

## THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN MISSISSIPPI

- 1709 - Tobias Gibson brought Methodism to Mississippi by traveling a circuitous boat route from South Carolina to 6 miles east of Natchez under the direction of Bishop Asbury
- 1813 - The Mississippi Annual conference was organized in the home of Newit Vick, a local preacher who came from Virginia and for whom the town of Vicksburg was named.
- 1832 - Mississippi had 20 charges. Lauderdale County was part of the Alabama Conference.
- 1839 - Alabama Conference Journal lists the Lauderdale Mission in the Gainesville District.
- 1856 - Lauderdale County was listed in the Macon District of the Alabama Conference.
- 1859 - Meridian was mentioned in the Alabama Conference Journal for the first time and alternated with Lauderdale for several years. It probably was a circuit.
- 1864 - Alabama Methodism was divided into two Conferences. The Mississippi churches were in the Mobile District.
- 1870 - The Mississippi and North Mississippi Conferences were organized to include all Methodist Episcopal South churches in Mississippi.
- 1808 - The first Conference of Sunday School Workers of the Mississippi Annual Conference was held at Central Church, April 12 - 14.
- 1901 - Attendance at Central Church, Meridian, on February 24, was 420 — the largest attendance in the history of this Sunday School at that time.
- Oct. 28, 1852 - Deed was issued for the first Methodist Church for "one dollar paid in hand" to William Dearman, local preacher (Dearman Chapel) in the Lauderdale Circuit of the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. The property included a church house and graveyard and was located on 9th Street between 9th and 11th Avenues.
- January 1860 - Deed was issued for the northwest corner of 11th Street and 27th Avenue from John T. Ball for \$200. This new church was a hand-hewn frame and log building. Services were by circuit riders, Confederate Chaplains and, at times, the Protestant Episcopal Church.
- April 1, 1867 - Deed was issued for lots 9 & 10 Ragsdale Survey (Niolon's corner).
- Nov. 3, 1873 - Deed was issued for lots 11 & 12 Ragsdale Survey (Niolon's corner). The frame and log church building was moved by oxen to the new location.
- 1885 - The new brick and stone church on Niolon's corner (8th St. & 23rd Ave.) was completed and paid for in full. The building committee raised \$17,000 for the completion of this project. Twelve yoke of oxen moved the old log building out to West 5th Street for the Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church South.
- 1913 - The stately church building on Niolon's corner burned down. Services were held in the Courthouse until the present building was ready for occupancy.
- Apr. 15, 1918 - Ground was broken for a new church at the present location. It was to cost \$70,000. Cornerstone was laid on August 11, and the new church was opened for use on August 10, 1919.
- Apr. 1, 1923 - The present building was completed and dedicated.
- Sept. 9, 1940 - The Women's Society of Christian Service was organized with Mrs. Jesse Graham as president. The women's organization had previously been the Woman's Missionary Society.
- 1951 - The Educational Building and Chapel were completed.
- 1960 - The refurbishing of the Sanctuary coincided with the Centennial celebration. The choir loft and organ were moved from under the organ pipes to the choir shell, a center aisle was added, and opera seats installed.
- Dec. 1967 - The Hemming Property on 11th Street to the north of the Education Building was purchased. This property was

renovated in the latter part of 1969 and used for meeting space for the four and five year Kindergarten in one building and the Rae Hartley and John Cook Classes in the other building.

Sept. & Oct. 1979 - The Wigransky property facing the church on 23rd Avenue was purchased and the property was prepared for a parking lot. The corner lot on 22nd Avenue and 11th Street (known as the Dabney/Green house) was purchased and the Buchanan property on the northwest corner of 23rd Avenue and 10th street was also added to the church property providing us with space for expansion and more parking.

Nov. 8, 1981 - Ground Breaking for the new Activities Center and remodeling of the Education Building.

Nov. 7, 1982 - Congregational Dinner held in the new Activities Center, which includes a stage and kitchen. This was the first official meeting in the new facilities with over 850 in attendance. Consecration of the Activities Center and renovated Education Building was held November 21, 1982.

May, 1984 - The Office space was extended into the old Fellowship Hall with the addition of a church library, a new study for the pastor and an office for the pastors' secretary. The remaining area of the old Fellowship Hall was remodeled.

Central United Methodist Church has had a long and illustrious history of service to East Central Mississippi. The opportunities to enhance and enlarge such service is directly ahead and extends on into the foreseeable future.