

An Outline of the History of the Coalmont United Methodist Church

By Williema Curtis, March 1987

Name: “Coalmont United Methodist Church” – originally “Methodist Episcopal Church” within the Holston District

Date Established: August 18, 1916

Address of Parsonage: Coalmont, Tennessee

Name of First Pastor: Rev. E. C. Thurston

Organization of UM Women: 1916 – none at present

Organization of UM Men: 1916 – or earlier

Any other special events:

Dedication of the new church building completed in Spring of 1917, Dr. Mitchell, the special speaker of this dedication, was from the Holston Conference at Knoxville, Tenn.

Some time in the 1930's the Methodist Episcopal and the Southern Methodist (Methodist Episcopal South) Churches in Grundy County were put into the Tennessee Conference, Nashville, Tennessee. I am unable to establish when we were placed in the Murfreesboro District.

Through the efforts of many concerned church-going citizens in the small coal mining town of Coalmont, (which was established in 1903), the officials of the Sewanee Fuel & Iron Company, (which had established the town and owned a vast area of coal and timber property), donated or sold the Lot No. 10, containing 1 acres on Martin Street and 4th Avenue for the sum of \$1.00 to the Methodist Episcopal Church by Deed dated August 18, 1916. The Trustees were William Creighton, W. R. Curtis, John W. Dykes, and C. W. Anderson. Stipulations in this Deed state that if ever this property ceases to be used for Church purposes, it shall revert to original owners or successors. Present owner of Company property is W. L. Hailey Company, Madison, Tenn.

After the trustees obtained the Deed for the lot for the church, the building committee, with many helping with labor and financially, started to build the church. I have been unable

to learn who all was on the building committee, but I believe W. R. Curtis, (Reverend Bill), handled the records and finances.

A contractor, Henry L. Brown, from Beersheba Springs was hired, and he designed the building according to the wishes of the building committee.

The building was completed around Easter – maybe later – and the dedication program was had in the spring of 1917. The speaker was the Superintendent of the Holston Conference, Dr. Mitchell, of Knoxville, Tenn., and the pastor was a Rev. Thurston. The church was filled to capacity for the important service. From the picture in the present sanctuary made on that day in 1917, there must have been 150 to 200 people there.

Over the years the church was well attended and supported with many different pastors. The Murfreesboro district should have records. There was a falling away from the beginning of the 1920's and continued into the 1940's. In the 1950's a new generation of teenagers organized a Methodist Youth Fellowship which created a lot of good and much interest in church work. From this time on the church has been up and down. Many people died and many families moved away. The coal company does not exist—the whole community has changed. We have four other churches within the city limits now.

Present Trustees of the Church are: Stanley Meeks, Jim Anderson (James A.), Thomas L. Curtis, Arthur Roy Curtis (Treasurer), Willie Sue Creighton Curtis (Pianist), Paul David Meeks (Lay Leader, Sunday School Supt. & Adult Class teacher), and Lewis Brown (Song Leader)