

Bethany United Methodist Church

Celebrating 200 years as Christ's presence in Reedville

Thomas Jefferson was in the White House when in the lower part of Northumberland County, Virginia a small band of fishermen and farmers gathered and organized a Methodist Episcopal Society. They were without a building in which to hold services, but met in homes of the members.

During the year 1805, feeling that the interest of Methodism warranted their having a house of worship, members secured two-thirds of an acre of land from Syrus Sutton and wife, Sukey Sutton, and erected on this lot a small frame structure. This building was known for years as the Methodist Meeting House. It was located just below the road that now leads to the town of Reedville, on the road to Fleeton (then known as Fleet's Point). The meeting house was in continual use as a church from 1806 to 1875.

This small band of loyal Methodists continued to grow in number and in 1872, finding that the building was inadequate, decided to build a larger and more pretentious building. A lot of land located on the road towards Beverlyville was secured from Mr. James H Hudnall that same year. The church was completed in 1875 and served until 1898, when its members decided to build a larger and more substantial building.

A lot of land adjoining the town hall of Reedville was purchased from AH Evans, and with the unity and zeal for the accomplishment of a great end, the work began. On July 4th, 1899, the cornerstone of Bethany No. 3 was laid. With generous assistance from the members and friends of the church, the brick building was completed, with all indebtedness paid, and was dedicated on June 30th, 1901. The following are quotes from the dedication:

"This beautiful structure is the handsomest and most costly edifice not only in Northumberland County, but in this whole section of Eastern Virginia. The cost has been over ten thousand dollars. The fronts of the edifice are of the finest pressed bricks; all selected and inspected by that indefatigable worker, Mr. Albert Morris, a member of the building committee".

"Reedville has long boasted one of the finest congregations in the Virginia Conference and now it bears the proud distinction of having within its territory one of the finest country church buildings in the South."

For a number of years consideration was given to the erection of a much needed church-school building. In 1942 that project was undertaken. With the enthusiastic cooperation of the membership, the brick annex to the original building was completed and dedicated in 1944.

As an outreach in mission to the community - "Casting Our Nests Into Deeper Water", the new Ministry Space constructed of handsome brick, as the existing structures, was dedicated on November 7th, 2004. While we are certainly proud of our beautiful sanctuary, buildings and rich history, we face the future with hope in God and great expectations for new opportunities to serve our Lord by serving our neighbors.

