint Committee for the History of Arkansas Methodism published “Methodism in Arkansas 1816-1976” by Walter N. Vernon.
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1977 Arkansas Methodists successfully launched its World Hunger Ingathering. In its second year, all goods and money collected were valued at over five hundred thousand dollars.

1985 The combination of camping and volunteer ministry became an Arkansas-based program for youth with adults, raising their own expenses, to clean up and repair homes. This group has ministered in and out of Arkansas.

1986 United Methodists in Arkansas gathered at Batesville to celebrate the 150th year “Sesquicentennial of the Arkansas Methodism.”

The Arkansas United Methodist Historical Society is founded. The body holds an annual luncheon with outstanding speakers and newsletters throughout each year.

Volunteers in Mission (VIM) became a mission supported across the state by Methodist congregations, involving thousands of persons to raise money to fix up and even build for others.

1988 The Hanmaum United Methodist Church in Springdale became the first Korean body of the North Arkansas Conference.

The Joint Commission on History and Archives was created to create the United Methodist Archives located on the Hendrix College Campus. It became a reality in 1991.

1989 The first printing of the United Methodist Hymnal appeared replacing the old Methodist Hymnal which appeared in 1935.

1995 The United Methodist Museum opened at Quapaw Quarters church in Little Rock. It reopened in 2012 at First United Methodist in Little Rock.

“Nueva Esperanza Iglesia Metodista Unida” New Hope United Methodist Church was created for Spanish speaking Methodists in north west Arkansas..

1997 Arkansas Methodists supported the Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso Texas with more than forty thousand dollars that year from apportionments.

1998 Arkansas claimed over 800 local churches with approximately 160,000 United Methodists.

2000 The Joint Advisory Board of the Little Rock and Arkansas Conferences published, “Two Centuries of Methodism in Arkansas: 1800-2000,” written by Nancy Britton

2003 Methodists in the North Arkansas and Little Rock Conferences merged to form the (new) Arkansas Conference.

2004 Arkansas Methodist claimed 721 churches and 139,714 members.

2012 United Methodist Museum reopens at First United Methodist in Little Rock.

