

## History of Harmony United Church

The year was 1926. America was in the middle of a very favorable economic period known as “the roaring 20’s”. Lots of people right here in our corner of the county had a sense of optimism. Most of families worked on the Berry Hill, the Hairston, or the Oak Hill Plantations. They were known as sharecroppers. They were hard working, family oriented people. Not many had electricity in the house or a car in the yard. But they did have neighborhood schools: one was just down the road from our church.

The year was 1926. The families wanted to do some serious worshipping. The nearest local churches were not within walking distance or buggy riding range. Some of the locals got permission to build a brush arbor on a site near our church . They cut tree limbs for shade and even had some logs to sit on. A pulpit and alter rail were constructed. Now all they needed was someone to “deliver the word from God”. Brother M. O. (or Buddy) Harvell did the honors. He was the pastor for the Cascade Methodist Episcopal-South charge. Brother Harvell would bring an organ on a truck to provide music for some “old-time gospel singing”. Even then the people in this area knew how bellow out good tune. This revival went on for weeks and weeks. The seeds were sown. The people wanted a permanent place to worship. Now it was time to germinate that seed.

The year was 1927. Spring had arrived. The people in the community stirred to life. A church was born. Harmony became part of the Cascade charge with local pastor M. O. Harvill as our first pastor. The churches under his tutelage were Brosville, Bethel, Cascade and Providence. The first Trustees of Harmony Methodist Episcopal-South were Doss Ross, C. Peter Burnett, and J. Kyle Robertson. They purchased a 40 yard by 75 yard (2/3 acre) section of land from Ailcie Glenn Whittle for the frugal price of \$1.00. If the site ever ceased to exist as a church, the land would revert to the Whittle estate. Harmony School had been located on this site and became the name-sake for the new church. The local Lynskey School (located on 863 and having recently been closed) was acquired. Local families helped to disassemble the school and move the lumber and materials to the Harmony land where it was used to construct this sanctuary. Rocks and logs were used for the foundation. There was no electricity or running water in our church. The first heat was a wood stove. Lots more of this information is available in “The Harmony Story” by Bernice Bryan Chattin.

Some things change, others stay the same. During the 90’s we added vinyl siding, padded the pews and paved the parking lot. In 2001 the church purchased five acres of land to insure that, when the time is right, we will be able to expand our building and our ministry. Harmony began a building addition project in March of 2004, and completed it in October of 2005. The addition included a new kitchen, new bathroom facilities, six classrooms, and a meeting area for our Contemporary Worship Service (a meal at 7 p.m. and service at 7:30 each Thursday night).

We have had many pastors over the years. Our first pastor was a local pastor. Our present pastor, Robert F. Hardy IV, is also a local pastor. The congregation family names are still familiar. The friendly, family oriented, open atmosphere has survived through the years. We still enjoy good music, good preaching, and a good meal!

Where do we stand as a church? For 80 years we have been “the little church on the hill”. “Little” does not apply to our goals and aspirations for the future. We want to grow in size as a Church (a building plan in the near future?). But more importantly, we want to grow in our service to the Lord. Harmony is “on the move” to bigger and better things for God.