

HISTORY OF MISSION AME CHURCH



Mission AME Church is in North Western Burke County on Piedmont Road.

The Church began organizing on Oct. 8th, 1883. DJ Forney and his wife Sarah sold a tract of land to the church trustees George Bristol, Henry Caldwell, and William Forney for seven dollars.

The members of the Church built the original building in 1884. Before completion, the members worshipped in a "hush arbor" constructed of rough upright poles covered with small tree limbs and bushes for protection from the sun.

Mission joined with four other churches in the early days to form John's River Circuit. These four churches were Mars Hill, Wilson's Creek, Sloan's Grove (Hartland), and Israel Chapel. One pastor called a "Circuit Rider Preacher," was appointed annually by the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal District and served these churches.

During the early years, people walked or rode to Church in horse-drawn wagons or carriages. At the end of the harvest season, a "camp meeting" (a week-long spiritual celebration of preaching and singing) at each rural Church. Friends and acquaintances traveled from near and far, camping in wagons or under makeshift lean-tos or tents. They brought fresh fruits, vegetables, corn meal, flour, and livestock to provide food. Without refrigeration, food was prepared fresh daily on an open fire.

As was the custom of the early black churches, a one-room school was established near the Church. The preacher of the Church usually serves as the schoolteacher.

Joseph Kennedy was one of the early teachers. Some of the early school committee men were Will Ervin, Ray Fleming, and William Avery.

In 1945 when Rev. Malloy was the pastor, a second church was erected near the original log church. Annie McDowell Ervin was secretary, and Cora Hall Forney was Treasurer. In 1970 when Rev. Herbert Carter was the pastor, major renovations occurred to the Church; the extension of the pulpit and choir box, three rooms also added upstairs, and the basement was finished and enlarged with new bathrooms, a kitchen, and a dining area.

PREACHERS AT MISSION AME CHURCH OVER THE YEARS:

Rev. Lee Pompey, Rev. A.L. White, Rev. Harris, Rev. CR Malloy, Rev. JR Crutchfield, Sr., Rev. Wright, Rev. JR Bridges, Rev. BT Pickett, Rev. Gaither, Rev. John Patterson, Rev. William Propst, Rev. Herbert Carter, Rev. Jack Moore, Rev. James Womack, Rev. Minnie Bryant, Rev. Joyce Avery, Rev. Dr. Jasper W. Hemphill, Rev. LC Corpening, Rev. David Montgomery, Rev. Willis Camp, III and Rev. Phyllis A. Caldwell current pastor.

EARLY CHURCH MEMBERS:

George Bristol, Henry Caldwell, William Forney, Caroline McDowell Fleming, Ray Fleming, Liz Avery, William Avery, Annie McDowell Ervin, Will Ervin, Haywood Fleming, Amos Caldwell, Ed Caldwell, Frances Clarke, Paul Clarke, Gilmore Avery, Millard Johnson, Sophie Johnson, Louis Caldwell, Lola Caldwell, Hattie Fullwood, Jessie Avery and Cora Hall Forney.

STEWARDS: Serve as advisors to the pastor. A steward assists the pastor in all administrative capacities.

EARLY STEWARDS:

Haywood Fleming, Amos Caldwell, Will Ervin, Frances Clarke, Paul Clarke, Gilmore Avery and Millard Johnson.

PAST STEWARDS:

William Ervin, Jr., Woodrow Ervin, Sr., Ervin Rutherford, Harper Ervin, Lucille Ervin, Rosalee Rutherford, and Kathleen Davis.

CURRENT STEWARDS:

Mary McGill, Cheryle Leary, Tammy Ervin, Ann Jackson, Ada Harbison.

TRUSTEES: These are responsible for the Church's temporal side or physical plant and all properties and facilities.

EARLY TRUSTEES: Ed Caldwell, William Avery, Clara Michaux, Sophie Jean Pearson and Ernest McGill.

CURRENT TRUSTEES: Richard Largent, President; Harry Ervin, Treasurer; Tammy Ervin, Mark Ervin, Brian Ervin and Kenny Ervin.

MISSIONARY SOCIETY: Committed to supporting the mission of the Church and challenged to help one another engage in ministry and action.

EARLY MISSIONARIES: Cora Hall Forney, Caroline McDowell Fleming, Lizzie Avery, Annie McDowell Ervin, Hattie Fullwood and Lola Caldwell, Helen Ervin, Betty Kincaid, Elizabeth Erwin, Clara Michaux, Sophia Pearson and Lorraine Tate.

In the early 1950's Susie Ervin Avery was president of the missionaries, and other members included: Lizzie Ervin, Mable Ervin, Jessie Mae Avery, Hattie Thomas, and Loretta Tate. Throughout the years, other members became missionaries: Lucille Ervin, Capitoria Thomas, Kathleen Davis, Rosa Rutherford, and Ann Watson.

CURRENT MISSIONARIES: Mary McGill, Ann Jackson, president, Ada Harbison and Nancy Corpening.