

CHURCH HISTORY
FAITH CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
31527 Bruceville Road
Bruceville, Maryland

1885-2014



“The Society of Methodists is believed to have been organized in the Trappe area about 1780, shortly after the first Methodist Conference was held in America. In his famous "Journal", Bishop Francis Asbury, who was John Wesley's personal representative in America, writes under date of February 9, 1780: 'Have peace, but long to be more employed in public work. I hear the word spreads in Bolingbroke [an area south and east of Trappe] and Talbot. So the Lord leads us through many hindrances'".²

1781 appears to be the date for the organization of the Talbot [County] Circuit. (Many of the early circuits were organized on the basis of counties.) Therefore this year [2006] could be celebrated as the 225th anniversary of organized Methodism for all Methodists in Talbot County.

The minutes for 1780 have no mention of Talbot Circuit. The circuit first appears as an appointment at the meeting of April 16, 1781, held at Judge White's. Henry Willis and Jeremiah Lambert were appointed to the new circuit. No membership statistics were reported in 1781, but in 1782 Willis and Lambert reported 660 Methodists in Talbot County.

In early Methodism formal organization usually followed the process of preaching and conversion. In other words, the circuit was created because there were already functioning Methodist societies in Talbot County. (No matter how hard Willis and Lambert worked that year, it is unlikely that they made all 660 converts in one year.) If the Methodists of Trappe were buying land for a building in 1784, it is very likely that there were one or more societies in the area in 1781. Of course, early Methodist societies were often not very formally organized, and came and went frequently, according to the interest and convenience of the members. It is impossible to trace individual societies through conference minutes. All reports are given by circuit.

Phil Lawton¹

E. C. Hallman wrote that Methodism came to the Trappe area and the society was "organized in the home of Dr. Allen, one of the staunch friends of the Methodists, and a place where many of the early itinerants stopped. Bishop Francis Asbury mentions visiting him on

several occasions. We are not certain as to when the church [at Bolingbroke] was built, but it was in existence by 1784, in that we have record that on Dec. 6th of that year".³ Bishop Coke preached and administered the sacraments. The church was improved in 1884, and 1899. By 1909 the society had dwindled until it was found necessary to close the church. It was sold and made into a shop. Bishop Asbury preached here on Dec. 5, 1786, Nov. 22, 1787, Nov. 24, 1788, Nov. 23, 1789, Dec. 12, 1790, May 20, 1801, and April 16, 1802.

The exact location of the church at Bolingbroke is unclear, but it was possibly near the intersection of Jamaica Pt., Chancellors Pt. and Barber Roads in the village known as Hughlett, also known as Manasses, and now called Barber. Historical maps document the existence of a "M.E. Ch." at this location circa 1900. The Journal of Thomas Coke recorded,

Dr. Allen's, Monday 6, [December 1784] I preached this day at noon at a place called Bolingbroke. Our chapel is situate in a neighboring forest. Perhaps I have in this little tour baptized more children and adults than I should have done in my whole life, if stationed in an English parish. I had this morning a great escape in crossing a broad ferry [across the Choptank River from Cambridge]. After setting off, Harry persuaded me to return back and leave our horses behind us, to be sent after me the next day, on account of the violence of the wind. I have hardly a doubt but we should have been drowned, if we had taken that step. We were considerable danger as it was: and if my heart did not deceive me, I calmly and sincerely prayed that GOD would drown me and take me to himself, if the peculiar work in which I am engaged, was not for his glory. Dr. Allen is a physician of some eminence in these parts, and a most precious man, of good sense, and of great simplicity. I suppose we have a dozen physicians in our society on this continent. One of the ferrymen, of that dangerous ferry, (who, I suppose, owns the boat) is half a methodist; and he therefore supplied us with a couple of horses to Bolingbroke, which is about seven miles from the ferry: and one William Frazer carried me in his carriage from Bolingbroke to Dr. Allen's.⁸

Undocumented reports indicate that a church was moved from a location on Chancellors Pt. Road to this location. Could this have been the church at Bolingbroke?

"In the year 1846 William Ozman, William Baker, Lamuel Small, William M. Price and Joesph Barttlett were appointed A^{sic} of ^{sic} Trustees by the Rev. L. Stork, to whom lot of land was deeded by William Baker and wife on old lot Emory's Chapple was erected. In sd year 1846 William M. Price removed from the County[,] Nathaniel Leonard was according to the deed put in his place".⁶ This trustee record continues until December 1892. News articles indicate that *Emory M. E. Church, Bolingbroke* had preaching every other Sabbath, 3 p.m. with Rev. Floyd E. Bloxton, Pastor.⁸ Rev. Floyd E. Bloxton went on to pastor Lebanon M. E. Church from 1901 to 1903. Little else is known to this writer about "Emory Chapple", where it was located, or what happened to it. Did *The Church at Bolingbroke* become *Emory M. E. Church* after the local

society became a Methodist charge, or perhaps two or more societies combined to form one church? Many small churches flourished in this area during the 19th century.

.....under date of Saturday, April 27, 1805, Asbury writes: "We crossed (the Choptank) at Dover Ferry and passed through Easton to Lebanon, lodging at brother Brown's." His Sunday entry reads: "I preached at Lebanon chapel, the neatest on this shore; my subject, Isaiah XI, 19, 20..." This is the first reference we have to a new church (or chapel, as Asbury terms it), built at Trappe in 1802 by the Methodists and the first church of that denomination in the village. Evidently it was intended to supplement, not to supplant, the church at Bolingbroke, for the latter remained in vigorous operation at least until the 1850's. Lebanon chapel in Trappe, meanwhile, had become too small for its congregation and steps were taken to enlarge and virtually to rebuild it. Bricks for the enlarged building, now designated a church rather than a chapel, were made from clay obtained from a nearby lot, and dirt to fill the excavation was brought from a nearby woods. The story is that workmen employed in tearing down the scaffold around the new building were granted a gallon of whisky. The church was completed in 1812, and was equipped with a gallery for use by colored people; the main floor of the building was divided as in early Quaker meeting-houses, with men sitting on one side and women on the other. In 1833 a new church was built, bricks from the old one being used in its construction. In the new church the custom of separating male and female worshippers was abandoned.²

"The division of sentiments brought about by the Civil War, left its mark upon Trappe, as it did upon so many communities. According to the few records that have been preserved by private individuals, a Southern Methodist Congregation was meeting together as early as 1866, when the Reverend F. A. Mercer was appointed to the charge. On May 22, 1867 a deed was recorded placing the property in the hands of [named] trustees of Trinity M. E. Church South. By 1883, the church was well established and under the pastorate of J. W. Grubb".⁴

The Methodist Church in Bruceville [Faith Chapel] began in a private home not far from the present church site. With the passing of time, the people in the community decided to erect a church building and such records that are available show that by 1885 Faith Chapel joined with Trinity M. E. Church South in Trappe to form a circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

While it is not possible to remember the names of every person who was responsible for the erection and continuing program of the church, records and memories have given us a few of them. Among the men who helped to erect the building and who were active in the earlier days were Mr. Charles Lyons, Mr. Hugh Kemp, Mr. Edward Brinsfield, Capt. Adam Bryan, Mr. Nicklas Parrott, Capt. Samuel Merrick and Capt. William T. Cryer, among others. One of the

most prominent and best remembered members of the church was Mr. William Sard, who for forty-two years served as Sunday School Superintendent. Those who remember him report that the church was the center of his community activities and that he served it with loyalty and devotion. Church school records also show the name of one other superintendent who was active in the earliest days of the church - Mr. James Wherett, who was servicing as early as 1887.

Two ministers, the Rev. J. W. Grubb and the Rev. B. S. Highley, labored together in the first years that Faith Chapel was established. Then, in 1902, under the pastorate of the Rev. H. M. Reed, the church was enlarged to its present size. It is also known that the pulpit Bible was given by Capt. William Kemp and that Mrs. Hugh Kemp made the cushion upon which the Bible rested. The pulpit furniture, which is in use today, was purchased from the Upper Bambury Church at the time of its closing. It is known that prior to 1850, a Methodist Protestant Church was established in Trappe [probably at the location now known as 3036 Main Street], and was part of a circuit with Upper Bambury M. P. and Windy Hill M. P. Churches. Apparently these churches ceased to function by 1912.

It is dangerous to attempt to name all of the active laypersons of the early years of Faith Chapel, for some names are certain to be omitted. Perhaps to this incomplete list others may share their recollections with us, correct us where we are in error, and help to make the history of this church more complete. In addition to those already named, it is known that among the active members of yesterday there appear the names of Mr. Lacy Cox, Mr. Alex Skipper, Mr. Roby Corkran, Mr. William Chessemann, Mr. Logan Talley, Mr. George Phillips, Mr. Henry Hummer and Mr. William Talley. Mrs. James Dulin is remembered as one who took it upon herself to always keep the little church in readiness for service. Other ladies who added their labors to those named above were Mrs. Florence Watts, Mrs. Hugh Kemp, Mrs. Lizzie Bryan, Mrs. Ada Lyons, Mrs. Dora Lyons, Mrs. Sudie Harding, Mrs. Sallie Parrott, Mrs. Lyda Fleetwood and Mrs. Sudie Ross. We are sure that there are many others who have labored faithfully to keep the church alive.

In 1939 and 1940, in the true spirit of Methodism, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, South, merged its congregation with that of the Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church, becoming known as the Trappe Methodist Church. The Trinity building was disposed of at public auction and was subsequently destroyed by fire in 1953. This is where the story of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, South, ends and a long association between Trappe Methodist Church and Faith Chapel Methodist Church begins. In 1968, when the national church united with the Evangelical United Brethren Church and became the United Methodist Church, Faith Chapel Methodist Church was obliged to change its name to *Faith Chapel United Methodist Church*.

In 1970, District Superintendent, Otto Bud Brewer, devised a plan to merge the Trappe Methodist Church and the Oxford Methodist Church into one Charge. At that time, Faith Chapel became a part of the Easton, St. Mark's Charge. Reverend Davis was our Pastor for the four years that we were merged into a Charge with Easton. Reverend Kyle Smith served the Trappe -

Oxford charge and lived in the parsonage at Oxford. After four years, Reverend Smith went to a Church in Milford, Delaware, and that meant that a new minister would be coming to the Trappe - Oxford Charge. The people of Trappe told the District Superintendent that since Reverend Smith had lived at Oxford for four years, the next minister should live in Trappe. This was not acceptable to the people at the Oxford Church, and so Oxford and Trappe once again became two different Charges, and Faith Chapel became part of the Trappe-Faith Chapel Charge again. Rev. Robert O'Kelley Wallace agreed to come back to the Trappe - Faith Chapel Charge, where he had another very successful two-year term of service. Reverend Wallace is the only pastor who served the two churches at two different times, fourteen years apart.

When Reverend Henry Charlton was assigned to the Trappe-Faith Chapel charge in 1992, he intended to permanently close the doors of Faith Chapel. The congregation had dwindled to about 5 ladies, which he called "the ladies of Faith". Their grandfathers built the church and they wouldn't give up. Despite Pastor Charlton's efforts to close the doors, the tiny congregation worked hard to increase attendance and save their church. The congregation grew steadily, and Pastor Charlton soon changed his mind about closing the doors and began an all-out effort to revive Faith Chapel.

On July 15, 1996, the Trustees of Faith Chapel purchased from Gerald and Lorena Skipper the large lot of land west and south of Faith Chapel for future expansion and additional parking. By 1997, Faith Chapel had seen a 600% growth in attendance, and on May 10, 1997, was given the Order of St. Barnabus award. This award is usually given to an individual for outstanding service to the church, but the one who was designated to receive the award felt that no one individual deserved all the credit, so an exception was made, and the award was given to the church. We were told that this had never been done before.

Although the churches at Trappe and Bruceville were previously "united" in name and shared the same pastor, they remained largely autonomous, if not occasionally a bit estranged. Pastor Charlton, (Pastor Hank as he preferred to be known), helped unify the churches. Under his leadership, and with God's help, our churches today share many activities in a spirit of mutual cooperation and understanding and are truly united.

In 1998, Pastor Charlton asked to be relieved due to a period of declining health. Pastor Ruthann Simpson replaced him. Pastor Simpson was the first female pastor assigned to the Trappe / Faith Chapel charge. She served until June 2004, and was followed by Pastor Cynthia Burkert, Pastor Maleia Ann Rust, and interim Pastor Mary Catherine Miller. [see complete pastoral record below]

By the summer of 2001 it was clear that termites and rot had taken their toll on our building, so a major renovation project was initiated. New timbers replaced much of the deteriorated old wood, vinyl siding was added, the roof on the front part of the church was replaced, and storm windows were added. In 2006, our brother and longtime church member, Al McNeal departed this life, and it was discovered that none of the doors of Faith Chapel were wide enough to permit the casket to enter the church. A contractor was hired on short notice

and the side door was enlarged in time for the service. In 2013 the old roof on the back part of the church began leaking and was subsequently replaced.

While Faith is a small building of worship let no one ever forget that the church of which it is a part, has been built upon a foundation of small churches. We cannot disregard the fact that no place is too small for God. This church, and hundreds like it, have kept the message of the Christian gospel alive in every corner of our land. We worship here today because a little group of people cared enough for their God to build a house of worship, and because their successors have labored to keep it alive. What the future holds we do not know, but we can be sure that the future for Faith Chapel can be expressed in the continued love of the people of this community as they come to this holy spot to worship Almighty God.

PASTORAL RECORD

Trinity M. E. South

1866-68 F. A. Mercer (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1868-69 L. B. Jones (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1869-70 J. M. Granpin (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1870-74 W. E. Maloy (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1874-75 J. Rembert Smith (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1875-77 B. W. Bond (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1877-78 F. B. Smith (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1878-79 J. H. Temple (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1879-81 J. L. Kibler (Trinity M. E. South, only)
1881-83 B. S. Highly (Trinity M. E. South, only)

Trinity M. E. South / Faith Chapel (Faith Chapel joined Trinity M. E. South in 1885)

1883-86 J. W. Grubb
1886-87 J. M. Follingsbee
1888-89 W. M. Wagner
1891-92 W. L. Dolly
1893-94 F. M. Totten
1895-97 C. W. Mark
1898-1901 G. R. Mays
1902-04 H. M. Reed
1905-07 J. W. Mithell
1908-11 J. W. Grubb
1912-14 J. A. Rood
1915-17 L. B. Bobbit
1918-21 A. B. Sapp
1922 R. V. Whitehurst
1923 C. M. Sarver
1924 C. L. Reiter

1925-33 F. T. Fairbanks
1934-37 J. S. Swartz
1938-39 S. L. Dulaney

Trappe Methodist / Faith Chapel

1939-1940 D. B. Prettyman ([photo available](#))
1940* Orm Rice (Served about six months after Rev. Prettyman passed away.)
1941-44 H. H. Schauer
1945 Howard R. McDade ([photo available](#))
1946-47 R. J. Cooke
1948-51 H. Norman Nicklas ([photo available](#))
1952 R. G. Given
1953-58 J. Gordon Stapleton ([photo available](#))
1958-60 Robert O'Kelley Wallace ([photo available](#))
1960-61? Cameron Johnson
1961-62? Dave Paul
1962?-65 Don Knight ([photo available](#))
1965-67 John Randolph
1967-70 Chester Wilcox

St. Marks, Easton / Faith Chapel

1970-74 Rev. Davis

Trappe Methodist / Faith Chapel

1974-76 Robert O. Wallace ([photo available](#))
1976-80 Ray F. Graham ([photo available](#))
1980-85 Kevin English
1985-88 Tom Edwards ([photo available](#))
1988-92 Dale Evans ([photo available](#))
1992-98 Henry Charlton ([photo available](#))
1998-2004 Ruthann Simpson ([photo available](#))
2004-2007 Cynthia Burkert ([photo available](#))
2007- 2014 Maleia Ann Rust ([photo available](#))
2014- Mary Catherine Miller_ ([photo available](#))

The information contained in this history of Faith Chapel was compiled by Robert Crowell from an early historical letter written by Rev. Mark, Rev. Maize & Rev. Mitchell, History of Trappe United Methodist Church by Charles B. Adams. Jr., 2003, individual recollections, and several published and unpublished documents noted below. We welcome additions and corrections

- ¹ Philip Lawton, Conference Historian, Peninsula-Delaware Conference, United Methodist Church.
- ² Excerpt copied from the manuscript of James C. Mullikin's History of Trappe, which was never finished. Circa 1953
- ³ E.C. Hallman; The Garden of Methodism; Peninsula Annual Conference, the Methodist Church; [1948]; p. 337.
- ⁴ The 173rd Anniversary of Trappe Methodist Church 1781 - 1954, J. G. Stapleton, 1954
- ⁵ Baltimore Herald, June 3, 1881
- ⁶ Minutes of the Mite Society at Bolingbroke Church Jan. 13, 1878 – Jan. 24, 1881
- ⁷ Trustee Record Emory's Chapple 1846 - 1892
- ⁸ The Journal of Thomas Coke, Bishop of the Methodist-Episcopal Church From September 18, 1784 to June 3, 1785 in *The Arminian Magazine*; Pritchard & Hall; Phil.; 1789; pps 288-289].