

GAINESVILLE METHODIST CHURCH
by Melvin Lee Steadman, Jr.,
Historian, Virginia Methodist
Historical Society

Gainesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized during the late 1870's as part of the Sudley Mission (formerly the Prince William Mission) of the Washington District, Baltimore Conference. Ewell's Chapel near Hickory Grove and Oakland were part of the original mission. In 1881 the following persons transferred from the Buckland Church to Gainesville and constituted some of the earliest members: M.C. Burghalter, Almira Clark, Alwilda Pattie, Jeanette McDonough, Sarah A. Gray and Mary F. Bell. The congregation met in the Gainesville School (now the kitchen wing of the home of C.F. Sinclair opposite the Church).

On April 21, 1883, at the first Quarterly Conference for Sudley Mission, held at Gainesville, with Dr. J.S. Gardner, Presiding Elder, in the Chair, the following building committee was appointed: J.S. Porter, Captain Henry Walper Kearney, John Luther Meetze, C.W. Marriott, and Captain James Herrell. On August 3, 1883 the first Board of Trustees was appointed: Captain Henry Walper Kearney, John Luther Meetze, A.W. Lemon, A.H. Compton, and Amos Benson.

It was important to construct a parsonage, and on November 16, 1883 (Deed Book 34-526) Lorenzo J. Prescott conveyed to the trustees (listed as W.L.B. Wheeler, H.W. Kearney, Amos Benson, A.J. Compton, J.L. Meetze, L.E. Johnson, and E.H. Smith) for \$800.00, cash, 2 acres 3 1/2 rods in the Village of Gainesville. Here the parsonage was built.

Miss Somerville Gaines, an original member of the congregation (whose family gave the community their name) conveyed one acre of land for a Church on August 18, 1883 (Deed Book 35-406). This adjoined the historic Gaines Cemetery and it became the site of the Church. Fred Snook of Bristow laid the first stone of the foundation in 1884 and died before construction was completed. The building remained incomplete on the interior for many years. The congregation grew and on June 7, 1885, the following were received (the first since 1881): Edmund Allen, Jane A. Allen, Sarah Madison Allen, Martha Winifred Allen, Edith Gertrude Allen and James W. McIntosh. The first named was the father-in-law of Confederate hero and trustee, Captain Kearney, formerly of the Laurel Brigade. The Allen girls were his children, all maiden ladies. Miss Gertrude Allen taught in the Gainesville School.

On October 10, 1886 the completed Church was dedicated. The Sudley Circuit at that time included appointments listed as: Buckland, Sudley, Thoroughfare, and Red Hill. The first couple married in the Church were Frank Hunter Pickett and Jessie Moore Bell who were married November 1, 1899, and lived to have a 50th wedding anniversary celebration in the Social Hall.

The Ladies Aid, so long an important part of the congregation, was organized July 19, 1922, with Mrs. Virginia Lee (Rust) Beard as organizing president. It was organized in the home of Miss Ruth Brown, who became the first president. She was followed in this office by Mrs. Claude Ellis. The following years saw Mrs. Bessie Ellis as president (and she served 16 years). This organization is now the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

In 1954 it was deemed necessary to replace the Charge parsonage built in 1883-4. A new brick parsonage was built by members of the Charge as a "labor of love" under the capable leadership of "Uncle" Dave Boger on a site in Lake View Estates, a new addition to Gainesville, given by Henry A. Florence.

In 1961 Gainesville became a Station Appointment. A site opposite the present parsonage was a gift from Henry A. Florence. This was sold and with the help of Mr. Florence and the Northern Virginia Methodist Board of Missions, five acres of the Gaines estate were acquired, adjoining the Church.

These are the Pastors of Gainesville and/or the Circuit to which it belonged:

Grandin	1879-1880	W. D. King	1914-1916
Mercer	1880-1881	C. K. Mullican	1916-1919
J. T. Maxwell	1881-1882	Homer Welch	1919-1922
Robert Smith	1882-1883	Charles Leonard Beard	1922-1926
J. S. Porter	1883-1884	H. A. Wilson	1926-1927
J. D. Martin	1884-1885	Charles F. Phillips	1927-1930
A. P. Boud	1885-1886	L. B. Atkins	1930-1931
Addison Weller	1886-1887	K. D. Swecker	1931-1933
G. B. Sutton	1887-1888	A. B. Sapp	1933-1938
J. T. Miller	1888-1889	John S. Schwartz	1938-1941
F. H. Shipley	1889-1890	Clark H. Wood	1941-1944
J. K. Gilbert	1890-1891	John L. Thomas	1944-1945
L. R. Jones	1891-1892	D. R. Rinehart	1945-1946
M. H. Keene	1892-1893	Earl L. Hayter	1946-1948
Addison Weller	1893-1895	James Lytton Duley	1948-1957
C. B. Sutton	1895-1899	Denzil Daniel	1958-1959
J. W. Bain	1899-1902	Reginald Walton	1959-1961
Simpson Veitch Hildebrand	1902-1907	Melvin Lee Steadman, Jr.	1961-1965
L. R. Jones	1907-1908	Thomas Jennings	1965-1967
Homer Welch	1908-1912	Clyde Dews	1967-1970
Walker Peyton Conway Coe	1912-1914	James R. Price	1970-1972
		G. Thomas Brown, Jr.	1972-

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