

# Brundidge United Methodist Church History

*From 1856 to Present*

The Brundidge United Methodist Church has a long and distinguished history of service to God and the people of Brundidge. The exact date of the advent of Methodism of Brundidge is unknown, but F.S. Mosely, curator and historian of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, confirms that records contain appointments of ministers who served through the years of the Civil War. Indeed, the church itself is noted to be older than the town. Methodist preachers first preached at camp meetings in Brundidge as early as 1842.

The first church building existed north of the present City Cemetery on the corner of South Main and Lee Streets. Records indicate that Thomas A. Collier preached at the Methodist Church in 1856. He was licensed as a local Methodist preacher in 1849 and joined his brother G.C. Collier at Brundidge in 1856. G.C. Collier was a prominent merchant in Brundidge, then known as Collier's Store. He built the first home in what became Brundidge. This home was located on Church Street behind the present First National Bank.

The first resident pastor for the Methodists in Brundidge was the Rev. Anthony Seale Dickinson, a charter member of the Alabama Conference. He was appointed in 1861 and again 1864 and 1868. He died in Brundidge in 1886 and is buried in the city cemetery. A memorial window is found in the present sanctuary, as is one to his son, Dr. R.C. Dickinson.

The Brundidge circuit was formed in 1877, with the Rev. Orion Sanford Perry as pastor, who received an annual salary of \$630. The churches on the circuit besides Brundidge were Bethel, Clay Hill, Sardis, Wesley Chapel, Williams Chapel, and Friendship. The Knox, Collier, McSean, Seay, Hightower, Malone, Dickinson and Bass were among the families in the church.

On April 10, 1880, a lot was purchased by the Methodists for the sum of \$275 to be used for a parsonage. In 1895 or 1896 a new church was built on the same lot as the first church and faced west. It was a long frame building with a vestibule steeple with a bell, and was said to seat four hundred.

Mrs. Lena McEachern, not a member of the church, made the location of the present Methodist Church building possible. She donated the lot, located on the corner of North Main and College Streets in October 1919. In 1921, the building committee consisted of J.F. Hightower, J.C. Johnson, Tupper Lightfoot, M.A. Brown, L.M. Fleming, E.L. Wilcoxon, and J.T. Tyner, under the leadership of Pastor W.T. Ellisor. Total receipts from various sources for the new church and parsonage had reached \$21,539.74. The first service was held in the new church in January of 1921 with Pastor Henry Samuel Ellison.

In 1922, according to the minutes of the Quarterly Conference, \$4,000 was borrowed from the Conference. After this money was repaid, the church was dedicated in 1928. The Rev. D.F. Ellisor, pastor, and Bishop Hoyt M. Dobbs, led the services.

The Brundidge Methodist Church continued a steady growth in the 1930's and was blessed with the ministries of several outstanding pastors: Huey P. Childs, Thomas Glenn Jones, Charles Andrew Rush, Samuel Robert Jones, and Thomas S. Harris.

The war years, the forties, did not see any construction but was under the able leadership of several well-known Methodist preachers: James Osgood Grogan, Ellis L. Andrews, John Fletcher McLeod Sr. and William M. Pickard Jr. In 1947, the organ committee, composed of Miss Anne Cloud Bass, J.T. Tyner and Miss Sara Elizabeth Hightower ("Miss S.E."), signed the contract for installation of a pipe organ for the sum of \$6,100. The purchase of the pipe organ was made possible by bequests from Mrs. Annie Dickinson, Mrs. Myra Butler, and Miss Anne Cloud Bass, as well as gifts and donations from other church members. The chimes, the brass cross, the candle sticks, and the brass flower urns were also gifts from Miss Anne Cloud Bass.

In 1959, a beautiful new brick parsonage was built by Dickert Construction Company on a lot donated by the Grady Caldwell family on Darby Street in the Caldwell subdivision:

An education annex with eight separate classrooms, a church office, and a pastor's study was erected in 1967. Another building was acquired in 1975, when the former Brundidge Library building was donated to the church by the Brundidge Banking Company and was moved across the street. This building became known as the McEachern Building because it had at one time been a part of the McEachern home. That same year the sanctuary was renovated and later the beautiful stained glass windows of the sanctuary were covered with protective Lexan.

The Brundidge UMC has had many lay people active in the ministry of Christ, and three of its members have become ordained ministers of Methodist Conferences: Wayne Helms, son of T.L. and Connie Pearl Helms; James A. Belcher, son of Clark Belcher and Liz Belcher; and R. Lawrence Bowden, son of Reuben Lawrence and Sara D. Bowden. Ministers Helms and Belcher serve in the Alabama-West Florida Conference, and Minister Bowden serves in the North Carolina Conference.

In 1985, Mrs. Helen Marley commissioned a well known local artist, Mr. Larry Godwin, to design and create a large metal cross to adorn the top of the church dome in memory of her late husband, David Escar Marley. Their daughter and son, Liz Ann Harbuck and Dr. David Marley, donated the lights to illuminate the cross in memory of their parents. Billy and Dorothy Jackson also commissioned Mr. Godwin to design and fashion a large metal sign across the front of the steps bearing the name of the church.

In the 1990's stained glass windows were installed in all of the Sunday school rooms and pastor's study and office. This beautiful artwork was designed and created by Charles Adams, a local artist and member of the church. Each window was placed in

memory of loved ones by church members.

In 1996, a committee composed of Mrs. Sara D. Bowden, Ms. Laura Hollis, Mrs. Dorothy Jackson, Mrs. Janie Mae Wallace and the Rev. Jimmy Spikes was appointed to oversee the renovating and refurbishing of the McEachern Building. Two parlors, a classroom, a kitchen, a small library and two bathrooms were the result of his renovation. Much of the interior design and decoration was done by Scott and Jeannie Swindall. Many church members contributed to their beautiful project. Mrs. Sue Helms, a former member, and mother of Mrs. Dorothy Laney, gave the money for the three beautiful chandeliers.

In November of 1997, a proposal was presented to the church membership for the purchase of a new organ. In 1998, the congregation voted to purchase a new pipe organ for the sum of \$61,000. Ironically, this was ten times the amount of the organ that was purchased in 1947. This dream became reality in January 2000 when the new organ was installed and played for the first time in February 2000 by the choir director, Liz Ann Harbuck.

Many dedicated ministers have served in Brundidge, contributing to the fine spirit and deep commitment of the congregation. Some of the church's most recent pastors have been the Rev. E. Zedoc Baxter, James E. Savage, James T. Ross, T. Leo Brannon, Mark W. Anthony, Ovie W. Mathison, D.K. Christenberry Jr., E. Bruce Fitzgerald, Luther A. Gandy, Bobby S. Holladay, Cecil L. Coleman, Jimmy Spikes, Richard Holmes and Michael Lawler.

Many improvements to the physical facilities have been made in the last three years. Mold and mildew was discovered in the church and Sunday school buildings. And because of health reasons it necessitated extensive renovations, under the supervision of a church member, Homer Homann. The interiors were stripped and completely redone and at the same time the altar area was enlarged. It was also necessary to replace the carpet and all hymnals and Bibles.

Additional work was also done during this time period. The front steps of the church building were re-built. The breeze-way between the two buildings was refinished to match the front steps. A new roof replaced the existing one. Three church member families beautifully redecorated the choir room, making it a lovely and functional additional. Two new restrooms were built in the fellowship hall and the kitchen was enhanced by the addition of a new deluxe built-in stove. The membership of the church voted to purchase a beautiful grand piano. This addition has greatly added to our music program. A new sound system has been installed in the sanctuary. New tables in the fellowship hall improve the seating arrangement and the appearance of this area. Many beautiful artistic prints and paintings have been placed in all three church buildings, which add greatly to our worship areas. The application of the seal coat and re-stripping of the parking lot extended the life of the asphalt surface and improves the looks of this area. A church family was kind enough to make this possible.

In June of 2006, Rev. Michael Lawler and wife, Peggy, became our pastoral family. We are grateful to have their spiritual guidance and love. The record of faithfulness of the members of the Brundidge United Methodist Church through the years has been an inspiration to other churches throughout the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

*This history was compiled by Betty Hixon and Sara D. Bowden.  
This information originally appeared in the Pike County Heritage Book.*

**MINISTERS APPOINTED TO BRUNDIDGE, PIKE COUNTY, ALABAMA**

<u>Dates of Appointment</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>District</u>
Dec 1861 Dec 1862	Anthony Seale Dickinson	Lowndesboro
Dec 1863	John Phillips Dickinson	Lowndesboro
Dec 1864 Nov 1865	Anthony Seale Dickinson	Lowndesboro Orion
Dec 1866	John Phillips Dickinson	Union Springs
Dec 1867	William Green Perry	Eufala
Dec 1868	Anthony Seale Dickinson	Union Springs
Dec 1871	James Washington Glenn	Union Springs
Nov 1872	David C. Cook	Union Springs
Nov 1873	George Waverly Griggs	Union Springs
Nov 1874	John Albert Peterson	Union Springs
Nov 1875	Phillip H. Moss	Union Springs
Nov 1876	Josiah Barker	Union Springs
Nov 1877 Nov 1878 Nov 1879	Orion Sanford Perry	Union Springs

Dates of Appointment	Minister	District	Dates of Appointment	Minister	District
Nov 1880	Benjamin Lafayette Selman	Union Springs	Nov 1907	Harvey Cook Threadgill	Troy
Nov 1881	Edward Eugene Cowan	Union Springs	Nov 1908	John B. Tate	Troy
Nov 1882			Nov 1909		
Nov 1883	Edward Marmaduke Turner	Union Springs	Nov 1910		
Nov 1884			Nov 1911	William Henry McNeal	Troy
Nov 1885			Nov 1912		
Nov 1886			Nov 1913		
Nov 1887	Jeremiah Shrewsbury Williams	Union Springs	Nov 1914	Samuel Monroe Hosmer	Troy
Nov 1888			Nov 1915	William Thomas Ellisor	Troy
Nov 1889			Nov 1916		
Nov 1890			Nov 1917		
Dec 1891	James Lewin Mathison	Union Springs	Nov 1918		
Nov 1892			Nov 1919		
Nov 1893			Nov 1920	Henry Samuel Ellison	Troy
Nov 1894					
Nov 1895	Neil Gillis	Union Springs	Nov 1921	George Kittrell Williams	Troy
Nov 1896			Nov 1922		
Dec 1897	Leslie Pritchett Lathram	Union Springs	Nov 1923	Laban Henry Scott Chappelle	Troy
Nov 1898			Nov 1924		
Nov 1899			Nov 1925		
Nov 1900			Nov 1926		
Nov 1901	Charles Bilbro Pilley	Union Springs	Nov 1927	David Francis Ellisor	Troy
Nov 1902			Nov 1928	James Felix Feagin	Troy
Dec 1903	John Roberts Peavy	Union Springs	Nov 1929	Huey Pleasant Childs	Troy
Nov 1904			Nov 1930		
Nov 1905			Nov 1931		
Nov 1906			Nov 1932	Thomas Glenn Jones	Troy

Dates of Appointment

Minister

District

Dates of Appointment

Minister

District

Nov 1933  
Nov 1934  
Nov 1935  
Nov 1936  
Nov 1937

Charles Andrew Rush  
  
Samuel Robert Jones

Troy  
  
Troy

May 1957  
  
May 1958  
May 1959  
May 1960  
May 1961

Joseph M. McKinney  
  
Daniel Keener Christenberry

Troy  
  
Troy

Nov 1938

Nov 1939  
Nov 1940

Thomas Summerfield Harris

Troy

May 1962  
May 1963

Ovie W. Mathison

Troy

Nov 1941  
Nov 1942

James Osgood Grogan

Troy

May 1964  
June 1965

Mark W. Anthony

Troy

Nov 1943  
Nov 1944  
Nov 1945

Ellis Lafayette Andrews

Troy

May 1966  
May 1967

T. Leo Brannon

Troy

Nov 1946  
Aug 1947  
Sep 1948

John Fletcher McLeod, Sr.

Troy

1968  
1969  
1970  
1971  
1972

James T. Ross

Troy

Aug 1949  
June 1950

William M. Pickard, Jr.

Troy

1973  
1974  
1975

James E. Savage

Troy

May 1951

Fred L. Davis

Troy

1976  
1977

E. Zedoc Baxter

Troy

May 1952

Thomas Leslie Hill

Troy

1978  
1979

May 1953  
June 1954

John Clinton Vickers

Troy

1980

Dean A. Bolan

Troy

May 1955

Gordon Atkeison

Troy

1981  
1982  
1983

E. Bruce Fitzgerald

Troy

May 1956

Comer Woodall

Troy

1984

**Dates of Appointment**

**Minister**

**District**

1985  
1986  
1987  
1988

Luther A. Gandy

Troy

1989  
1990

Bobby S. Holladay

Troy

1991  
1992  
1993

Cecil L. Coleman

Troy

1994  
1995  
1996  
1997  
1998  
1999  
2000

Jimmy Spikes

Troy

Greenville

2001

Richard Holmes

Troy

2006

Michael Lawler

Montgomery/Opelika