CHAPTER THREE

Churches

Beverly Fire Baptized Holiness Church

During the years 1940-1941, a black church of the Fire Baptized Holiness faith was established at Beverly, near the rock quarry. The church was started because of the interest shown by the people of the Beverly community.

The Rev. Charlie Hunt, a Greenville Fire Baptized Holiness minister and carpenter, preached to the congregation and worked in an effort to foster its growth. A dwelling house, located on the left beyond the bridge in the Beverly area, was renovated through his efforts.

Members residing in the community included the Terrel, Brookin, and Pendergrass families. When many families moved from the Beverly community, the church halted its worship after only two years of existence.

Calumet Baptist Church

In 1905 the construction of Calumet Manufacturing Company (later designated as Woodside Mill, Liberty Plant No. 2) led to the founding of a Liberty church that is known today as Calumet Baptist Church. In the spring of 1908, the Rev. John Head of the Salem community met with Cora and John Dixon, Angie Davis, O. S. Atkinson, and two unidentified persons. The meeting took place on a Sunday afternoon at what is now the corner of Calhoun and South Peachtree streets, and a Union Church was organized.

The owners of Calumet Mill allowed the group use of a two-story house, located at One Jackson Street. The upper floor, used for a school on weekdays, served for church service on Sundays; the lower floor was used as an office by Grace W. Callaham, the village nurse.

Succeeding Head as pastor of the Union congregation in the early 1900s was Earley Crenshaw, a Wesleyan. The third pastor, a Rev. Hudson, was a Methodist.

Community nursing services were discontinued in 1920, when the cotton mill was sold to the Woodside Company, and the lower story was converted into a storage area for the mill. After using the upper portion of this building for ten years, the congregation
constructed a church on another piece of mill-owned property (the site of the present pastorium at 10 Calhoun Street). Tragedy struck the little church on Sunday, February 11, 1924; during that night the church building burned. Another edifice, constructed the following year, was established as a Baptist church. The Mill eventually gave the church members a deed to the property with the provision that two trustees be elected from the mill to serve with the deacons. The first of these trustees, elected in April 1937, were B. D. Martin and Guy Atkinson.

A building program began in 1949. New Sunday School rooms were dedicated on the second Sunday in August 1950, and a new auditorium with a seating capacity of five hundred was dedicated October 25, 1953. Paul Hayes assumed the pastorate of Calumet Church on November 12, 1961, and plans were soon made for the construction of a pastorium and a fellowship building. Ground breaking for the pastorium was held on May 6, 1962; the Hayes Fellowship Building was completed in September 1962; and a dedication for both buildings was held on April 7, 1963.

Other pastors serving the church before permanent records were kept are listed in alphabetical order: Rev. Abbot, Rev. Bolls, Rev. Burts, Jim Davis, Rev. Edwards, Dave Fuller, Phil Jenkins, Fant Jones, Rev. Justice, Clarence Martin, Frank Merck, Rev. Mitchell, Rev. Sheriff, Rev. Stamey, and Rev. Tinsley. Beginning September 6, 1936, permanent records of church matters were maintained. On September 13, 1936, the church called Lloyd Pace as its new pastor and increased the pastor's weekly salary from ten to twelve dollars. Pastors who have served the church since the mid 1930s are Lloyd Pace (1936-1940), Earle Sargent (1941-1944), Herbert Ayers (1944-1957), Cohen Arms (1957-1960), Mina Lee Davis (1960-1961), Paul Hayes (1961-1971), and Willie Honea (1971).

**Carmel Presbyterian Church**

According to the Rev. Doctor Thomas Reese writing in 1793, Richmond Church (later called Carmel) was built by 1787 near Three and Twenty Creek in what is today Anderson County. (The church celebrated its centennial in 1889.) The church has been denoted as Three and Twenty Church, Richmond Church, and finally Carmel Church. According to available church records, one of the earliest ministers at Carmel was the Rev. Thomas Reese, who came in 1792 at the invitation of Carmel and of Hopewell (later known as the Old Stone Church near Pendleton). At the time Reese became pastor, Carmel consisted of about sixty families and Hopewell near forty. He served both churches until his death in 1796. Just after Reese's death, a united petition of the two churches asking for supplies was sent to South Carolina Presbytery. It was signed by Robert Anderson, John Wilson, Robert McCann, Robert Henderson, and Andrew Pickens. As Anderson and Pickens were elders of Hopewell, it is presumed that Henderson, Wilson, and McCann were elders of Carmel Church.

The early members are unknown, though tradition claims the Pickens, Wilson, Hamilton, Henderson, McCann families and others of Scotch-Irish descent who came to South Carolina from Pennsylvania and Virginia. Tradition also has it that Robert Pickens, John Wilson and Thomas Hamilton were the first elders of Carmel Church. Robert McCann and Robert Henderson are said to have become elders a few years later. The bodies of Robert Pickens and John Wilson are resting in the Pickens Graveyard, the site of the first church building. The remains of Thomas Hamilton, who died in 1850 at age ninety-one, lies in Carmel Cemetery. After the death of Reese, Carmel Church and Old Stone were supplied by J. Simpson and J. Gilliland. These men along with A. Brown
probably supplied the congregations until the close of the eighteenth century. For several years Carmel and Old Stone were supplied by Dickson, McElhaney, Montgomery, Templeton, and J. Gilliland, Jr. About the year 1802, the log church, situated on Three and Twenty, was torn down and moved to near Indian Creek, the site of the present church.

On September 12, 1803, a call was presented by the two churches, Old Stone and Carmel, for the services of the James McElhaney and James Gilliland, Sr. Gilliland accepted the call, but McElhaney took it under consideration. A year passed, and McElhaney had not accepted the call; so Old Stone and Carmel jointly presented a call for the services of the Benjamin R. Montgomery. Montgomery accepted, and on April 4, 1805, became their ordained pastor at the Presbytery holding its spring session at Carmel Church. The ordination sermon was preached by Doctor Moses Waddell, and the charge was delivered by John Simpson, the moderator of the Presbytery.

Montgomery was succeeded in 1807 by James McElhaney, who continued as pastor of the two churches. He was assisted after about 1809 by his son-in-law, J. D. Murphy. Both contracted fever and died—Murphy in September of 1812 and McElhaney in October. Until 1816, the churches were supplied at intervals by John B. Kennedy and Hugh Dickson. In the spring of 1816, Carmel and Hopewell petitioned the Presbytery for the services of James Hillhouse as supply until the next stated session, and their request was granted. At the next meeting of the Presbytery, Hillhouse was called as pastor of the two churches, with two-thirds of his time to be spent serving Hopewell. During his tenure, a frame structure for Carmel was erected. Hillhouse served as pastor until October 5, 1822, when pastoral relations were terminated. After receiving licentiate supplies for several years, Carmel and Old Stone again petitioned Presbytery for supplies. About 1828, the congregation of Old Stone Church moved to a new church in the town of Pendleton, and Anthony W. Ross served as pastor of both Carmel and Pendleton. Ross continued as pastor of Carmel until 1837, when he retired. He was succeeded by John L. Kennedy, who supplied Carmel Church for the next thirty or more years, and was the principal of Thalian Academy, one of the most noted schools of the State during the period from 1840 and 1868. Although Carmel had only fifty-six members in 1825, the membership reached several hundred after it was supplied by Kennedy. The frame structure that was built about 1820 was moved back from the road in 1857, and a large and commodious brick structure was erected. A gallery for slaves, many of whom were members, was built in one end of the church.

After Kennedy retired, Dr. John B. Adger supplied the church for a year. Hugh McLees was called as pastor and served from 1875 till 1878. He was succeeded by A. P. Nicholson. John. R. Riley was the next pastor and served until 1896 or 1897. After Dr. Riley retired, the church had grown numerically weak because many of the older members had died and other members had moved away. Other Presbyterian churches had been built at Slabtown, Liberty, Pickens, Mt. Pleasant, Easley and Central, all of which drew members from the old mother church. After Dr. J. R. Riley retired, the church was supplied by W. H. Workman for several years. He was succeeded by J. C. Bailey, who served as pastor for about six years—from 1913 to 1919. He was succeeded by H. A. Knox.

Families who attended Carmel were: Boggs, Hamilton, McCann, Smith, Glenn, Ford, Stewart, McWhorter, Lay, Russell, Kennedy, Templeton, Walker, Knight, Robinson, Earle, Fowler, Fennell, Grice, Barr, and many others.

Over the years of the church's existence, several members of Carmel became ministers. Among these were George W. Boggs, J. C. Kennedy, D. C. Boggs, John N. Robinson, A. R. Kennedy, W. L. Boggs, and W. K. Boggs.
In 1958, members of Carmel Church approved the construction of an educational building, and the structure was occupied the following year. (Source: C. T. Martin in the book *The Presbyterian Church in South Carolina, 1850-1900* by W. S. Bean.)

**Eastside Baptist Church**

The history of Eastside Baptist Church is closely connected with the history of Liberty Woodside Mills, and the growth of this house of worship reflects industrial development in Liberty. The original Liberty Plant began operation in late 1901, and mill officials shortly thereafter recognized the need for a church. In 1904, the mill management had a simple frame house of worship constructed, and W. T. Abbott came to Liberty at that time to organize a Union Church. From this group, Eastside Baptist Church eventually evolved. Abbott, who served the church ably as pastor for about ten years, was succeeded by the W. M. Walker, who remained for a year. Tom Durham followed Walker and also pastored for a single year.

Many members can trace their association with Eastside church back to the early beginnings and the first unpretentious building known as Old Hall, which was located off West Beattie Street on top of the hill near Hunt Avenue. Old Hall was razed in 1915, and a new wooden structure was erected at the intersection of Mills Avenue and Anderson Drive (US Highway 178). Entrance to the building was from Mills Avenue. The first minister to conduct services in the new structure was Tom Durham. From the mid 1910s through the mid 1930s, the church was served by Rev. Mitchell, Jim Davis, Rev. Berts, Rev. Jones, C. V. Martin, E. O. Edwards, Phil Jenkins and R. W. Bailes; and the congregation was called Second Baptist Church of Liberty for several years.

In 1935, the Jim Davis was again called to serve as pastor, and the name of the church was changed from Second Baptist Church to Eastside Baptist Church. Davis, the only pastor who served the church at two separate times, felt the new name was more appropriate because the church was second to none.

Following his second term, the church was pastored by W. A. Loudermilk in 1940. He was followed by Clyde Johnson, Robert Wheeler, and M. A. Bryant. Under the direction of Bryant, the church was brick-veneered, and in 1950 fourteen rooms were added to the facility. In 1952, a new parsonage was built a short distance from the church on Anderson Drive. It replaced a frame parsonage which was located on Mills Avenue directly across the street from the second sanctuary used by the congregation.

Doug Baker, who assumed spiritual leadership of the congregation in 1955, was followed in 1957 by Marion Hudgens. The congregation at Eastside Baptist Church decided to build a much-needed auditorium in 1957, and the old auditorium was converted into classrooms upon completion of the new addition. The entrance to the new auditorium faced the point where Mills Avenue and Anderson Drive intersect. In 1965, Hudgens was succeeded as the church’s pastor by the Leroy Stewart. Stewart served the church for only two years, leaving in 1967 to work with the Home Mission Board. W. J. Lockaby was then called, and he served until his resignation in March 1975. Kenneth Moon assumed the pastorate of Eastside Baptist Church in June 1975. In February 1975, the members of Eastside, mindful of the need for larger church facilities, purchased approximately seven and one-half acres of land on Anderson Drive.
Emmanuel Baptist Church

A presbytery was formed at Tabernacle Baptist Church in Greenville on October 15, 1961, for the purpose of organizing a new missionary Baptist church in or near the town of Liberty. Members of the presbytery were Harold Sightler of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Garland Sentell of Pickens Mill Baptist Church, Bill Compton of Southside Baptist Church, and Mina Lee Davis of Calumet Baptist Church.

Following the reading of articles of faith and remarks concerning the New Testament church, the new church was opened for charter membership, and forty-three persons joined. The new church was named Emmanuel Baptist Church on the motion of Mina Lee Davis, who was elected pastor and served until his resignation on May 31, 1964. Initially, the church's religious services were held at Reunion School located about two miles east of Liberty near Beverly Quarry on South Carolina Highway 93.

On April 29, 1962, members gave church deacons the authority to purchase a building and land. Early in 1965, a new church building was completed on property between East Main Street and the Southern Railway tracks.

On August 16, 1964, Tom Buffington was called as pastor of the young church. He served until July 28, 1974. Roger Redmond, who began his ministry at Emmanuel on December 20, 1974, became pastor in 1976.

First Baptist Church

The earliest Baptist church in the Liberty area, according to William Clayton's statement recorded in the Piedmont Baptist Association Minutes in 1890, was a crude log house located northwest of the present city limits. Clayton also stated that the congregation later built a new structure one and one-half miles from this location in the area of Liberty Spring near the Westview Cemetery.

There are no records of the Liberty Baptist Church before the Mount Pisgah Baptist Church minutes record that...

When the Liberty Church applied to the Saluda Baptist Association in 1817 for admission through her delegates, Enoch Smith and Champ Taylor, the minutes state that "A Church, (viz.) Liberty, lately constituted from Mount Pisgah, made application by letter and messengers for admission into our union; which was cordially received, and their messengers invited to seat with us." Men who attended Saluda Association Sessions were Robert Orr, Phillip May, Enoch Smith, William Hubbard, and Champ Taylor.

In 1826, the membership of the church consisted of only nine persons. One faithful member during this period of hardship for the small church was Cynthia Parsons, who was elected to the office of deaconess in 1832. The church joined with other Baptist churches in 1829 to form the Twelve Mile River Association. Men who attended Twelve Mile Association sessions were William Clayton, Samuel Parsons, John McWhorter, J. B. Clayton, James Parsons, and Henry Sergeant.

The church building stood for approximately forty years, before being replaced in 1862 with a new structure on the same site at Liberty Spring. By that year the membership had
grown to fifty-one persons: forty-five whites and six blacks. Thomas R. Gary was called as pastor, and he served the church for six years. The Liberty church remained a member of the Twelve Mile River Association until 1876, when, at Mount Pisgah Church, the Liberty Church was among twelve churches of that Association calling for letters of dismissal with the view of forming the Piedmont Baptist Association. The Liberty church was also incorporated in 1876.

The building at Liberty Spring was torn down in 1882 or 1883, and much of the lumber was used to construct a new building on the corner of Front and Church streets (now the site of the parking lot adjacent to the Liberty Fire Department). The wood structure was replaced in 1913 by a brick building located on the same lot. This structure served the church until 1965, when the membership decided to relocate. A new physical plant was constructed on Edgemont Street.


Flat Rock Baptist Church

in the summer of 1870, a revival meeting was held on a knoll near the present intersection of SC Highway 178 and SC Highway 135. One result of the meeting was the organization of a church with twenty-six members. Tommy R. Gary, pastor of the Liberty Baptist Church during the 1860s and postmaster at Salubrity from 1871 to 1876, was the church’s first pastor. He used his own Bible until the church bought one about 1880.

Mrs. J. Leander Boggs, a member of a pioneer family in the area, provided land on which to construct a building and to establish a cemetery sometime after the church was organized. A nearby field was always referred to by Boggs as "the flat rock field" because it contained large flat rocks. Since the church's founding, four separate buildings have served the congregation. The first two buildings were located beside Highway 178 at the old cemetery. The logs used in the construction of the first structure were hewn by hand. The second edifice was bought by Sam Wilson and later transformed into a barn. A third building for the congregation was built in a grove of trees now known as McGee Park. In 1937, eight Sunday School rooms were added to the one-room building. The church building was further remodeled in 1949, and a new Sunday School plant was added. The fourth and present church building was erected in 1960, and the first service in the new structure was held on August 13, 1961.

According to 1911 records, Mrs. Sam Wilson organized the first Women’s Missionary Society and served as its first president. With the exception of a few years during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the society was very active in all phases of mission work.


Young men who grew up in Flat Rock community and later entered the ministry include John Tollison, Roy Melton, Doyle Kay, Wallace Hughes, C. E. Price, Jr., Charles Hamlin, Carl Ellenburg, Bruce Kelley, and Grady Tollison.

Golden Grove Wesleyan Church

In 1894, S. J. Cowan, formerly with the Methodist Episcopal Church South but then a missionary evangelist for the South Carolina Wesleyan Methodist Conference, placed a tent on the present site of Golden Grove Wesleyan Methodist Church, located on US Highway 178 about three miles south of Liberty. The tent meeting resulted in the organization of Golden Grove Church on the morning of July 23, 1894. Fourteen members made up the original church congregation, and six additional persons joined the newly-formed group at the evening service the same day. After the conclusion of the tent meeting, the congregation worshiped in various homes and perhaps outside during the summer months.

The need for a more permanent house of worship was eventually recognized, and John Boggs donated approximately one acre of land on which to construct a building. He reserved a portion of that land for use as a cemetery for the Boggs family. A wood frame building was eventually erected through the efforts of church members and interested persons of the community.

Golden Grove's original frame church building was remodeled in 1948: three classrooms were added, the sanctuary was renovated, heating facilities were installed, and the outside was refurbished with brick veneer. In January 1957, further progress was made under the leadership of Oscar Baker Stewart. An acre of land across the highway from the church was given by Mrs. O. M. McKinney, and a parsonage was constructed. Stewart and his family did not occupy the home because he died prior to its completion.

Additions to the church were made in 1963-64, when a foyer, porch, and steeple were appended to the front of the church and a library and pastor's study constructed. During these years, renovations were also made to the educational section of the church, the sanctuary was remodeled, and alterations were made to the ceiling, pulpit area, and choir loft.

In 1969, Golden Grove Wesleyan Church purchased approximately two acres of land to be used for further expansion of its facilities.

Liberty Church of God

The Liberty Church of God was organized in 1938 under the leadership of Nettie Hanvey, with the assistance of Edna Alexander of Liberty and Mrs. Claude Essey and Mr. and Mrs. Lem Kay of Central. The church held its first meeting in a small store building near Woodside Mill No. 2 in Liberty.

In 1941, Lem Kay donated the lumber and other building materials used to construct the church's first wood-frame building on the corner of Byrnes and Lee Streets. The church entrance faced Byrnes Street in 1950 after the building was remodeled and bricked. A fellowship building for the church was completed in 1970, and a new parsonage was built in 1974. A new sanctuary for the Liberty Church of God was erected facing Jackson
Street in 1973-74. The first service in the new structure was held on February 9, 1974. R. Boyd King was pastor in 1976.

**Liberty Presbyterian Church**

In 1858 a group of interested persons living near the Liberty Spring area organized a Union Sunday School with Elder Thomas G. Boggs as group leader, George W. B. Boggs as superintendent, Thomas H. Boggs as assistant superintendent, and John Templeton as secretary. Those involved in this early religious school included the McWhorter, Williams, Hendrix, Johnson, Brock, Neighbors, Chapman, Clayton, Smith, Templeton, Hollingsworth, Chamblin, and Boggs families. Until the outbreak of the Civil War, this Sunday School met at Liberty Academy near Liberty Spring. Meetings were held thereafter in the nearby Baptist Church.

Around 1881, some Liberty residents who were Presbyterian, and who held membership at Carmel Church near the Flat Rock community, desired to have their own house of worship. Efforts began to obtain a suitable building for a church, and contributions for the proposed structure were received from the membership and from other religious denominations. By September 29, 1883, the Liberty Presbyterian Church had been completed on the corner of Palmetto and Main streets at a cost of five hundred dollars. The new church had twenty members.

The first pastor to serve the Liberty Presbyterian Church was John R. Riley; church elders were Joseph Addison Boggs and William K. Boggs. The deacons were J. J. Wakelin, D. J. Greer, and M. A. Boggs. Charter members were Thomas G. Boggs and his wife, Eleanor; Joseph Addison Boggs and his wife, Pauline; Eliza Boggs; Josephine Boggs; Martha Boggs; Marcus A. Boggs; C. J. Boggs; W. K. Boggs and his wife, Mary E.; A. M. Boggs and Lizzie Boggs; D. J. Greer and his wife, Josephine; J. J. Wakelin and his wife, Matilda; Essie Chapman; Olivia Willard; and Naomi George.

The first building was torn down, and the present building with a sanctuary capacity of three hundred fifty was completed in December of 1913. A manse, built west of the church in 1906, served as the home of the church's pastors for forty-two years. This building was torn down in 1948 and replaced with the present manse. An educational building (containing additional Sunday School rooms, a large meeting hall, and a kitchen) was completed adjoining the main building and adjacent to the manse in 1956.


**Liberty United Methodist Church**

A small Methodist group met in Liberty in 1905 at the home of Rosa Ford, and a new church for the community called Liberty Methodist Church was formed under the leadership of J. F. Attaway. It consisted of approximately twenty-five initial members.
including Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Bannister, Mr. and Mrs. Albert L. Johnson, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Pack Boggs, Charlie T. Hutchins and his son, J. Claude Hutchins, Rosa Ford, Jane Chapman, Sue and Lou Smith, Vickie Dunwoody, Eliza Smith and Fleta Smith.

The Presbyterians in Liberty offered the group the use of their church building for one service each month. Members of the church erected their own building in 1907 during the pastorate of the D. D. Jones. Charles T. Hutchins was contractor. The church building was dedicated by the W. M. Duncan, a prominent minister of the time.

The residence of Dr. Clark Wales Smith was purchased for use as a parsonage about 1920 while W. B. Justice was pastor.

At a conference in 1931, the Liberty church was put on a charge with Pickens, but in 1935 the northern part of Pickens County was transferred to the Anderson District. The Liberty Charge was then formed.

Wayland Hutchins was the first child to join the Liberty Methodist Church, and Kinard Johnson was the first infant to be baptized there. William S. Richbourg became superintendent of the Sunday School in 1914 and served for almost forty years.

In 1939, the three major branches of Methodism (the Methodist Episcopal, the Methodist Episcopal South and the Methodist Protestant) combined to form the Methodist Church. The present-day United Methodist Church came into being as a result of a merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren.

In 1974, the congregation of Liberty United Methodist Church moved into its new building on Mae Street near the Lakewood Heights Subdivision with John Culp as pastor. He resigned in 1975 and was succeeded by Robert Morgan.


### Liberty Wesleyan Church

Liberty Wesleyan was organized by J. R. Davis in 1907. It was discontinued in 1915 and reorganized on July 22, 1919, only to be discontinued in 1927 and reorganized on February 13, 1934. Pastors who have served Liberty Wesleyan Church include J. R. Davis, D. O. Powers, J. E. Martin, W. L. Miller, G. E. Crenshaw, A. J. Tant, A. L. Vess, T. C. Harvey, G. L. Stewart, and others.

### New Grove Baptist Church

New Grove Baptist Church, organized in the early part of the 1900s, was located five miles from Liberty on what is now Slabtown Road just inside the Anderson County line where it bounds Pickens County. The membership of New Grove was never large in the black community. Most of the members who gathered each first Sunday in the month for
services were from the immediate neighborhood. A cemetery for the membership was located adjacent to the church.

New Grove came to an end in 1943. With young males going off to World War II and families moving away from rural areas, the community lost many of its citizens and the church lost its members. The last families of the church remembered were the Bowens and Phinazees. W. M. Brown of Anderson was the last pastor. For a number of years, New Grove's cemetery was preserved by those who purchased the property after the church's demise.

New Hope Baptist Church

New Hope Baptist Church, located in Liberty near the intersection of Main Street and US Highway 178, had its beginning during the last half of the nineteenth century. Prior to 1870, a small group of blacks residing in the Liberty Spring area decided to form a church. The location of the first meeting was on what is now the one hundredth block of Pickens Drive (U.S. 178), and the meeting is said to have been held in a "brush arbor."

The first building occupied by members of the church was a converted store building located on Lee Street near the city ball park across from the former Southern Railway Depot. The congregation soon outgrew the building and moved into a larger structure located on North Azalea Street. This building subsequently burned. The property on which the present building stands was deeded by Joe and Caroline Mayes on March 9, 1887. The property containing one fifth of an acre, bordering Caroline Mayes and S. D. Stewart, was sold to David Johnston, Joseph Mayes, Richard Hadden, Zach Reid, Morris Hampton, Jeff Calhoun, and Willis Hill for seventeen dollars.

The People's Journal reported in February 22, 1894, that the "colored Baptists and Methodists are both putting up good new church buildings." When Caroline Mas sold a lot to the school trustees in 1897, the deed stated that it joined a lot "on which the Colored Baptist church now stands on the East." The Liberty School Board of Trustees sold to the deacons of New Hope on May 2, 1922, "one-eighth of an acre and the first story of the school building located on the lot," for $299.00. The deacons were William M. Johnson, William C. Simpson, Alex Simpson, William M. Alexander and Marion Rogers.

Built in 1925, the present building is the first brick church in Pickens County constructed for a black congregation. Improvements made to the church plant include the installation of a coal furnace in the early 1940s, new church pews purchased for three thousand dollars in 1944, and the installation of city water and inside restrooms in 1958. After the first signboard, donated by S. C. Franks in 1948, became worn and partially decayed, a second one constructed of brick was donated by Franks in 1962. It was erected by William Andrews.

The first baptisms of the church were conducted in a spring located near Azalea Street. Later, the church baptized new members at a spring located near West View Cemetery. A branch, which has its origin today just off East Main Street, was also used for baptisms for several years, as were other sites.

The early deacons of New Hope listed in the first collected history of the congregation were Richard Hadden, Norman Hamilton, and David Johnson. Through the years, others who served the church as deacons were George Alexander, Alex Austin, Berry Jenkins, Alex Johnson, Capious Johnson, William (Bill) Simpson, Alex Simpson, Isaac Simpson, Sammy Simpson, William Johnson, Warren Rogers, William Alexander, Eddie Simpson, J. O. North, Arthur Simpson, Governor Lealand, Walter Lee Moore, J. S. Rogers,
William Simpson, Luther Johnson Sr., Robert L. Austin, Luther Johnson, Jr., Jacob Cannon, and Willie (Bill) Austin.

John Singleton, William Johnson, Rev. E. L. Sitton, A. A. Martin, Walter C. Cason and Luther Johnson, Sr., have served as Sunday School Superintendents.

Emma North, Florence Lacey Murphy, Beulah W. Thayer, Pearl H. Austin, Velma Hallums Reid, Hattie Hallums Jones, Lillie Rhone, Debbie Ervin, Judy Austin, Miriam Durham, Rachel Johnson, English Hallums Allen, Almeta Cannon, Matthew Green, David Green, Santhelyn Davis and Anthony Aiken were church musicians.

Church secretaries have been William Johnson, Lillie Rhone, Governor Lealand, Almeta Cannon, Tommie Joe Reese and Sarah Bradley.


Rice's Creek Baptist Church

Rice's Creek Baptist Church was established as a result of meetings held about 1887. Ola Lancaster donated an acre of land about 1908 for use as a site on which to erect a church building. Under the leadership of the Seabrook Atkinson, interested persons began to conduct prayer meetings in various homes in the community. A revival was held in August, 1910, and concerned individuals began to plan for the construction of a building following the meeting. Many members did the actual work on the building, and some persons donated timber for the project. The first service was held in the new structure on Easter Sunday, 1911; and the church was formally dedicated on December 24, 1916. Six Sunday School rooms were added in 1946. After a new brick structure was completed in 1964, the old building was demolished to make room for a church parking lot.

A pastorium was added to the church's property in 1967, and the church took on the full financial support of its pastor in July of 1968. Based upon the memory of several older members of the congregation, some of the church's charter members were Mr. and Mrs. B. P. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gantt, Nicey Gantt Cartee, Minnie Gantt Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Gantt, Lona Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. William Ellenburg, Mrs. Summey, and Mrs. Alexander.

Pastors who served Rice's Creek Baptist Church were Seabrook Atkinson, W. M. Walker, Frank Murphy, Fant Jones, Jim Davis, Fulton Childress, Hovie Jones, Mason Simmons, Lloyd Pace, H. A. Newton, Rufus Mitchell, Herbert Ayers, Francis Whitmire, Garland Leopard, Cecil Holcombe, Tom Harper, and Bobby Price.

Robinson Chapel United Methodist Church

The first record of a Black Methodist church in Liberty is a deed from David H. Templeton, executor of Catherine Templeton's estate to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This deed, dated February 3, 1886, for Lot No. 8 on Main Street, is for the property sold to John Ellis, Pinkney Mooney and Jesse Garvin for $21.50. The Pickens Sentinel states in October and December of 1886 that the "colored Methodist are erecting a commodious church in town." The church records state that Benjamin Robinson was the first pastor and the church was named in his honor.
The February 3, 1887, edition of the *Pickens Sentinel* relates that a hurricane occurred on January 23, 1887, and the "colored Methodist church was demolished." On February 22, 1894, the *People's Journal* reported the "colored Baptists and Methodists are both putting up good new church buildings."

Wesley Hadden, Allen Gillian, and Frank Blassingame (trustees of the church), purchased Lot No. 7 on March 24, 1900, from Moses Cherry for thirty-seven dollars, when Peter R. Camblin was pastor. The old church was later sold to him and moved onto a lot that he owned.

In 1912, the church was rebuilt under the leadership of the Rev. I. V. Manning, who served the Charge for twelve years. The church partially financed construction through the sale of a portion of its property to Charles E. Bush. The church building was brick veneered in 1925 and a corner stone laid. While Judge Clark served as pastor in 1961, two restrooms, a choir room, and pastor's study were added. John L. Pendarvis assumed the duties of pastor in 1964 and made plans for an educational building and fellowship hall. Before the plans could be finalized, Pendarvis was moved by the Annual Conference.

Selby C. Anderson is the fifth generation of his family to serve as superintendent of the church school. His grandmother, Louisa Boggs, was a charter member of the church.


**Ruhama Methodist and (Later Ruhama Baptist Church)**

Ruhama Garner Neighbors gave two acres of land to the trustees of Ruhama Church for the purpose of building a Methodist Church three miles south of Liberty. This property was given in 1872, and the deed was recorded in August 1876.

A small book owned by L. G. Clayton includes the following information:

The following gentlemen were appointed by the Rev. Clarkson, Pastor of Ruhama M.E. Church South to serve as a building committee for the purpose of erecting a new church at or near where the old church now stands: James F. Hendricks, E. T. Taylor, John Major, James H. Clayton, J. F. Rampy, Alfred Smith, A. M. Boggs, J. F. Boggs, and L. G. Clayton.

After two or three ineffectual attempts to get a quorum of the committee to meet at the church for the purpose of organizing and commencing the work, we finally succeeded in getting a quorum consisting of the following gentlemen: J. F. Hendricks, L. G. Clayton, Alfred Smith, Frank Boggs, and John Major. After prayer by the Rev. M. Stewart, the meeting was opened by electing J. F. Hendricks chairman of the committee and L. G. Clayton, Secretary. No treasurer was elected at the time. The above meeting was on July 30th 1888. Next meeting was appointed at Central August 2nd 1888. Nothing was done of any importance.

The third meeting was on August 6th 1888. It was then decided to build a house 40 feet square and 16 feet high. It was also decided by a unanimous vote not to meet again without bringing money it being decided that gas would accomplish nothing. There has been general unanimity among the committee with the exception of Bro. E. T. Taylor, who flew the track once, but who now is in fine working time. August 10th 1888. LGC.

Ruhama. August 11th 1888. The committee met today and elected L. G. Clayton Treasurer. The following gentlemen paid the treasurer $67.25. A. M. Boggs $10.00, E.
T. Taylor $20.00, J. D. Major, $10.00, J. H. Clayton $2.00, L. G. Clayton $25.25 for a total of $67.25. It was then decided to build a house 50 x 30 x 16. Clayton and Taylor then went to 6 Mile to Barker in regard to the lumber and to see about the shingles. They engaged the shingles at $2.50 per 1,000 to be 5/8 inch thick and width average 4 inches wide. Never saw Barker about lumber, he was gone to Pickens. Will see him on 13th at Central. James F. Hendricks promised to have twenty dollars by the time the lumber was sawed. The treasurer forgot to receipt the committee when he received the money but gave E. T. Taylor the receipt that night at Central and also deposited the $67.25 in J. R. Williams safe until needed.

Ruhamah Church. The committee met to decide what disposition to make of the old house and to decide where to build the new one. After a good deal of wrangling and nearly quarrelling on the part of some of the committee, it was decided to let the old church stand as it was and to build the new one broad-side next to Public road. After the new church is built, it was decided to advertise and sell the old church. E. T. Taylor promises to give twenty-dollars minus the benches any time after the new church is ready to hold service in. (This booklet, now in the Faith Clayton Collection at Central Wesleyan College, contains other information related to the building of this church.)

This Methodist Church ceased to function at an unknown date, and a Baptist church was established on Sunday, June 27, 1939. From the large group present, thirty-one persons joined. (The church and property had recently been sold to the Baptists of the Piedmont Association.) A Sunday School with eighty members was organized with W. F. Merck serving as superintendent. A series of services was conducted by J. W. Spillars, the pastor, during the latter part of July 1939.

St. Luke Methodist Church

St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church, located on what is now Flat Rock School Road near Five Forks Intersection, was begun November 3, 1883. The land was sold to the congregation on November 27, 1882, with Benson Hallums, Gilbert Blassingame, and Cary Pickens as trustees. Benson Hallums sold the one acre "on the road leading from Five Forks to a Brick Church named Carmel," for fifteen dollars to the trustees.

The Church, situated on a 1.8 acre tract, thrived and prospered for a number of years. The departure of many members from rural areas to the towns and cities, together with deaths of the members, decreased the congregation. The church closed in 1922.

A longtime pastor of the church was the Rev. Tillman. Families who maintained membership during St. Luke's existence included the Hallums Family, Blassingame Family, Edmond Welborn, Ann Welborn Family, Boggs Family, Reid Family, and Simpson Family.

The site of St. Luke Church is maintained. It is a weeded area with a cemetery marked only by some field rocks. A granite marker on Flat Rock Road recognizes the former church and its contribution to the community.

Smith Chapel Wesleyan Church

Located about three miles northwest of Liberty between Golden Creek and Twelve Mile River and organized in 1909, Smith Chapel was built on land donated by the late Z. O.
Smith (from whom the church acquired its name). Smith passed away in 1933, and he and his wife are buried in the church cemetery.

In 1931, the church was rebuilt while Glenn L. Stewart was pastor. Then in 1950, during the pastorate of Oscar Baker Stewart, the church was remodeled. An auxiliary building was added to the church property in 1973. The pastor of Smith Chapel Wesleyan Church in 1976 was Jesse Clyde Byars.

**Smith Grove Baptist Church**

The Mullinax family cemetery, located about two and a half miles east of Liberty in the Smith Grove Community, was the site of a meeting in the summer of 1913 of interested persons who gathered to discuss and plan the building of a Baptist church. The meeting led to the establishment of Smith Grove Baptist Church in 1914. The building was completed in 1914, and the church was named in honor of Tillman Nathan Smith (1877-1954), who gave the land.


As the years passed, the 1914 structure deteriorated while the membership continued to grow. In March 1961, a new structure was completed while Wyatt League was pastor. Following League's eighteen years of service as pastor of the church, James Hampton was called. He served until the year 1968. During Hampton's ministry the church built a parsonage in 1963.

Tom A. Walton assumed the duties of pastor of the church in June 1968. During that year the church's fellowship building was completed.

Charles Kirby was the next pastor of Smith Grove Baptist Church; he served in that capacity until September 1975.

**True Light Fire Baptized Holiness Church**

True Light Fire Baptized Holiness Church had its beginning in Liberty about 1939. Bishop W. E. Fuller (founder of the denomination), operating from his headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, sponsored a tent meeting on a vacant lot on what is now North Fernwood Street.

Worship services conducted by ministers and licensed preachers of the denomination were held every night for six weeks. At the end of this period, a number of persons had expressed a desire to establish a church of the denomination in Liberty. A lot was purchased adjacent to the Willie Young residence, and a one-room structure was erected for the congregation of some ten to twelve persons. Charlie Hunt of Greenville, a pastor of the denomination and carpenter who built many churches, erected the structure with the aid of the members. Hunt pastored the church for a short time.

After Hunt's tenure ended, Janie Norris of Greenville was assigned to the church and remained in that position until her death in 1948. Texie Ellison of Easley was assigned to the church and was the last known pastor. The regular worship services were each second and fourth Sunday afternoon at three o'clock. Family names associated with True Light
were Terrel, Richardson, and Anderson. After the death of its last member, Frances Anderson in May 1951, the church ceased to operate. The building was torn down after several years and the property sold.

**Union United Methodist Church**

Union United Methodist Church, located three miles north of Liberty on Campground Road, had its beginning in 1870 at a brush arbor on its present site. A deed was recorded on November 20, 1872, from William Banks to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church "whereon stands a house of worship." Members and friends of the community would gather once per year for a week of camping and church services. The activities ended on a Sunday with Camp Meeting which lasted all day.

The Colored Camp Meeting. The greatest camp meeting that ever has been witnessed in Pickens County, among the colored people, was held at Union Church, commencing the 4th inst. and ending the 8th. The meeting was conducted by order of Rev. R. A. Fletcher. Those who labored with him were Rev. George Gray, Rev. Patrick Fair, and also Simmons and Goodlett. The result was that 101 members took sacrament, 8 were baptized 13 received into full fellowship and 21 on probation, making, in all 34 additions to the church, and there were also 18 conversions. The meeting was well attended. Mr. A. M. Folger was present, with his Bibles for sale. The pulpit was occupied on Sunday by Rev. R. A. Fletcher. The order of the meeting was excellent. The meeting closed on Monday at 10 o'clock. After the benediction was pronounced, all went home, rejoicing in the Lord for their successful camp meeting at Union. *(Pickens Sentinel. 18 Oct 1877, p. 2, col. 3)*

The present church structure, erected in 1973 under the pastoral leadership of John L. Pendarvis and Julius L. Scipio, replaced a building that had lasted for more than half a century.

The membership of fifteen persons are descendants of families associated with the history of the church. The Julius Thayer Family, the Frank Thayer Family, the Bright Hunter Family, the Ervin McDowell Family, the Rhone Family, the Riley Ferguson Family are representative of the membership throughout in the history of the congregation.

Being on the same Methodist charge, Union Camp Ground and Robinson Chapel always shared pastors. Known in the beginning as Union Camp Ground, later as Union Methodist Episcopal Church, the church is today known as Union United Methodist Church.