

**The First United Methodist Church
Port St. Joe, Florida
One Hundred Years 1912–2012
May 20, 2012**



**History Publication Project:
Virginia Harrison
Leonard Costin
Stephen Whealton**

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Virginia Harrison**

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A Message from the Pastor



An entire century ago, a small band of Christians gathered together, prayed, planned and formed the First Methodist Church of Port St. Joe.

Since that time, thousands of children, youth and adults have passed through these doors. They have spent time in worship, prayer, ministry, fellowship, sharing, caring and building.

As we look back on the history of First United Methodist Church, we find many faithful people who have brought us to where we are today. Another century from now, it is my prayer that as the people of First United Methodist Church look back on us, they will find us faithful as well.

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 says, *"¹⁰When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹²be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."*

As we celebrate our 100 years of ministry in Port St. Joe, Florida, we want to remember that we too are drinking from wells that we did not dig. There have been many faithful people who have sacrificed so we could be here to worship and do His ministry today. We give thanks and praise to God for all of those who have come before us and helped to make this possible. On a personal note, I am so thankful to be a part of the ministry of First United Methodist Church during this part of their history.

So, as we look back, we must also look forward. And just as our forefathers before us, we will build, and dig and plant for those who will come after us.

Mac Fulcher

STAFF



Rev. Mac Fulcher: Acting Youth Director; Deborah Loyless Tuttle, Children's Ministry
Helen Ramsey, Treasurer; Joanne Freeman, Administrative Assistant;
Hilda Duren, Organist; Cintel Rudd, Custodian

PREFACE

This history of our church borrows heavily and quotes from earlier histories, written in 1976 by Mrs. Ralph Swatts and in 1990 by Miss Margaret Smith, who quoted Mrs. Swatts. In fact, except for a few early memories, it depends on the earlier histories for factual information about the building of the Long Avenue church and our present building and the people who made it happen. Whenever possible, that history has been expanded with pictures and personal memories and with documents that it is hoped you will find interesting.

In 100 years, this church has made a great deal of history. Studying its past, its people, its programs, and its outreach can only impress one with the richness and variety of our church heritage. It has to make one proud. However, since there is so much that needs to be included, trying to get it all recorded on a limited number of pages is a problem. Much has been left out because of lack of space, and, undoubtedly, there are oversights. Unfortunately, there always are. Please understand, if you realize that something important is missing. Please accept this apology.

I would like to thank all those church members who supplied pictures, offered information, or wrote memories, and those who have been, throughout, encouraging and helpful. I especially would like to thank Leonard Costin, co-chairman, who has done everything possible to insure the success of this project, and Stephen Whealton, who has taken hundreds of pictures and who has supplied materials and documents, as well. Sonjia Taylor, also, has made numerous contributions. Dusty May and Sandy McInnis wrote about the Sails. Phyllis Altstaetter has graciously proofread most of the text. My husband, Jim Harrison, has had the patience of Job. It is impossible to thank everyone. I do appreciate your help, all of you! So many of you went out of your way to find needed pictures and information. THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

It is my sincere wish, and that of Leonard and Stephen, that you enjoy this little book, that you find it meaningful, and that you will treasure it as a reminder of the loving administrations of those earlier members who so loved their God and the Methodist Church in Port St. Joe.

Virginia Harrison, historian

History of the Area



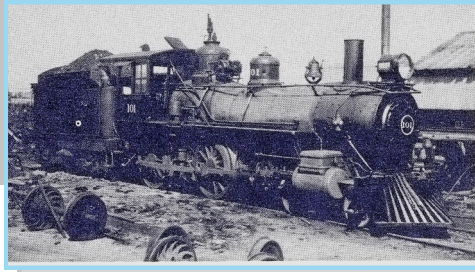
The struggle by England, France, and Spain to control St. Joseph's Bay ended in 1819, when the United States purchased Florida from Spain.

Only fifteen years later, the historic city, now known as Old St. Joseph, was born where modern Port St. Joe exists today and rose to prominence, the largest city in Florida, with a population of over 10,000.

St. Joseph existed only ten years, but in that brief time it hosted the convention that produced Florida's first constitution and was almost named capital of the state. The Monument in Constitution Park and the Constitution Museum commemorate that moment in history.



During its incredible, short lived success, St. Joseph boasted the second railroad in the state



(the third railroad in the United States ?); a newspaper, The St. Joseph Times; a deep natural harbor, making it a great port into which ships brought goods from all over the world; a race track; fine hotels; and numerous bars which served drinks on ice .

Later, it was said that there were no churches in this "sin city," and there were those who believed that "Florida's Sodom or Gomorrah" was destroyed by God: because in spite of its meteoric rise to fame and power, the young city could not survive a quick series of devastating events.

The economic panic of 1837 was followed by a yellow fever epidemic that killed a large part of its population and sent the rest scurrying for safety. Then, there was a huge fire that burned many of the buildings and a hurricane which flooded the streets.

The few houses left in the city were dismantled for their

hardwood, which had been shipped down from the north to this land of palmetto and pine, and they were rebuilt in neighboring Apalachicola.

It didn't help that the Civil War erupted quickly after.

The wealthy men who had considered the St. Joseph Bay area prime investment property now let it go rather than pay taxes on worthless land.

James Bennett Stone purchased the tax deeds. and for a little more than \$125.00 became the owner of the southern coastal land that later became Gulf County; and in 1896 his son, Terrell Higdon Stone, moved to the Bay for the expressed purpose of building a town in the spot called Indian Pass—not to be confused with the modern Indian Pass—because Indians had regularly passed this way.



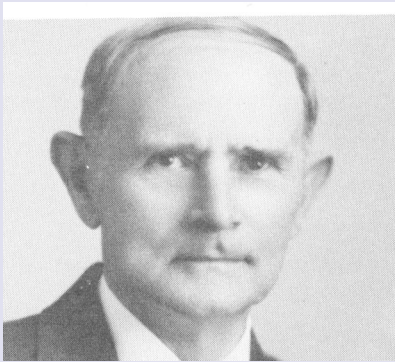
T. H. Stone

In 1913 the town of Port St. Joe was officially incorporated.

CHURCH HISTORY

Our church had its tentative beginnings somewhere between 1910, when the Apalachicola Northern Railroad began to run trains to the wharves , and 1913, when the town of Port St. Joe was officially incorporated.

In 1912, under the leadership of Asbury Morgan Jones, a group of interested citizens met in the two room schoolhouse located on Long Avenue and Fourth Street.



Asbury Morgan Jones

Urged to action by their wives, who didn't want to live or bring up their children in a churchless community, the men first organized a community Sunday School. Mr. Jones was elected superintendent and served in this office for twenty-one years,

Marie (Mrs. A. M.) Jones and Sally (Mrs. R. A.) Costin were the first Sunday School teachers. Although the Sunday School was comprised of members of several denominations, and though teachers and officers were not all Methodists, it used Methodist literature.



Marie Jones

The ladies wanted more than a Sunday School. They wanted a church! A small group of wives, including Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Costin, and Annie (Mrs. T.H.) Stone, formed a committee and as a group visited each of the men, pressing for pledges of financial support for a minister and the erection of a real church building.



Sally Costin



Annie Stone

The men, still led by Mr. Jones, met again, this time in the lobby of the Port Inn, and the Methodist Church of Port St. Joe became a reality. The Alabama Conference added the new church to the assignments of a circuit riding pastor, the Rev. Charles L. Middlebrooks, who was already serving a church in Wewahitchka and in what is now called Indian Pass. Until 1914, services were held once a month, first in the Port Inn and then in the little wooden school building.



The Port Inn

Begun in 1912 and completed in 1914, ours was the first church building in town.

Located on the corner of Long Avenue and Seventh Street, and built on a

lot 100 feet by 170 feet, it was 40 and 1/2 feet wide by 70 1/2 feet long, on a foundation of 8 by 24 inch brick piers on 10 foot centers around the perimeter of the building and with one row down the center.



It was a wooden building with no sub-flooring. There were four Sunday School rooms, two downstairs, one on either side of the front door, and two more directly over them with a balcony connecting the upstairs rooms. When membership grew, the balcony was also used for a Sunday School class.

Neither earlier history mentions side rooms at the opposite end of the building, but some remember that there were little rooms there. One seemed to belong to the pastor; perhaps the other side was used for storage.

Early Methodists were the only church in town to have a building in which to worship, and no church in town had a minister more than one Sunday a month. The solution was simple: share the building; share the ministers. All congregations attended services in the little wooden church on Long Avenue every Sunday and listened to Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian messages in turn.

Finally, after membership had grown, our church was assigned a minister for three Sundays every month, with our minister living in Port St. Joe but preaching one Sunday in Wewahitchka. It took many more years before we had a full time pastor. By this time the other churches had acquired buildings of their own in which to meet.

Memory:

I was still a little girl when the Baptists moved into their new church building on 3rd Street and Baltzell . I was so impressed, because theirs was a much larger building than ours, and it was brick! I visited there often, because back then, in Port St. Joe, everybody, children and adults, attended any special services and events, including revivals, in whatever churches they were held. I loved it when Baptist missionaries came from China to tell us how people there lived and when they showed us the tiny silk shoes that grown ladies wore on their tightly, painfully bound feet. We watched, wide eyed, as he pretended to hobble in those tiny shoes.

In the summers, children attended every church's Bible School, each of them lasting for two weeks. The time really was spent studying the Bible. We would memorize dozens of verses and compete in sword drills to be the first to locate and read aloud the scripture in the references called out by the teacher. We colored and cut and pasted little square houses to create the little town of Bethlehem. Oh, and we sang and sang! We attended Bible Schools for six weeks every summer!

Virginia Swatts Harrison



Early Port St. Joe Methodists



The year was around 1948. One of my earliest memories in life was walking down the aisle of the old wooden Methodist Church on Long Avenue, going with my two sisters to take our penny to the alter. Every Sunday this was the small children's part of the service. I remember the ladies always wore hats to church, some larger than others. Everyone dressed up in his Sunday best. My sisters and I had to sit through the whole service between my mother and father. To us, the service seemed to last all day. We went most every Sunday as a family. My Christian roots and life long friendships were formed in that little wooden church.

George Duren

As a child, I attended Sunday school and church regularly at the old wooden Methodist church in Port St. Joe located on the corner of Long Avenue and Seventh Street. It was hot in the summer and cold in the winter. The pews were hard and sermons seemed to last all day. When I would run or skip inside the building, it would shake. Not a flattering picture, but I miss that old building and all the wonderful

times that I had there as a child. It was my beginning to a long Christian journey, a journey I'm still traveling today.

Leonard Costin



MEMORIES OF SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHURCH IN THE OLD WOODEN BUILDING ON LONG AVENUE.

I remember that the whole Sunday School assembled in the sanctuary before classes went to their separate rooms. R. Glenn Boyles, not the first Sunday School superintendent, but the only one I remember in the old church building, presided. I remember that every person, child or adult, who had had a birthday during the week was called to come stand at the front while all present sang "Happy Birthday." We had announcements, a devotional, all together, and we sang at least one hymn.

Virginia Swatts Harrison



SGT. LEONARD BELIN

Leonard landed in France on D-Day and saw nine days of intensive action before he was flown to England for treatment immediately after he was wounded.

☆☆☆

CLOSED ALL DAY WED.

DENTISTRY

Costin's Dept. Store

Charge Accounts
Invited

(romance borrowed)

\$19.95

**Mouchette's
Style Shop**

PIGGLY WIGGLE

Brisket STEW 1b 19

III

Next week is week of prayer and on Tuesday the W. M. S. will meet with Mrs. George Patton and further plans for the program will be made then.

This history of the building of our "new" church was written by Maybel Swatts in 1976 and by Margaret Smith in 1990. All pictures have been added in 2012.

"By 1942 the congregation recognized the need for a more adequate building. An inspection of the existing building noted that the brick piers were insufficient to carry the building load as evidenced by excessive settling, and that walking across the floor caused the entire building to shake. The weatherboarding was badly deteriorated and window frames were in need of repair or replacement. The administrative board decided to make the necessary repairs, start a building fund, but to await more normal (post war) conditions for further planning. The first building fund envelopes, without a date or numbers on them, were ordered in October, 1942. That November a safety deposit box was rented for building fund bonds

In 1945 the Methodist Men's Club was organized under the leadership of Nobie H. Stone. The primary purpose of this organization was to plan and facilitate the erection of a new and more adequate church plant including a sanctuary and an educational building. A church supper was held in the Episcopal Parish House, and \$30,000 was pledged at this time to begin the project

In December of 1946 a letter from George W. Kerlin, District Superintendent, addressed to the pastor, officials and membership of the Port St Joe Methodist Church, granted them permission to undertake the erection of a new church and church school buildings. Within two weeks the board of trustees met and appointed an Estimating and Planning Committee to determine:

1. Building requirements for worship service, church school, youth fellowship, Women's Society of Christian Service
2. Available sites
3. Cost of constructing the proposed building, present funds available and possibilities for financing the remainder
4. Cost of purchasing the proposed site
5. Probable returns from sale of present building and site

Appointed to serve on this committee were Loyd Tubb, J. L. Sharlt, Nobie H. Stone, J. L. Temple, Watson Smith, D. B. Lay, M. K. Hurlbut, W. W. Barrier, Sr., George F. Suber, E. Clay Lewis, Jr., F. L. Hunt, M. P. Tomlinson, R. G. Boyles, and J. Lamar Miller. On 29 January, 1948, the complete working plan for the sanctuary, prepared by Prentiss Huddleston and Associates of Tallahassee, was signed by J. L. Sharit, chairman of the building committee.



Joseph L. Sharit

In the pastor's report to the Quarterly Conference dated 6 April, 1948, Reverend Tubb stated, "We have blueprints and specifications for our church. The grounds are cleared and a small amount of material is on the ground and more materials have been donated and secured which will be placed as soon as weather permits. We are beginning on a pay-as-you-go plan." The pay-as-you-go policy resulted in flurries of activity interspersed with lulls and delays. Much of the actual labor was done by the men of the church and friends from other churches.

A resolution passed by the Quarterly Conference on 31 January, 1949, authorized the board of trustees to mortgage the site and property thereon of the new church building under construction for a sum not exceeding \$25,000, the proceeds to be used exclusively for construction. This resolution was signed by George W. Kerlin, District Superintendent; Loyd W. Tubb. In the pastor's report to the Quarterly Conference dated 6 April, 1948, Reverend Tubb stated, "We have blueprints and specifications for our church. The grounds are cleared and a small amount of material is on the ground and more materials have been donated and secured which will be placed as soon as weather permits. We are beginning on a pay-as-you-go plan." The pay-as-you-go policy resulted in flurries of activity interspersed with lulls and delays. Much of the actual labor was done by the men of the church and friends from other churches.

Reverend Tubb's report dated 18 May, 1950, states, "We have been in our new church two months." The building was far from completed, but church services were held in the social hall.

The sanctuary was first used in the spring of 1951 for the dedication of the organ purchased by the women of the church. At first the furniture from the Long Avenue building was used in the new sanctuary, but in 1952 new furniture arrived and while it was being installed, services were again held in the social hall.



J.L Miller J. L.



R. Glenn Boyles



Mark Tomlinson



M.K. Hurlbut



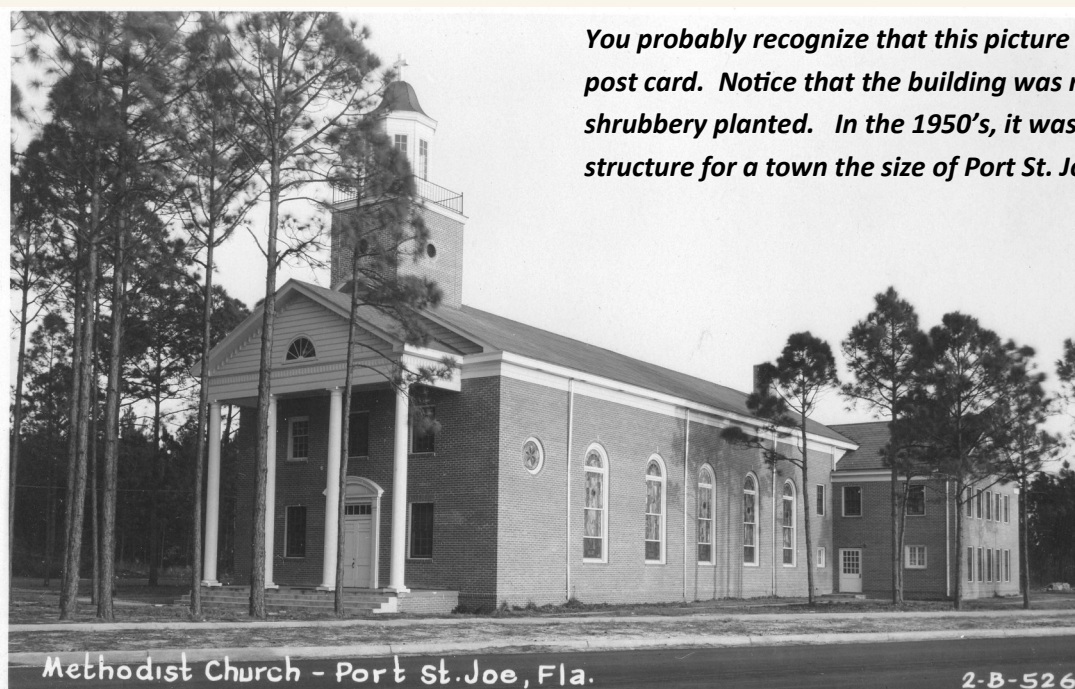
Nobie Higdon Stone



Lindsey Temple



George Suber



You probably recognize that this picture is from a post card. Notice that the building was new with no shrubbery planted. In the 1950's, it was an imposing structure for a town the size of Port St. Joe

Methodist Church - Port St. Joe, Fla.

2-B-526

OUR NEW CHURCH

The project was sponsored on behalf of the membership of the church by the Methodist Men's Club, and it is the desire of the members of this club that appreciation be shown the following in special recognition for assistance on behalf of the grounds, building, furnishings, etc.

St. Joe Paper Company—Site and cash contribution.

Mr. George G. Tapper and Mr. E. L. Hobaugh—Clearing, grading and side walks
Mr. P. L. Coleman and Faulk and Coleman—Storm sewers and parkway paving.

City of Port St. Joe, The County Commissioners, and Coggins and Deermont—
Culverts and hauling fill dirt.

Mrs. Alfred I. duPont, Mr. H. H. Saunders, and the St. Joe Paper Company—Cash
and Carpet.

St. Joe Lumber and Export Co., Mr. M. L. Fleishel, Sr., Lumber and Cash Con-
tributions.

W. P. Gilbert, Labor and other valuable assistance.

Mr. Walter Duren—Use of trucks and other very valuable assistance.

Mr. George A. Whittington—Labor

Mr. Edd C. Pridgeon—Labor

Mr. S. C. Pridgeon—Labor

Mr. G. W. Parish—Labor

Mr. Grady O'Brian—Labor

Mr. Wilson Walker—Labor.

ACCESSORIES AND FURNITURE

Mr. W. W. Barrier—Neon Cross atop of steeple.

Mr. Wm. T. Edwards—Sterling Silver Communion Service.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph A. Swatts—Altar, Honoring Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Stone.

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Edwards—Lectern.

Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Temple—Font, honoring Elmore Godfrey IV and James Pope
Godfrey.

Mrs. J. T. McNeill, Sr., and Mr. and Mrs. James T. McNeill—(Pulpit) in memory
of J. T. McNeill.

Mr. J. O. Bragdon—(Pulpit) in memory of J. T. McNeill and honoring Mrs. Gypsy
A. McNeill.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy H. Hallman—Pulpit Chair, honoring E. J. Oxley.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Belin—Pulpit Chair, honoring Jacob Chapman Belin, Jr.

Mrs. C. M. McLean—Vases.

The R. H. Brinson Family—Cross.

Miss Amelia Gibson—Candle Holders.

Woman's Society of Christian Service and The Wesleyan Service Guild, Choir
Screen, Altar Rail, floor tile and Wurlitzer Organ.

PEWS

Mr. T. H. Stone.

Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Suber—Honoring George F. Suber, Jr.

The Hugh W. Griffin Family, The Wesley F. Farris Family and the Gordon W.
Farris Family.

The John and Paul Blounts.

Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Shuford and S. Blair Shuford, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. M. K. Hurlbut—In Memory of C. J. Hurlbut, M. D.

Bulletin July, 1952

Dr. Robert E. King—Honoring Janet King.

Mr. C. W. Long—In Memory of Katie Long, Mother of C. W. Long.

Mr. J. B. Harris—In Memory of Father and Mother.

Mr. A. B. Pratt—In Memory of Lucius L. Pratt.

Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Howell—Honoring Florida Sauls Howell.

The A. S. and W. L. Chason Families.

Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Costin—Honoring Anne, Martha, Leonard and Robert Costin.

Mr. R. E. Bellows—In Memory of James W. and Ella Reed Bellows.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Lamar Miller—Honoring Hildreth Ann and John Lamar Miller, Jr.

Mrs. A. M. Jones—In Memory of Asbury Morgan Jones.

The Walter Duren Family.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Roy Gibson, Sr.

The F. L. Hunt Family.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Glenn Boyles.

Mr. Paul K. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Johnson, and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Belin—
In Memory of Clarence M. B. Johnson and Sgt. Harry D. Johnson.

Mr. and Mrs. Fenlon Talley and Miss Marie Talley.

Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Fleishel.

Mr. and Mrs. Rush Chism.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Stimpson—In Memory of Mrs. Albert S. Pugh.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Geddie, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Smith, Mrs. Doris Whealton—In
Memory of Walter and Amelia Allen.

Mr. and Mrs. John Beasley—In Memory of Lucy Raffield.

Mrs. Herbert C. Brown.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin D. Ramsey, Paul Edwin, Donald Boyer, Ruth Lynn and
Mary Dell Ramsey.

Dr. L. H. Bartee—Honoring Esther C. Bartee.

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Chandler, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bass, and Mr. and Mrs. B. E.
Rawls—Honoring Rev. and Mrs. O. D. Langston

WINDOWS

Mrs. J. T. McNeill, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. James T. McNeill, and Mr. and Mrs. W. A.
Walker—In Memory of James T. McNeill, Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Costin, Mrs. Ruth Soule, Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Costin, and Mr.
and Mrs. T. S. Gibson—Honoring Sally Guerry Costin.

Mrs. C. C. Taunton and Children—In Memory of Howard C. Taunton.

Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Childers—In Memory of E. F. Childers.

Mr. and Mrs. John Maddox—In Honor of Mariah Sims Maddox.

Mrs. R. W. Childers—In Memory of R. W. Childers.

Methodist Men's Club—In Memory of Nobie H. Stone.

The B. H. Dickens Family—In Memory of Benjamin Hill Dickens.

Mr. and Mrs. C. C. and Elmore Williams—In Memory of Sarah Hammond Wil-
liams.

Mrs. A. M. Jones—In Memory of Asbury Morgan Jones.

Dr. Albert L. Ward and Mr. Massey Ward.

Dr. Albert L. Ward and Mr. Massey Ward—Honoring Mrs. George W. Ward.

If failure of recognition of any one for any service has not been mentioned, it
is human failure of the head and not the heart. We are overwhelmingly grateful
to all.

THE METHODIST MEN'S CLUB.

Building will be open during the afternoon for all friends and visitors.

Dr. Robert E. King—Honoring Janet King.
 Mr. C. W. Long—In Memory of Katie Long, Mother of C. W. Long.
 Mr. J. B. Harris—In Memory of Father and Mother.
 Mr. A. B. Pratt—In Memory of Lucius L. Pratt.
 Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Howell—Honoring Florida Sauls Howell.
 The A. S. and W. L. Chason Families.
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 Mr. R. E. Bellows—In Memory of James W. and Ella Reed Bellows.
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 The Walter Duren Family.
 Mr. and Mrs. B. Roy Gibson, Sr.
 The F. L. Hunt Family.
 Mr. and Mrs. R. Glenn Boyles.
 Mr. Paul K. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Johnson, and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Belin—
 In Memory of Clarence M. B. Johnson and Sgt. Harry D. Johnson.
 Mr. and Mrs. Fennon Talley and Miss Marie Talley.
 Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Fleishel.
 Mr. and Mrs. Rush Chism.
 Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Stimpson—In Memory of Mrs. Albert S. Pugh.
 Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Geddie, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Smith, Mrs. Doris Whealton—In
 Memory of Walter and Amelia Allen.
 Mr. and Mrs. John Beasley—In Memory of Lucy Raffield.
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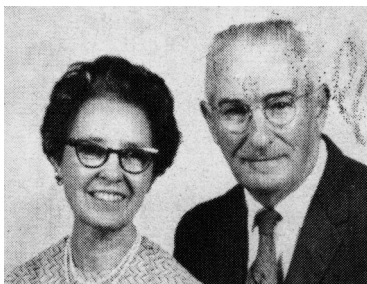
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***There are so many wonderful
 memories of those who loved and men-
 tored us through our growing up and
 young adult years. We had and have an
 amazing church family.***

Sonjia Blount Taylor



***I remember, appreciatively, Elizabeth Tom-
 linson playing the church organ for so many years,
 and her husband Mark weekly keeping the grass cut
 so as to keep Ms. Elizabeth from bein alone as she
 practiced.***

Sonjia Blount Taylor



***We recall, affectionately, George and Lyda Adkins as they month after month, year after year,
 prepared for Holy Communion. Mr. George was at the church in the wee hours every Sunday morning to
 see that heaters were lit or air conditioners were turned on. Then, he took his place at the back door to
 hold it open and welcome everyone who came to Sunday School.***

Sonjia Blount Taylor

The dedication of the sanctuary by Bishop Clare Purcell on 26 February, 1958, taxed the seating capacity of the church. The services were broadcast by radio station WDLP of Panama City.

In addition to Bishop Purcell and Port St Joe minister Fred Davis, Reverends Warren L Lindsey and Loyd Tubb returned to participate in this service.



Additions and improvements continued through the following years. Central heat and air conditioning were contracted in 1958. The following year a public address system was installed. This same year the official board endorsed in principal the efforts of the Men's Club for a new parsonage, but filled the immediate need by repairing and building an addition to the existing structure on Sixteenth Street and Long Avenue.

In 1959 Norman Gross was hired as architect for new Sunday School buildings and the following year the board accepted the bid of E. F. Gunn, contractor.

A steeple was added to the church in 1971. A new parsonage was begun on the site adjacent to the church site. Contractor for this building was Wade Barrier, Jr., and the parsonage was completed in 1973.

Damages incurred from Hurricane Eloise in 1976 cost about \$8,000 to repair. Then, on Labor Day weekend of 1984, Hurricane Kate canceled Sunday services and caused extensive damage to the church property. The carpet in the sanctuary, parlor, and the pastor's study was replaced. Salt water damage necessitated the re-wiring of the church at an estimated cost of \$10,000.

The house and lot located at 1914 Cypress was purchased in 1985 as residence for the associate minister.

The work of the church goes on and efforts must continue to grow spiritually and to provide suitable facilities for worship, for study, and for effective service to God.

These Ministers Have Served Our Church

1912 Charles L. Middle-
brooks

Ernest Chiles

Charles Avenger

Ben Bridges

M.A. Jones

1923 Conrad C. Garner

1924 Morgan D. Taylor

1926 Adam G. Ellisor

1929 James A. Seale

1930 Wesley P. Patillo

1931 Claude P. Roberets

1932 J.P. Stelle

1933 Alfred P. Segars

1935 Caleb Bates

1937 Don E. Marietta, Sr.

1941 Oscar D. Langston

1946 Loyd W. Tubb

1951 Warren L. Lindsey

1953 Fred L. Davis

1957 Edmund O. Bradley

1960 John C. Carmichael

1962 Thomas S. Harris

1966 Oliver M. Sell

1969 Roy Millard Spikes

1974 John W. McCurdy

1981 Jimmie R. Spikes

1983 Alvin N. Harbour, Jr.

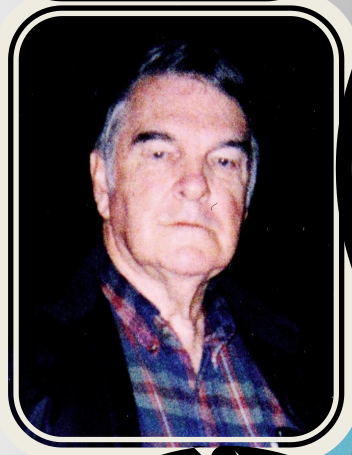
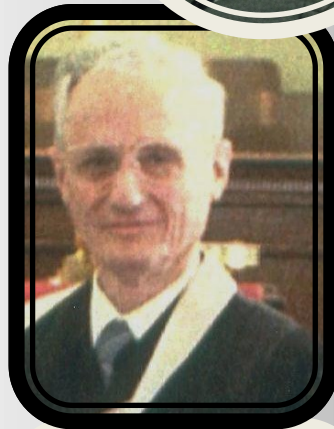
1986 Ennis G. Sellers

1989 E. Zedoc Baxter

1997 Jessee R. Evans

2003 Daniel D. Rhodes

2006 Malcolm W. Fulcher II



Celebrating 200 Years of Methodism

January 27, 1984



Pictured are the 1984 church officers for First United Methodist Church of Port St. Joe, Fla. who will lead the church in the Bicentennial year. They are left to right: Alden Farris, secretary United Methodist Men's Club; Laura Geddie, chairperson of the council on ministries; Billy Joe Rish, lay leader; Al Ray, president of the United Methodist Men and chairperson of the administrative board; Phyllis Alstaetter, 1983 UMW president; and Virginia Harrison, 1984 UMW president.

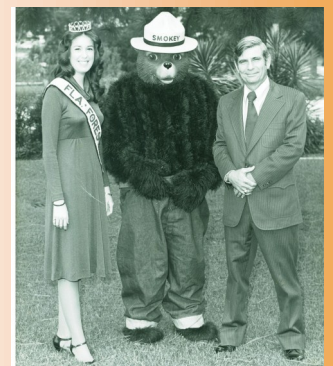
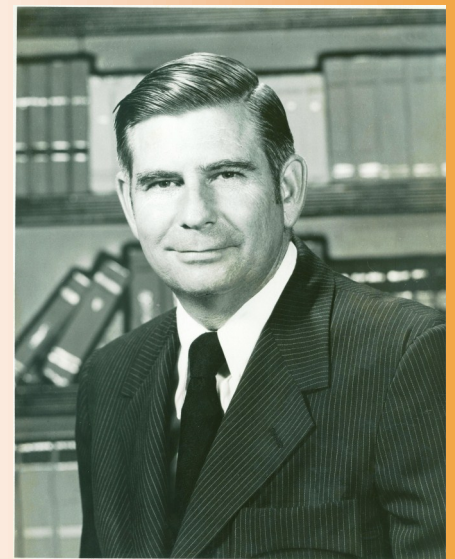
William Joseph Rish

Much more should be said about Billy Joe Rish than can be recorded here. Besides the work that he did all his adult life for this Methodist church, Billy Joe reached out from our church and represented us in special ways that no one else, to date, has done.

At the District level, Billy Joe served on the CORE Committee from 2002 until his death. On the Conference level, he was a member of the Alabama West Florida Foundation from 1900–2009, 18 years, serving as president from 1997–2001. Also, he served as a member of the Development Fund. The AWF Foundation oversees the financial affairs of the Conference and the administration of funded scholarships. No one else from our church has ever served on the AWF Foundation.

On the General Conference level, Billy Joe served for 20 years. Elected to the General Conference from the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference in 1980, he was reelected for four more consecutive four year terms, during which time he automatically served as a member of the Southwestern Jurisdictional Conference.

Billy Joe is the only member from our church ever to be elected to the General Conference.



Since 1990, when the second history was written, the only addition to the permanent buildings has been space added to the much used kitchen. However, some remodeling of interior space has helped to accommodate changing needs.

The social hall which once served as temporary sanctuary was reproporioned so that part of its space now serves as offices, a Sunday School classroom, and restrooms. Part of it is now halls. The smaller room that is left is now the parlor, so designated by the ladies when they furnished and decorated it. Later, it was redecorated with the addition of some new furniture by the family of Sue (Mrs. Floyd) Roberts as a memorial. Since its completion it has made an attractive and comfortable meeting room for small or larger groups including Sunday School classes.

Some of the Sunday School classrooms have been partitioned, others combined to double their size.



The vestibule has been redecorated as a memorial to Alden Farris by his family and with gifts from Renee (Mrs. Stuart) Shoaf.



Portraits of the Apostles now hang on both sides of the hall.

The halls and lower rooms in the back part of the main building, including the choir rooms and the parlor, have recently been repainted by volunteers, mostly David and Nancy Yarbrough, Bill and Linda McGlothlin, and Mike and Jill Davis.



A new sign has been erected beside Highway 98.

There is no doubt that the most consequential change since 2004 has been the addition of

+++++ The Sails +++++

The “early church”—the “contemporary service”—“the sails”—“worship on the water”—the “other church” are all names used to refer to the early morning services and those who attend them.

The following account is comprised of histories written by Douglas May and Sandy McInnis.

With a desire to increase church membership and to reach a younger population and the “unchurched,” a committee explored contemporary services in the surrounding area and worked with a Methodist development consultant, Mr. Paul Nixon.

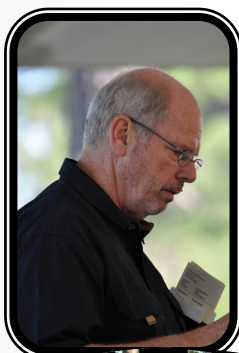
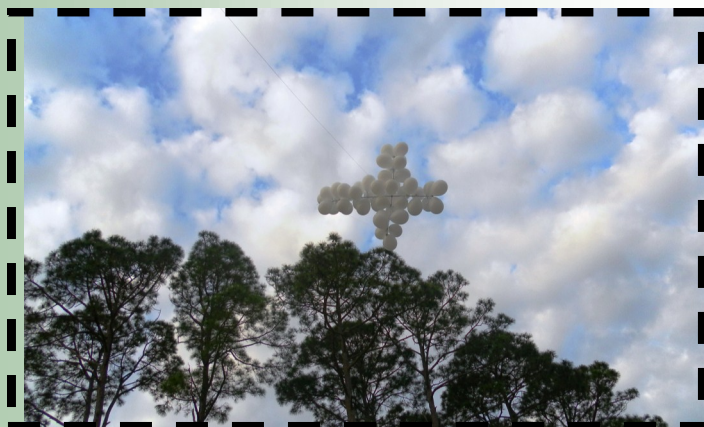
They found that the trend was to less traditional, less formal services, more audience participation, and a more contemporary style of music.

The first services in the new style were held in the sanctuary, but then they moved into the social hall with tables, food, beverages and a casual atmosphere. The dress code was informal enough to draw even beach goers.

Guitars, mandolins, keyboards, and other instruments, a contemporary singing group affectionately called The Dixie Chicks, and the Living Waters band accompany singing instead of tapes. With the erection of The Sails, the service has grown in popularity and attendance has increased.



Planners and leaders of the new church are excited and encouraged by the way their church has evolved. Dusty May concludes: *“Through the efforts of the church leadership and the wonderful willingness of the congregation to embrace changes, the new worship on the water service now regularly serves over 100 worshipers each Sunday and provides a wonderful Christian experience to many who previously did not attend a worship service at all. The new pavilion and Sails and especially the people who worship there have added an entirely new and exciting avenue for spreading the Love of Christ through the First United Methodist Church of Port St. Joe.”*



RENOVATION

In early 2012 major redecorating transformed the look of the sanctuary, which, except for fresh paint on the walls, had received no attention since the church was built.

Committee members were Dolores Windolf, chairman, Paula Pickett, Cindy Belin, Carol Rish,, Debbie Tankersley, Sandra Taunton, Trina Richards.

Pastor Mac Fulcher and Walt Williams, Chairman of the Board, served as ex officio members.



The committee took a good look at what they had to work with and decided that the church had “good bones,” making it unnecessary to make any architectural changes.

They visited other sanctuaries in the area, looked at hundreds of possibilities, consulted experts, and decided to refurbish and to accentuate.

They realized that we had beautiful, quality pews and altar furniture,, so they removed decades of polish and grime and restored it to its original finish.

They recognized four esthetic weaknesses: the dark wainscoting was in bad shape; the view of the balcony from the sanctuary below was unattractive; the really nice columns on the side walls

disappeared into the walls; and the poles supporting the balcony were serviceable but unsightly. The pictures that follow will show how they turned these problems into assets.

The major changes from tradition were in the color of the carpet and pew cushions from deep red to green and in replacing the carpet on the altar platform with wood.

A major feat was the accomplishment of all this in a two week period. More than a few doubted that it could be done so quickly, but professional renovators worked around the clock, and the only thing not in place as promised after two weeks were the pew cushions, which arrived a couple of weeks later.





The
Work
Goes
on!



The 11:00 O'clock congregation
meets under the sails while the
sanctuary is being renovated.



...and then the cleanup...



Services in the "New" Sanctuary



THE CHANCEL CHOIR



Hilda Duren

Ann Comforter

The Chancel Choir has played an important role in worship services since the beginning of the church and has always been appreciated by a grateful congregation. Providing anthems and special music on Sunday mornings and for decades on Sunday nights as well, the choir traditionally performs Christmas and Easter cantatas, and has on a few occasions offered other concerts during the week, such as The Sound of Music.



Elizabeth Jones Tomlinson began playing piano for services at the age of nine and was our first organist. She served for approximately 70 years.

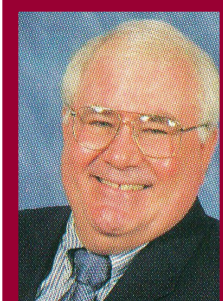




Virginia Harrison
when she directed
the choir



**Debbie
Tankersley**



Robin Downs
as director.



Ann Comforter
during her first term as
director



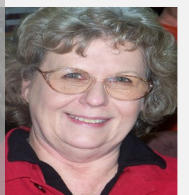
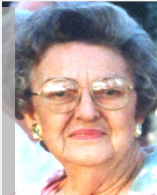
Jeff Barnes



Sandy McInnis
Whenever she is needed

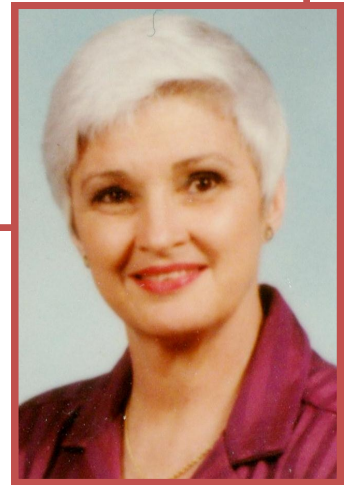


Christmas Party, 2012



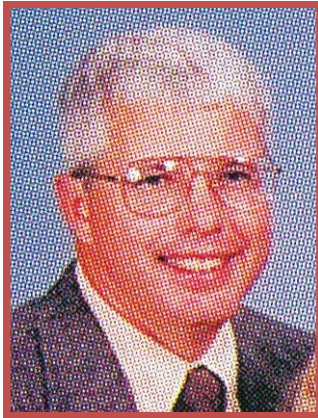
In 1973, Rev. Millard Spikes wanted to initiate an acolyte program. He asked me if I would undertake the task of recruiting, training, and overseeing the acolytes. I did this, and I was exceedingly pleased with the results. The acolytes have been bringing the light of Christ into our worship services and at the close of worship carrying His light back out into a world in need of His love.

The first acolytes were Kip Altstaetter, Rodney Herring, Brian Melton, Bernie Pridgeon, Jake Tankersley, and Rick Taylor. Sonja Taylor



Sonja Taylor created this prayer for the Acolyte service instructions:

Acolyte prayer: Guide me, O Lord, in all that I do, so that others may see the Light it is my privilege to carry for thee. AMEN



ACOLYTES

It was my privilege to accept the Acolyte duties from Janis Tankersly in January 1998 and to serve through June, 2010. I once told my wife that I cherished the idea of teaching young children the importance of learning, living, and accepting Christ in their hearts and carrying that forward by serving the Church. Serving as an acolyte gives the child an early opportunity to participate in the church service. It is my prayer that the duty of an acolyte serves as a seed to grow into faithful service for Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jeffrey Furr



Acolyte Members between 1998 and 2010

Kendall Hicks
Megan Todd
Meredith Todd
Becky Belin
Anna Salzar
Ashby Davis
Courtney Thom
Sarah Gem Alle
Caroline Allen
Canda Borden
Andrew Furr
Rebecca Furr
Lindsay Furr
Leland Ray
J. Mason Ray
Kyle Pickett
Jeremy Baxley
Emily Baxley
Charlie Cox
Sam Cox

Alex Flanagan
Casey Flanagan
Chelsea Flanagan
Zeke Stevens
Jacob Gentry
Kathryn Arnok
Douglas May
Daniel May
George Kelley
Krystian Kelley
Russell Miller
Wade Guilford
Kaley Wilder
Joe Rish
Caroline Rish
Kathleen Rish
Katie McNeill
Jaclyn Kerigan
A.J. Palmer
Hayden Palmer

McKayla Woodham
Nicole Windolf
Bobby Joe Hanson
Elizabeth Furstenberg
Madelyn Flanagan
Rachel Douglas
Tori Thomas
Reid Kennedy
Jacob Kennedy
Megan Hubbard
Mary Claire Finlay
Reid Yarbrough
Debra Burdeshaw
Lila McKenzie Ramsey
Jonathan Rentfro
Jake Paterson
Joseph Farrell
Zack McFarland
Joel Bogaert



METHODIST MEN'S CLUB

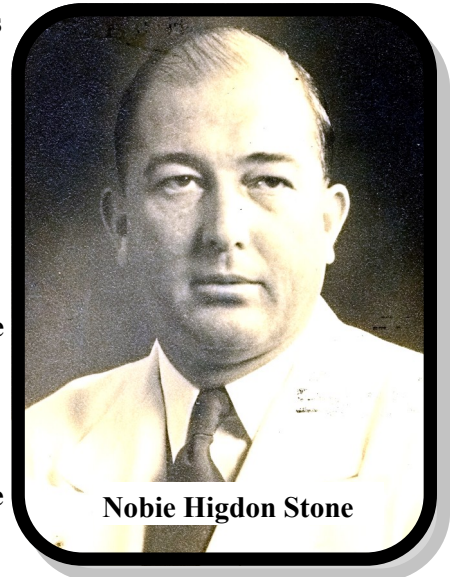
The Methodist Men's Club is one of the oldest organizations in the church, and it has played a vital role since 1945, when the Rev. O.D. Langston was pastor, and Nobie H. Stone was charge lay leader and Men's Bible Class teacher. It was he who was instrumental in organizing the men of the church so that they could better meet the increasingly more pressing need for a new church building. He didn't live to see the new building by the bay, but in appreciation for his leadership, the Men's Club purchased a stained glass window in his memory.

With a membership that once swelled to 252, the men did what needed to be done. In addition to committee meetings, they met for years on a Tuesday night each month, and paid the Women's Society, with the circles taking turns, to provide them with great dinners. When this "historian" was in high school, she attended their meetings to play the piano for them to sing hymns, which they seemed to greatly enjoy doing.

This part of our history has been the most difficult to work on, and the problem seems to be a "man thing." The Men's Club has worked tirelessly for this church and this community all these years. Little would have gone as well without their service, without their

hundreds of projects and financial contributions. However, from its inception, the men have risen to accomplish whatever tasks were needed without any thought to keeping records. They have just wanted to make a difference, not to go down in history as having done so. Certainly, they have not bothered to take pictures!

By the early 1960's the men had begun to meet for breakfast each first Sunday morning. One of the first cooks was Kenneth Herring. When he left Port St. Joe, Jim Harrison became chief cook and served for forty-five years before handing the spoons over to the younger men, led by the current president, David Yarbrough.



Nobie Higdon Stone



Most of the Men's Club projects in the church and community are recognized, appreciated, and forgotten. Most of the Men's Club financial contributions to others' projects are accepted gratefully, but then forgotten. It has been impossible to obtain even a list of them! However, almost anyone in town can tell you about their chicken cookings.

For decades, the men had supported their projects with periodic spaghetti suppers, but when they started cooking chicken Zedock's way, Port St. Joe almost stood in line to buy tickets. Zedock Bax-

ter brought with him a recipe for the best slow cooked, grilled chicken the town could remember tasting. No one could argue that they didn't get their money's worth with a plate overloaded with half a chicken, beans, slaw, bread and tea. Frequently, the United Methodist Women held a bake sale at the same time, so dessert was almost always available as well.

Benny Roberts was chief cook for many years after Zedock retired and moved away.

WOMANLESS WEDDING

Sponsored By
The Woman's Society of Christian Service
and
Men's Club
of the
Methodist Church, Port St. Joe, Florida

February 28, 1952

7:45 P.M.

MUSIC John Dickey's Hill Billy String Band
VOCALIST Ben Snyder
ACCORDIANIST
ACCOMPANIST Carter Breeze

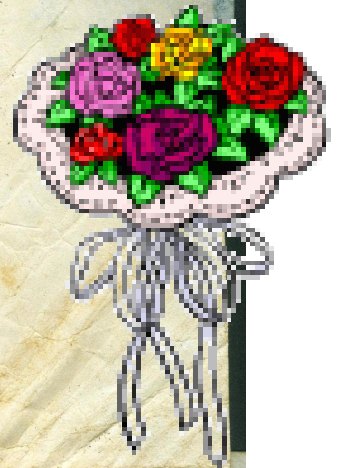
THE WEDDING PARTY

Bride	Buck Griffin
Groom	Durel Brigman
Maid of Honor	Elmore Godfrey
Matron of Honor	Paul Edwin Ramsey
Best Man	Leonard Belin
Bridesmaids	Mark Tomlinson
	Bob Bringman
	Bill Shuford
	Rush Chism
	Massey Ward
	Carol Warner
Junior Bridesmaids	Wayne Buttram
	Walter Duren
	Jimmie Cox
	Joe McLeod
	Bernard Pridgeon
	Bobby Bellows
	J. Lamar Miller
Flower Girls	Dr. A. L. Ward
	B. B. Conklin
Minister	Dr. Robert King
Ring Bearer	Stevie Beatty
Train Bearers	Kenneth Brodnax, Jr.
	Brig Scisson
	Hubert Richards
	J. B. Harris
	Bob duBell
	Gannon Buzzett
Groomsmen	

SUPPORTING CAST

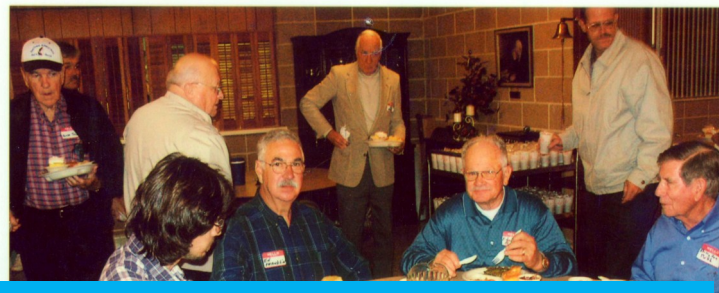
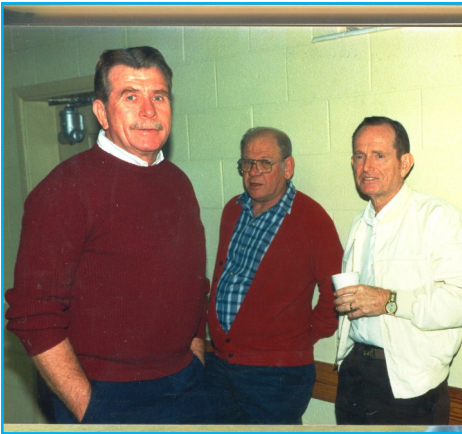
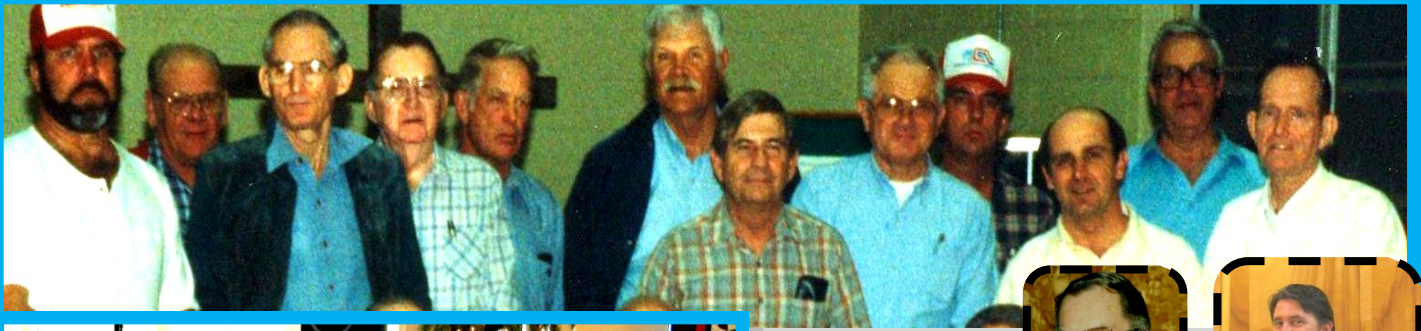
Aunt of the Bride	W. H. Weeks
Uncle of the Bride	J. H. Veasey
Mrs. Nosey (a neighbor)	Ed Eells
Ulika Scratchfeed (a jilted sweetheart)	Percy Fleischel
Aunt Heminy Grits (colored nurse)	John Simpson
Sis (baby sister of the bride)	Jimmie Costin
Mrs. Puplesnigger, Mother of the Bride	J. C. Laney
Mr. Puplesnigger, Father of the Bride	Floyd Hunt
Mrs. Burketbeedle, Mother of Groom	John Blount
Mr. Burketbeedle, Mother of Groom	H. H. Saunders
Grandpappy of the Bride	Glen Boyles
Grandmammy of the Bride	R. W. Smith
Mrs. Turnipseed, Cousin of the Bride	Josh Miller
Mr. Turnipseed, Cousin of the Bride	Henry Geddie
Barbership Quartette	Rev. Warren Lindsey
	John Goff
	Gordon Hallmark
	Ralph Swatts
Pianist	Alden Farris

The Woman's Society of Christian Service
and The Men's Club of the Methodist Church



I remember the WOMANLESS WEDDING! The auditorium was packed! My dad, Ralph Swatts, sang, "I wish I Was Single Again."

Virginia Swatts Harrison



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

"From Biblical times women have been involved in carrying on the Lord's work. Soon after the establishment of a church in Port St Joe, a Ladies' Aid Society was organized. Through the years this society has become known as the Women's Missionary Society, the Women's Society for Christian Service, and now as United Methodist Women.

"During the very early years notable leadership was provided by Mrs. James McNeill, SR., Mrs. George Patton, Mrs. A. M. Jones, SR., and Mrs. Higdon Stone." They were joined in the 1920's by Mrs. Joe Sharit, Mrs. R. A. Costin, Mrs. E. F. Chllders, and Mrs. Thomas S. Gibson, Sr. "

Their ranks were swelled in the 1930's and 1940's by their daughters and others: Elizabeth Jones ((Mrs. Mark) Tomlinson, Maybel Stone (Mrs. Ralph) Swatts, Mae Jones (Mrs. D.B.) Lay, and Ida Ethel Kilbourne (Mrs. Charlie) Browne, Edith (Mrs. Nobie H.) Stone, Ruth (Mrs. Edwin) Ramsey, Elwin (Mrs. John) Blount, Elsie (Mrs. Paul) Blount, Esther (Mrs. Lindsey) Temple, Patti (Mrs. Roy) Gibson, Marie (Mrs. Chauncey) Costin, Lyda (Mrs. George) Adkins, Eunice (Mrs. Hubert) Brinson, Betty (Mrs. Jimmy) McNeil, Lucille (Mrs. George) Suber, Neva (Mrs. J.T.) Croxton, Mary (Mrs. Leonard) Belin, Merle (Mrs. Jake) Belin, Alma (Mrs. Tiny) Jones, Hildreth (Mrs. J. L. amar) Miller, Mrs. J. C. Laney, Mrs. B.H. Dickens, Susie Chason, Mrs. F. G. Roberts, Nancy (Mrs. Willie) Howell, Laura (Mrs. Henry) Geddie, Doris (Mrs. M. F.) Whealton, Ruth (Mrs. Bob) Smith, among others whose names, regretfully, are not available.



Mrs. James T. McNeill



Mrs. George A. Patton

METHODIST W. S. C. S. IN ALL-DAY MEETING MONDAY

The Methodist W. S. C. S. met Monday of last week at the home of Mrs. J. T. McNeill for an all-day meeting.

Preceding a luncheon of turkey and all the trimmings, a program on Porto Rico was presented. Mrs. J. L. Temple, Mrs. G. A. Patton, Miss Pat Laney, Mrs. F. G. Roberts and Mrs. B. H. Dickens Jr., participated in presenting an interesting study of the agricultural and social problems of Porto Rica, after which Miss Laney entertained the members with two vocal selections.

Mrs. McNeill invited the men of the choir to attend the luncheon part of the meeting, and knowing her capabilities, the men's section turned out almost in its entirety. J. Lamar Miller, Noble Stone, Ralph Swatts, George Suber and Mr. Barneau were the masculine representatives of the choir.

After the luncheon, a short business meeting was conducted by Mrs. J. C. Laney.

"The new Women's Society for Christian Service had four "circles" named for Ester Bartee, Claudine Boyer, Cassie Graves, and Annie Stone." Mae Jones, (Mrs. D. B. Lay) Dean was the first president of the W.S.C.S.

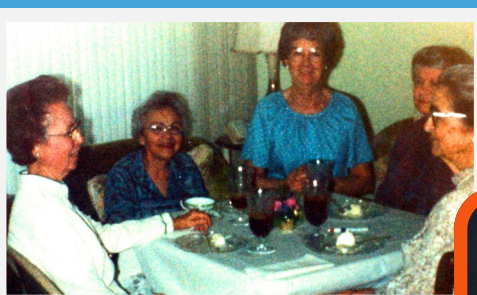
"In the 1040's an organization called the Wesleyan Service Guild was formed. An auxiliary of the W.S.C.S., the Guild met in the evening and provided a channel for employed women to participate.

"In 1968, with the union of all Methodist churches into the United Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Service Guild and the Women's Society for Christian Service were also joined to become the United Methodist Women." Mrs. Ralph Swatts was the first president of the United Methodist Women.

"The purposes of UMW are to develop spiritual life, study the needs of the world, support Christian work around the world, strengthen the local church, and improve civic and world conditions.

"Throughout the history of the local church, the UMW has provided both leadership and active support of all church work, in addition of helping raise funds for our present buildings, the efforts of UMW supplied the cost of much of the furnishings."





Methodist women have enjoyed working and playing together.





Children's Sunday School Classes

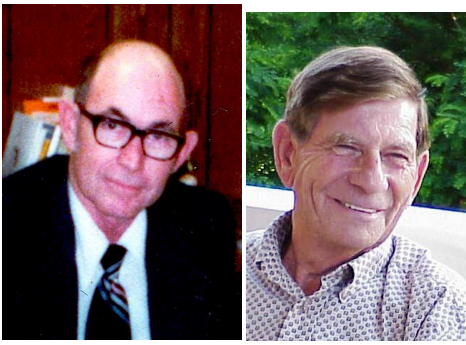


Now and Then



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES





~ The Pridgeon-Rish Sunday School Class was founded in 1965 by Billy Joe Rish, who served as its teacher and leader for 45 years. First

named the Young Adult Class, inevitably it was re-named the Adult Fellowship Class and then the Bernard Pridgeon Memorial Class. With the death of their teacher, members decided to add the name Rish.

Whatever you call it, this has been the "go to" class for every minister who has needed something accomplished. When Carol Rish was asked if she would make a list of all the Sunday School class projects she could remember, she covered both sides of an 8 1/2 X 11" sheet of paper using small letters and no spaces between lines. While the work tackled by this class includes "heavy lifting" like the painting of walls and furniture in all the Sunday School classrooms, the establishment of the Care Closet, the establishment of the Live Nativity

at Christmas, the active and substantial support of an "adopted" church in Cameroon, Africa, among many projects which deserve to be recorded, to list them all would take two full pages in this history. Proceeds from the Care Closet, alone, have enabled the class to give more than \$123,000.00 to church and community charities. Although many of these have since been supported by the church, the direction and most of the work for each is still performed by members of this class.

As Carol pointed out, members of the Pridgeon-Rish Class have always participated in every area of church life, such as church committees, choir, bell choir, interim Sunday School teachers, ushers, Men's Club, women's organizations, Holy Week, building trustees, and Administrative Board, Billy Joe Rish could be justifiably proud of what he "started."

The class is made up of singles and couples. Its members love this church and work in it; they love each other and have wonderful times together and look after each other; but this is a class that is always reaching out to others to join them in their love, work, and play. The class meets at 10:00 on Sunday mornings in the Parlor.



Vic LaFerle
president

The Marie Jones Bible Class, named after one of the first two Sunday School teachers in our church, is the class that goes further back in our history than any other. Although it doesn't have as many members as it once did,

it has had "the longest run." Taught at various times by Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jimmy McNeil, Mrs. Ralph Swatts, Mrs. Nobie Stone, among others, it is taught today by Miss Mazie Stone.

MARIE JONES BIBLE CLASS



THE CHURCH IN THE LIVES OF ITS FAMILIES



The first wedding to be held in the new church
For several years Tammy Sue Blount and J.B. Griffith sang in the choir.



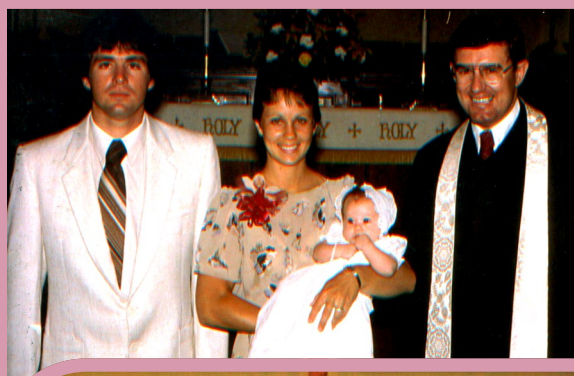
Considered the most beautiful setting for a wedding, our sanctuary has frequently been rented by nonmembers and even by couples from other towns.

You can see, though that it was pretty bare for the earliest weddings.

Weddings

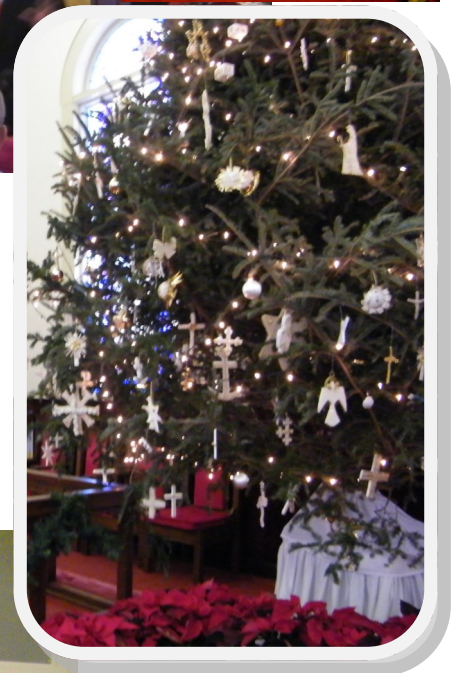


THE CHURCH IN THE LIVES OF ITS FAMILIES

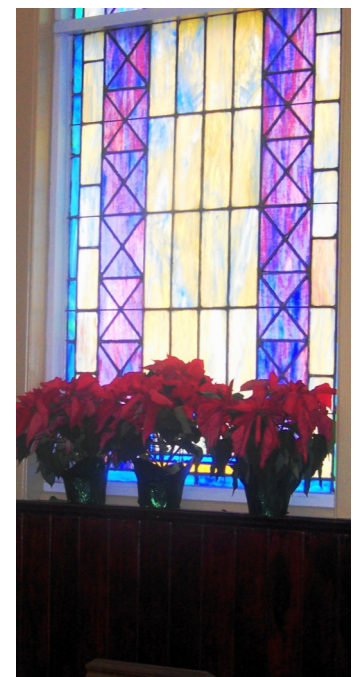


Christenings





We have always loved **Christmas!** Decorations everywhere in the church building, poinsettias, the Christmas tree, live nativity scenes inside and out, a special concern for the needy, caroling, celebrations and fellowship, and communion in a special, much loved candlelight Christmas Eve service help to reinforce the very special, wonderful, all important gift of God's son because he loved us that much.





The Chrismon Tree



Memory:

A dear saint, Julia Creech introduced our church to the Chrismon Tree in the early 1970's. With the help of the Wesleyan Service Guild, she bought patterns and materials necessary to make the ornaments for our first Chrismon Tree. This is a tradition that continues to this day under the watchful eye of Debbie Tankersley.

Sonjia Taylor

I remember when Bess Evans asked me who picked our Chrismon tree. I told her George Duran got about a 12 foot tree from his supplier every year. She said that at Jesse's last church they always went to a tree farm near Dothan, Alabama, and cut a big tree, and they would like us to do that this year. I believe that was in 1996 or 1997.

We agreed. A group of us which included, I think, Ed Franklin, Ed Creamer, an employee from the Piggly Wiggly, Bess, Jesse, Jeanne Buckins, Elsie Griffin, and myself got George Duran to let us use his big trailer and we made the two hour one way drive to Dothan.

Bess picked a tree about 20 feet tall and had it loaded onto our trailer. It took all of us to get it into the church, and we placed it into our new, very large tree stand made by the high school welding class. Set up at the end of the right aisle, it completely blocked off any way of getting past it. We had to use a special ladder to decorate it.

I have to admit that after all of the trouble of getting, setting up, and decorating the new Chrismon tree, it was beautiful and added a lot to our Christmas services. I know this, that the Methodist church had the biggest, best decorated tree in all of Port St. Joe as long as Bess and Jesse Evans were with our church.

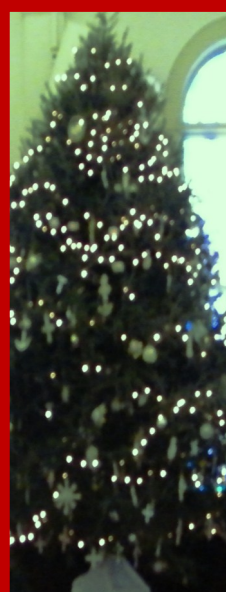
Victor LeFerle

I share this memory with Sonjia, since she and I helped to make our first Chrismon ornaments. Then, Julia Creech, with the help of the Wesleyan Service Guild, took charge every year of securing the tree and getting it up and decorated and then, after Christmas, undecorated and down again.

For years Billy Joe Rish supplied live trees from his tree lot; but then the ladies decided an artificial tree would be easier. Now, we're back to fresh.

It was Sarah Franklin and Ed who began the tradition of saving the trunk of the Chrismon tree to make a large cross at Easter. The cross would be draped with black until Easter morning, when church members would cover it with fresh, colorful flowers.

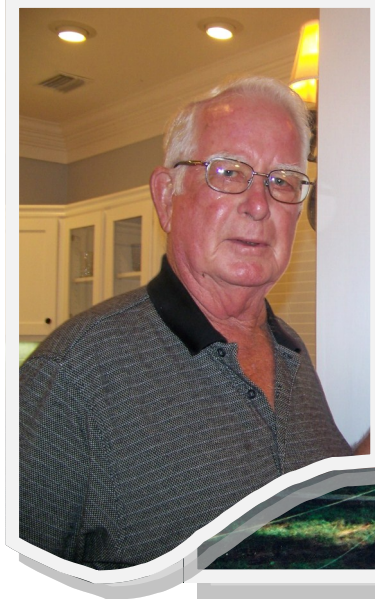
Virginia Harrison



LIVE NATIVITY

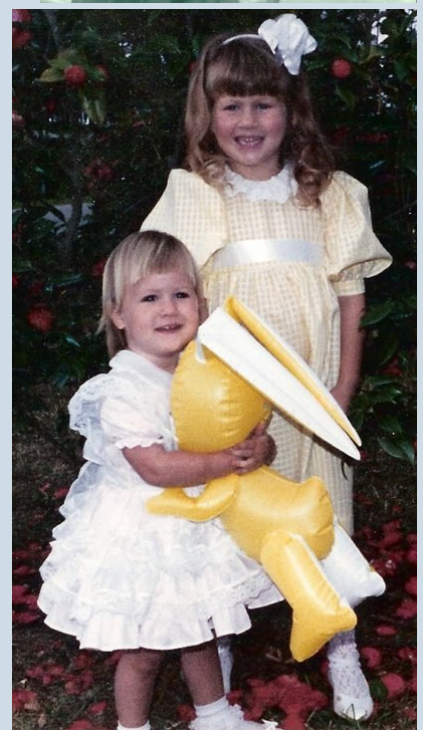
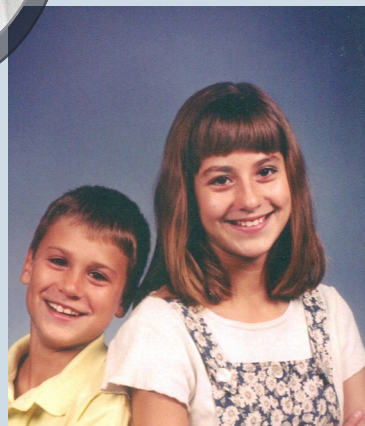
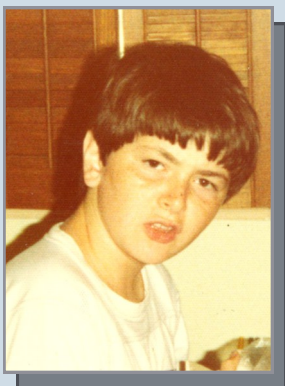
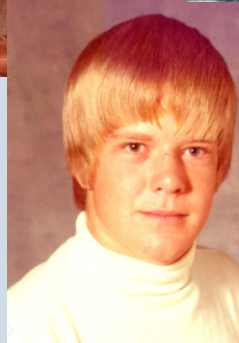
For 33 years, at Christmas, the Live Nativity, under the direction of Phyllis Altstaetter, has shared the essence of the season with the town of Port St. Joe. Generations have served to depict the Christmas story in full costume made by the ladies, in a full sized stable built for the purpose by a faithful group of men led first by Bill Brown and then by Cliff Sanborn. The stable scene is complete with an assortment of animals, enjoyed by children and adults alike. For three decades Billy Joe Rish secured the animals, and men and boys stood sentry to make sure the animals remained safe through the night. Kip Altstaetter vividly remembers that when he was 15, his dad let him drive the car to get to the church in the middle of the night for their shift.







“Suffer the little children to come unto me”



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Our children are our future, our responsibility, and our joy. Our church has always cherished our children and has fully supported programs that have taught them that Jesus loves them. Through the years, Sunday School classes and summer vacation Bible schools have provided fun, love, education, and prayers. Summer camp at Blue Lake has enriched the lives of generations of children.

Every Sunday, babies are cared for in the church nursery, and from the age of three, children leave regular church to attend their own Children's Church, and on First Sundays receive communion at their own altar before they go.

The children's programs received a welcome boost with the addition to the church staff of Miss Deborah Loyless in 2005. Miss Loyless is now Mrs. Tuttle, but the children keep her as busy as ever.

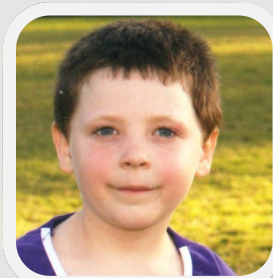


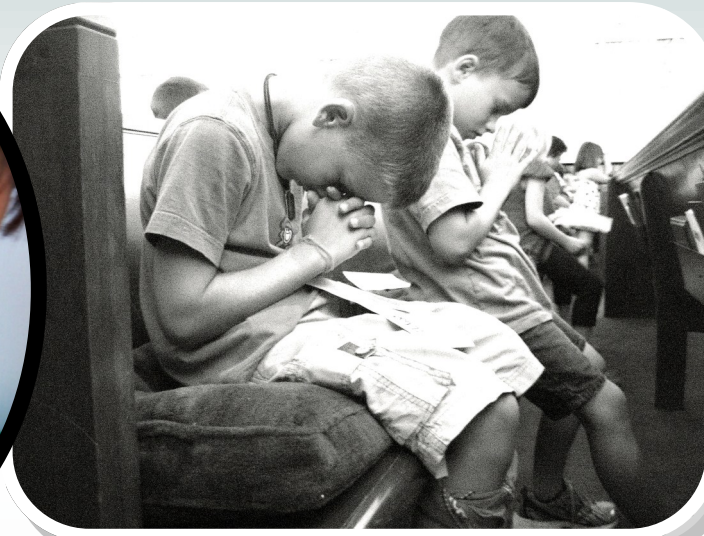
The Children's Ministry at First United Methodist Church is an active, fun filled, Jesus lovin' ministry. Over the past seven years, I have watched children grow and develop a strong love of the Lord. We have had so much fun traveling all over the area and learning lots of Bible stories. From Vacation Bible School to Christmas musicals to our weekly programs, this church has reached hundreds of children and families in our community. My prayer is that this church will always be welcoming and open to any family!

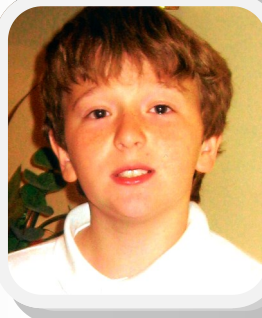
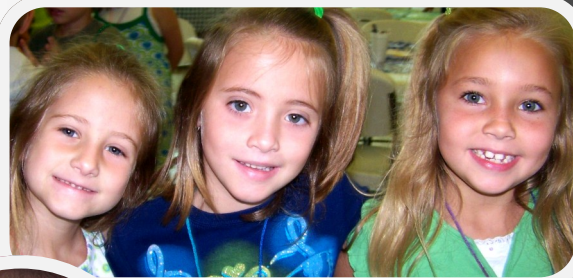
Deborah



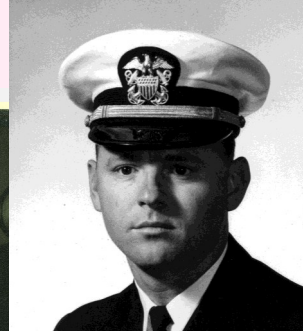
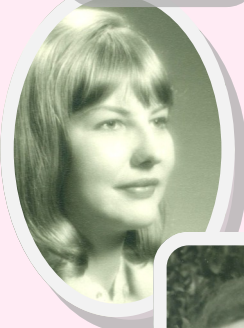
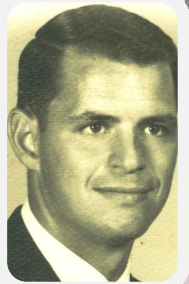
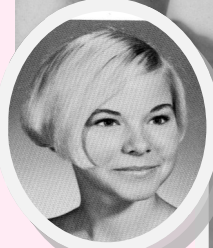
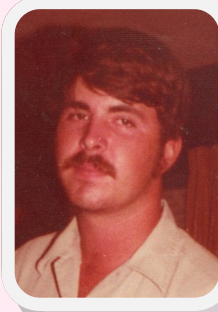
Director of Children's Ministry
Deborah Loyless Tuttle







They grew up in this church.....



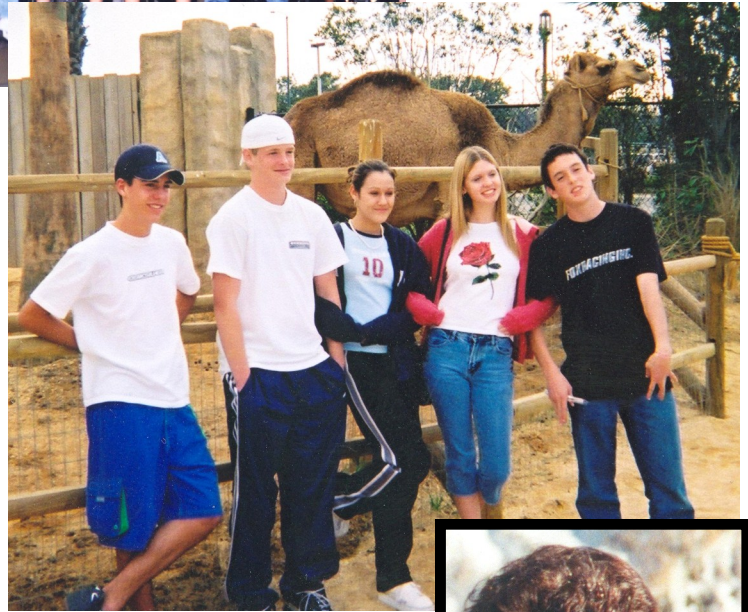
METHODIST YOUTH



Zedock Baxter, in black and white photo above, frequently accompanied the youth on trips.

In the bottom photo, Jeff Barnes leads a group of youthful singers.

This church has always supported its youth in whatever ways have been requested. In the early years, teens belonged to the Methodist Youth Fellowship, participated in district and conference organizations, and teen leaders served on the official board.



Under the direction of Miss Diana Sealy, the youth of the church enjoyed worship, education, and great trips for fun and volunteer service.

HOLY WEEK

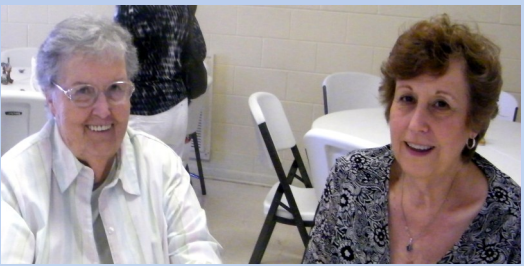
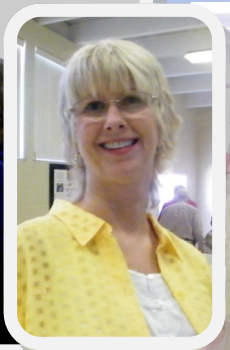
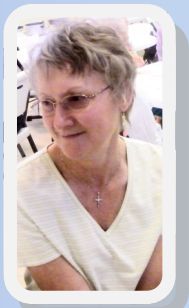
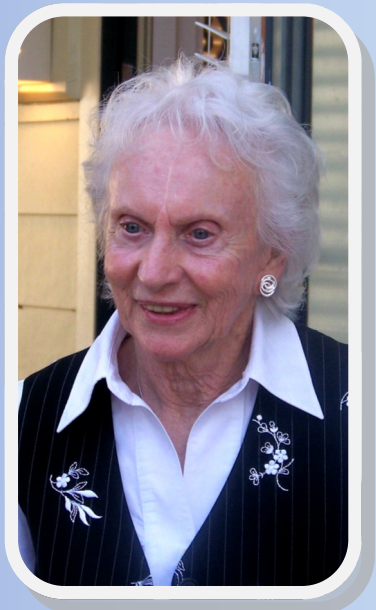
An annual Easter gift from the church to the other churches and the community is Holy Week.

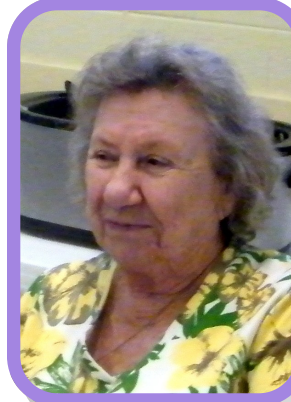
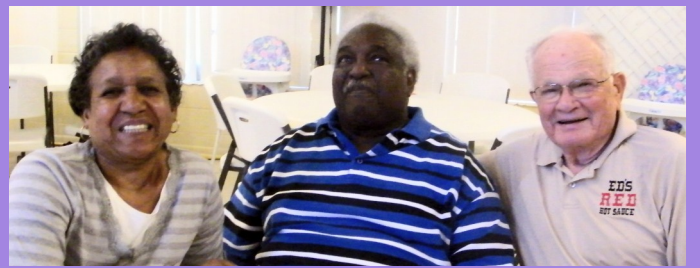
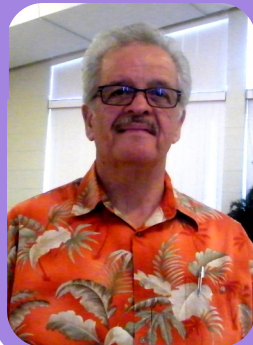
Ministers from all the churches take turns delivering short messages at noon.

Following the message each day, all are invited to enjoy soup, sandwiches, and desserts. It is a lot of work, but everybody declares that that is a blessing, too.



Since 1989, with the arrival of Pastor Zedock Baxter and his wife Frances, and directed by Phyllis Altstaetter all these years, the free of charge luncheons after Holy Week services have been a huge success. In recent years, the First Baptist Church has formed its own crew to help with the soup, and the Methodist ladies are grateful.





LADIES' BIBLE STUDIES

Under the direction of Barbara Buzzett (Mrs. James) Terry, two studies a year for the last 15 years have brought together ladies from all the churches in town to study His Word. Many of the studies have been written by Beth Moore. Ann (Mrs. Benny) Roberts has facilitated a large group of ladies for each study. Facilitators for other groups at various times have been Mrs. Cathy Cox, Mrs. Ann Tison, Mrs. Cindy Belin, and Mrs. Barbara Terry.

Participants watch tapes, do their homework, take part in discussions, share delicious food, and get to know each other better.



Mrs. Ann Roberts



Mrs. Barbara Terry



THE CARE CLOSET

Begun in 1997 by the Bernard Pridgeon (now Pridgeon-Rish) Sunday School Class to provide good, clean, used clothing to help families out of work when the paper mill closed down, the Care Closet has succeeded beyond all expectations.

Supported now by the whole church and individuals from other churches, this local mission outreach has moved several times into larger quarters, from a crowded 12' by 20' space to its own large, paid for, steel building in which customers can shop as if they were in a regular store.



Items sell for fifty cents or less, and when there is a need, clothing is given with no charge to whole families and to groups, such as to the refugees from Hurricane Katrina. Even so, with God's blessings and support from the community, the Care Closet has given back over \$123,000 to the church, to local charities, and to the community, particularly the youth in Gulf County.



appropriate signs. They match shoes on the racks and hang purses, ties, and belts. They decide whether these baby clothes will fit newborns or toddlers.

They clean up and get everything ready for the customers and other volunteers who come in to wait on them.



Through the years, Vic LaFerle has guided and served the Care Closet as no other one person. To him goes much of the credit for its phenomenal success.



Perhaps customers think that clothes just somehow hang themselves up in the Care Closet. Actually, these and others are the little elves who unpack boxes and sacks of donations, sort them, put pieces of sets together again, and hang them under the



Tuesday is "sorting" day.



UNITED METHODIST COMMITTEE ON RELIEF

UMCOR VOLUNTEERS at Sager Brown

A group of 16– 20 volunteers has made five annual trips on the church bus to Baldwin, Louisiana, at their own expense, to work in the United Methodist Committee on Relief warehouse and community. Volunteers sort donations and prepare health, layette, birthing, cleaning, sewing, and school kits so that they will be in readiness in times of natural disasters and when accepted by

third world countries. When eighteen wheelers roll in, volunteers unload or load them. They work in the community, as well, building and repairing dwellings as needed, and they lend aid in a women's shelter and a nursery school.

The trip is made early in December and local volunteers feel that giving in this way enriches their own Christmas season.





Making a difference in the community is one of the priorities of the Pidgeon Rish Sunday School Class, and for several years members have been listening to students read in a special class at Port St. Joe Elementary School. Volunteers have developed long lasting relationships with young people who remain in touch years after these friendships were formed.



AGAPE TRAVELERS



This is one group that for many years made good use of the church bus. Inviting old or young to travel with them, and including those who wouldn't have been able to go by themselves, the Agape Travelers made trips to attractions like the Naval Museum in Pensacola, McClay Gardens, in Tallahassee, Cypress Gardens, concerts, and ball games, even one in Atlanta. Of course, trips included all that could be crowded in: restaurants, shopping, sight seeing, and much fun and fellowship.



Rev. Zedock Baxter, followed by Rev. Jesse Evans, followed by Vic LaFerle, were the chief planners. Vic LaFerle drove the bus.







A TASTE of CHOCOLATE

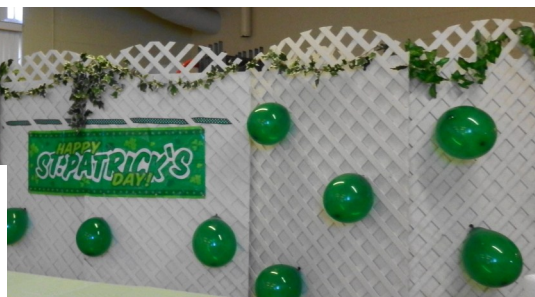
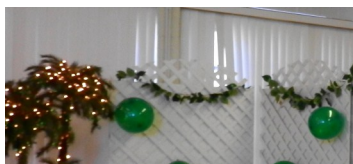


CAMEROON DINNER and FASHION SHOW held by the Pridgeon-Rish Sunday School Class to to raise \$7,000 to dig a well in “adopted” church in a village in Africa and to hire a nurse for the church clinic. (Most of the money for the well went to secure the permission of its chiefs.) Paying guests enjoyed a delicious dinner and a rip, roaring good time!

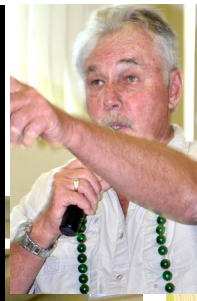


Annual Choir Fund Raiser St. Patrick's Day Dinner

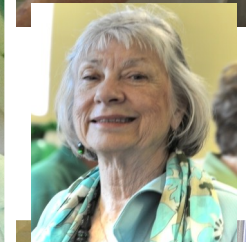
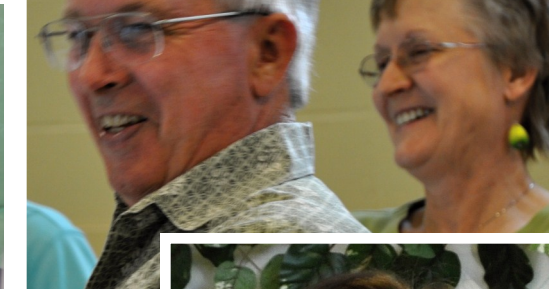
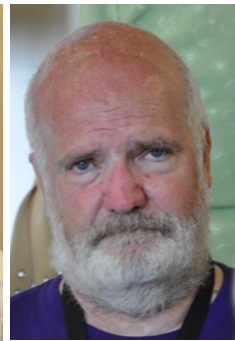
The Choir works hard, and everyone has good food and a good time!



The Choir is very grateful for the generous support of the Congregation of their popular auction of baked goods and wants to especially thank Clifford Sanborn for his bid of \$100 for Debbie Tankersley's coconut layer cake.



.....and a good time is had by all.....



FAMILY NIGHT SUPPERS

Methodists have always enjoyed eating and have always been good cooks! They also enjoy getting together. Through the years, covered dish dinners have been popular and in the last few years, catered suppers on Wednesday nights have given members a time to enjoy good food and fellowship before studies, youth meetings, and choir practice.



For decades, Jim Harrison has made tea for church suppers, luncheons, fund raisers, and any other events involving meals.





ACKNOWLEDGMENT

On behalf of myself and the members of the Port St. Joe First United Methodist Church, I wish to thank our historian, Virginia Harrison, for her many hours of dedicated service in putting together this Centennial book to celebrate our 100 year anniversary. I also want to thank those members who assisted Virginia in the monumental task of gathering the information as well as providing pictures and memories.

It is my desire that the church build on this historic publication by updating our history on a regular basis and preparing a similar type publication every 25 years.

Yours in Christ,

Mac Fulcher



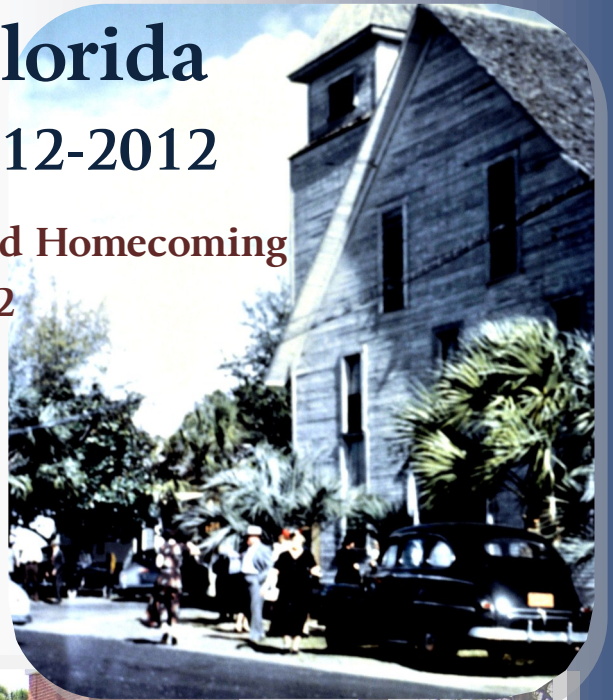
The First United Methodist Church

Port St. Joe, Florida

100 Years 1912-2012

Centennial Celebration and Homecoming

May 20, 2012



We drink from wells we have not dug.

