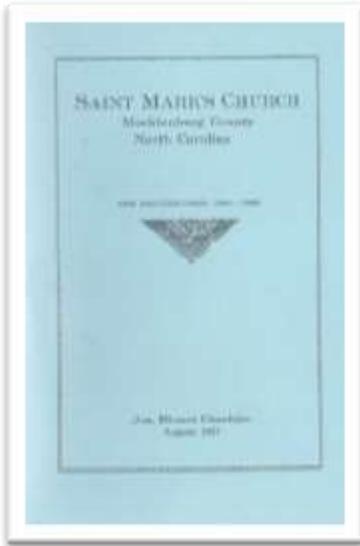


Disenchanted Presbyterians

A brief history of St. Mark's from 1884 to present

Michael Thompson, 2012



St. Mark's was founded due to the determination of a few disenchanted Presbyterians who along with a rural community of mostly farmers petitioned the Diocese to organize an Episcopal Church in Northern Mecklenburg County.

Columbus W. McCoy was one of those noted as being dissatisfied with the Calvinistic teachings of Hopewell Presbyterian Church. Mr. McCoy became enamored with the Episcopal Church when Edwin A. Osborne (who left the Presbyterian Church to pursue the Episcopal priesthood) had shared a copy of the Book of Common Prayer with him. During this time Mr. McCoy started attending services at St. Peter's Episcopal Church where Colonel Hamilton Jones, a friend of Mr. McCoy's, and junior warden introduced Mr. McCoy to The Reverend Joseph Blount Cheshire, Jr., then rector of St. Peter's. As a result of this meeting, in early 1883, Mr. McCoy invited Mr. Cheshire to Long Creek to conduct a service for the community. This service was held November 18, 1883,

in the Beech Cliff School house on McCoy road, one and one half miles north of St. Mark's present location. Although Mr. Cheshire was encouraged by the response of those attending, inclement weather prevented further services until May 1884.

On August 12, 1884, Mr. Cheshire returned to Long Creek along with George B. Wetmore and Edwin Osborne. The three men held morning and evening services, conducted visitations and performed several baptisms from August 12, through August 17 (their stay was extended three days at the urging of the community). Preceding this preaching mission, many in the community expressed the desire to organize into a congregation. A petition was sent to the Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. As a result, on October 24, 1884, Bishop Theodore B. Lyman came from Raleigh to preach and confirm sixteen people. After the service, an additional petition was presented to the Bishop. On the following day, Bishop Lyman granted the congregation mission status and appointed Mr. Cheshire minister.

Inspired by the biblical account of the conversion of Mark by Peter, Mr. Cheshire and Mr. Osborne proposed the name "St. Mark's" for the newly organized congregation. The name served as a reminder of the special relationship between St. Mark's mission and St. Peter's Church. Early in 1886, the members of St. Mark's mission led by the rector made plans to build a church.

The land was donated in October 1886, and the cornerstone was laid. The first service was held on March 27, 1887 in the newly erected building.

St. Mark's has had 27 priests since its inception, four of whom became bishops of the church. In 1956, permission was granted for St. Mark's to become a parish.

The original communicants, their ancestors and the community have worked with diligence and determination to sustain St. Mark's status in the community. These characteristics and traditions have been passed down and continue at St. Mark's today.

Cited

Cheshire, Jos. Blount (1927). Saint Mark's Church: It's beginnings, 1884-1886. Publisher unknown: Mecklenburg County.