

BUCKHALL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 1905 to 1980

And are we yet alive and see each others' faces?
Glory and thanks to Jesus give for His Almighty Grace.

In the minutes of the First Quarterly Conference of 1905 is found the passage "The following were appointed as trustees for a church at Buckhall-Captain T. J. Moore, J. L. Lineweaver, A. J. Ramey, Morgan Hensley and William H. Breeden." Although this is the first mention of the church building which has stood for seventy-five years at Buckhall, the congregation was an active part of the Buckhall community many years before the building was erected.

The first records pertaining to Buckhall are minutes from a Quarterly Conference held at Midland, Virginia on April 24, 1897, but the Prince William Charge, including churches at Midland, Hazelwood and Buckhall, was in existence before this time. A charge of the United Brethren in Christ was several churches served by one minister. Midland and Hazelwood had preaching twice a month, Buckhall had a service by the preacher in charge only once a month. Responsibility for the payment of the preacher's salary was divided between the churches according to their membership and totaled \$180.00 per year. The records indicate that in the year 1897, Hazelwood contributed \$70 with 54 members, Midland contributed \$65 with 36 members and Buckhall contributed \$45 with 22 members.

Much of the information in these early years comes from the minutes of the Quarterly Conference and other meetings. Since Buckhall was not the largest church, items specifically relating to its concerns are sparse. While names of prominent people and scattered statistics on attendance, membership, treasury balances and pastoral activities are available, there is a lack of details concerning the issues confronting the church and the actions of its members.

In the local conference the highest official was the Presiding Elder who supervised the Quarterly Conferences in the district. The preacher in charge went from church to church preaching on Sundays and visiting the members of the different congregations. Each church had a local minister who saw to their spiritual needs and conducted services when the preacher in charge was at another church. In addition to these officials, there were class leaders, general stewards, class stewards and presidents of various auxiliaries composed of the ladies or the youth of the congregations. Each church was a separate unit functioning independently, coming together with the other churches of the charge only during the Quarterly Conferences.

The Quarterly Conference, attended by the church officers, ministers and Conference officials, was composed mainly of reports reflecting the "state of the Conference". Of particular interest to these church officers were statistics concerning membership and financial matters. Other matters considered during the Conference included renewal of licenses to local ministers, recommendations to the Conference for granting a preaching license, and the approval of officials' moral conduct.

During the early years of this century, there were many changes in the Prince William Mission; a total of 14 different churches were included in the charge at various points in time. Some of them (Buckhall, Hazelwood, Midland) appeared thriving concerns while most of them are mentioned only once or twice in the Conference minutes, then dropped from the records. In 1903, "the question of dropping some of the apportionments was discussed, but no action upon the question was taken. The pastor and the members were urged to greater efforts, so as to not make it necessary to drop the mission or any part of it." Despite their apparent concern, however, many of the smaller congregations disappeared from the Conference records.

In the year 1905, Buckhall had approximately 20 members and was contributing \$50.00 toward the preacher's annual salary of \$235.00. It was decided that a church should be erected at Buckhall and in June of that year, a board of trustees was elected and charged with the construction of the building. The land on which the building stands was donated by Joseph and Lydia Hensley. Captain Thomas J. Moore, a member of the first board of trustees, promised "I will use the best timber and plenty of nails so it won't shake."

On February 17, 1906, after the church had been completed and was in use, the trustees made their official report on the construction costs: "The total cost of the church in money and material work was \$830.80. Total amount received in money including \$50.00 borrowed from the bank (was) \$426.80. Total amount received in lumber and works (was) \$266.50. Amount yet unprovided for (was) \$137.50."

The charge, consisting of Buckhall, Hazelwood and Midland churches, continued their routine meetings and services for the next several years. In 1908, a group at Hazelwood Church was charged with finding a new location for the Hazelwood Church. The building was moved to a lot in Aden and dedicated in 1910. The old property was kept as a cemetery.

Another church was added to the charge in 1911. It was located at Oak Hill and remained an active part of the charge until 1916 when it no longer appears in the Conference reports. The Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church was purchased in 1917 and became known as the Manassas United Brethren Church.

In the years 1936-39, Buckhall was preparing to expand the church building by adding classrooms. Money was raised by the church members and the Conference was to donate an amount also if the written report of the planned improvements was approved. Not all of the churches were expanding however, for in 1940, the Conference minutes indicated that the possibility of dropping the Manassas Church from the charge was seriously considered. This was prompted by several factors--declining enrollment in Sunday School classes and poor attendance at Christian Endeavor meetings and worship services. Also there had been no board meetings of the officers of the Manassas Church and, as the preacher in charge, Rev. M. J. Miller, pointed out, "this was a serious offense".

The 1940's brought many concerns to Buckhall Church and its members. In 1941, excavation was begun to raise the church and build a basement; this construction was completed in 1944. On a larger sphere, the Church was seeking to advance its position by increasing membership and ministering effectively to the spiritual needs of its members. This decade saw many personal tragedies during the war and the church was there to comfort-- "ministering to homes where boys are in the service as casualty lists are coming in from the Invasion".

Two important mergers occurred in a 7 year period. In 1939, there was a merger between the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and South, and the Methodist Protestant Church to form the Methodist Church. In 1946, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ merged with the Evangelical Church to become the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The whole tone of the church changed and evangelical missions became an important part of the church's work.

In 1947, a third merger was proposed between the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church but there was not much discussion in the local Evangelical United Brethren Conference and the matter appears to have been dropped. Of more concern to the members of the Charge was the Kingdom Advance Program "to acquaint our people with the needs of this country as well as abroad." Evangelical campaigns also occupied much of the Church's efforts during the late 1940's and early 1950's.

In 1955, colored glass replaced the plain glass in the windows in anticipation of the Church's 50th anniversary which was celebrated on October 30 and commemorated with a history written by Reverend Donald Austin.

In the minutes of the 1958 local conference, there was a note stating conference approval for the relocation of Manassas Church. Three and one-half acres were purchased in 1961 at a cost of \$10,000 and designated for the Manassas Church and parsonage. The ground breaking was January 20, 1963 and both the church and parsonage were dedicated on March 15, 1964. It was the first time that a parsonage and church were dedicated at the same time Reverend Floyd Fulk's tenure as Superintendent of the Virginia Conference.

1964 was also the year when Buckhall began to make plans for a program of major renovations costing approximately \$10,000. The plans included adding two rooms to the basement and two rooms to the upper level, a well, refinishing the interior of the sanctuary, painting, and grading and graveling the driveway. The membership at this time was 76.

When a merger between the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren was again proposed, the local churches were given the opportunity to suggest names for the combined church. On November 30, 1966, the conference was informed the name of the Church will be the United Methodist Church. The "United" symbolizes the Evangelical United Brethren Church. With the vote to be taken in 1968, the next 12 years were set aside as the period to bring the churches into harmony. The union of the churches on April 23, 1968 began a flurry of activity in the local conference. In May of 1968, a merger was requested between Grace Methodist Church and Manassas Evangelical United Brethren Church, but the Methodists were informed that the Virginia Conference would not merge until 1970 and appropriate action would be taken at that time. However, permission was granted to move the Aden Evangelical United Brethren Church building to property owned by the Asbury Methodist Church and to merge with the Nokesville Charge.

Although the merger of the two churches was officially announced at the Annual Conference in 1968, the administrations of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Conferences in Virginia did not join until 1970. Many of the activities in the local churches remained unchanged, but the union of the churches raised some questions: should the charge be served by a former Methodist pastor or an Evangelical United Brethren minister? Should Grace Methodist Church merge with the Manassas Evangelical United Brethren Church? Should Buckhall be closed?

Once the turmoil of the merger settled, these questions were answered. Buckhall was served by a former Evangelical United Brethren minister until 1970, Grace and Manassas remained separate churches and Buckhall was not closed. The minutes of a 1970 meeting state that it was never the intention of the Alexandria District to close Buckhall. It was to be retained and expanded; since it was a small church, it would be assisted by the Mission Board as if it were a new church.

During the years following the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist Church, Manassas Church grew in size and strength. Once the burden of debt, caused by the completion of the church building, was removed, the Church expanded its ministry into the community in modern and innovative ways. Buckhall also increased in size but more slowly and by 1974, the difference between the churches was evident in the pastor's charge conference reports. However, it was not until 1976 that it was suggested a separate pastor for each church would be in the best interest of both congregations.

In June 1977, Paul Pearson arrived as pastor to Buckhall United Methodist Church. Under his guidance, the assets of the charge were divided between the two churches (Manassas purchased Buckhall's half-interest in the parsonage), membership increased 12% and within 2 years, the church was functioning as a complete organization, a church involved in the community it serves.

← 1986-208

Today, Buckhall has a total membership of 110. As the area surrounding the church grows, the church grows also. There are no large signs or advertisements proclaiming the Church's presence, yet somehow people find their way to Buckhall and once they come, they return again and again to the little church on the hill. There is a sense of love and faith which cannot be measured, but can be felt. This feeling is best summarized in the words of one member who believes "the aim of this church is to establish and maintain an atmosphere where from youngest to oldest each can continually develop in appreciation of his fellows and in love and respect for his God."

Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by His Love;
And still He Doth His help afford, and hides our life above.

1982 - Church went from being served
by part-time minister to
full-time minister.

Kathryn Ann Simmons
September, 1980

Church purchased approx. 5 acres
adjoining land for future expansion.

PASTORS SERVING BUCKHALL

L. A. Racey	1897 - 1899
C. M. Good	1899 - 1901
G. W. Stover	1901 - 1903
W. M. Maiden	1903 - 1904
A. V. Vondersmith	1904 - 1906
Arthur L. Maiden	1906 - 1907
H. B. Ritter	1907 - 1910
J. W. Brill	1910 - 1916
L. C. Messick	1916 - 1920
S. D. Skelton	1920 - 1923
C. J. Racey	1923 - 1924
Wilmer R. Swank	1924 - 1926
Lee E. Sheaffer	1926 - 1929
Grant M. Miller	1929 - 1930
William Marvin Maiden	1930 (5 month supply)
Arthur L. Maiden - returned	1930 - 1932
Olin R. Kesner	1932 - 1938
Daniel Newman	1938 - 1940
Stanley A. Knupp	1940 - 1946
Daniel Newman (returned)	1946 - 1948
H. Fred Edge	1948 - 1952
Delmas Sherman	1952 - 1953
Donald A. Austin	1953 - 1956
Roy Hedrich	1956 - 1958
Lloyd S. Bowman	1958 - 1963
H. Eugene Baker	1963 - 1966
Wilton B. Thomas	1966 - 1967
Richard Ruth	1967 - 1968
Jerry Jordan	1968 (part of year)
Glen Black	1968 - 1970
Russell Walker	1970 - 1973
Paul Allen Beighley III	1973 - 5/31/77 (Manassas Charge consisting of Manassas and Buck- hall dissolved.)
Paul W. Pearson	1977 - 1978
Brooks L. Ambos, Jr.	1978 - 1979
Gary L. Hulme	1979 - present

Cemetery



Buckhall Church

Southwest Corner

