

1853 Deed - Proving early Methodist Church in  
Brazos County.

Deed Records of Upshur County  
Book E Page 188

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Book E

In Testimony whereof I hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this day & date  
above written.

Septimus J. Taylor (seal)

Test: B. N. McBride  
G. R. Grace

THE STATE OF TEXAS    |  
COUNTY OF UPSHUR    |

Before me, G. E. Warren Clerk of the County Court

of said County personally appeared B. N. McBride one of the subscribing witnesses to the within  
deed and after being duly sworn says that Septimus J. Taylor the grantor to the same acknow-  
ledged in his presents that he signed sealed and delivered the same for the purposes and consi-  
derations therein stated and that he was requested to sign the same as witness.

Given under my hand and official seal at Gilmer, December 7th, A. D. 1853.

G. E. Warren, C Clk

Filed for record December 7th, A. D. 1853, at 10 o'clock A. M.

G. E. Warren, C Clk

JOHN R. MAGRILL & ELIZABETH A. MAGRILL

DEED TO

CHURCH LOT, TRUSTEES GILMER  
CIRCUIT

STATE OF TEXAS    |  
COUNTY OF UPSHUR    |

This indenture made this 28 day of September in the year

of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty three between John R. Magrill & Elizabeth Magrill  
his wife of the County of Upshur & State of Texas of the one part and John L. Camp, Joshia Add-  
ington, Joseph Derrick, Austine Walker, Thos. D. Brooks, Gustavus E. Warren, W. H. Matthews,  
Thos. C. Gillespie, J. A. Derrick, Trustees in trust for the use and purposes hereinafter men-  
tioned all of the County of Upshur in the State of Texas aforesaid of the other part, Witnesseth  
that the said John R. Magrill & his wife, Elizabeth Magrill for and in consideration of the sum  
of one Dollar in specie to us in hand paid at and upon the selling and delivery of these presents  
the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have given granted bargained sold released confirmed  
& conveyed and by these presents do give grant bargain sell release confirm & convey unto them  
the said Trustees and their successors Trustees in trust for the use & purposes hereinafter men-  
tioned and declared all the estate right title interest property and demand whatsoever either in  
Law or Equity which we the said John R. Magrill & his wife Elizabeth Magrill have in and to or  
upon all and singular a certain Lot or piece of land situate lying and being in the County of  
Upshur and State aforesaid bounded and buted as follows, to-wit: A Survey of 9964 square varas  
of land on the headright Certificate or Survey of M D Greer on a division line of said survey

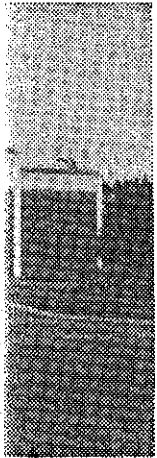
run N & S thro said survey and on the West half of same, Beginning at a stake from which a Black Jack bears S 221 1/2 E 6 4/10 varas; Thence West 90 varas a stake from which a red oak bears N 17 W 11 5/10 varas; Thence South S 19 W 100 varas a stake from which a post oak bears S 66 1/2 E 5 vars; Thence East at 123 varas a stake from which a hickory bears N 46 1/2 E 6 vars; Thence North at 94 5/10 varas the place of beginning, containing and laid out for one acre and one half more or less acres of land, together with all and singular the House Woods, waterways privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise pertaining.

To have and to hold all and singular the above mentioned and described lot or piece of land situate lying and being as aforesaid together with all and singular the house woods ways waters and privileges thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining unto them the said John L. & Associates Trustees and their successors in office forever in trust that they shall build or cause to be erected and built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the ministers and preachers of the said Church at their general conferences and in further trust and confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church South or by the annual conference authorized by the said General Conference to preach and expound gods holy words therein and in further trust and confidence that as often as any one or more of the Trustees herein before mentioned shall die or cease to be a member or members of said Church according to the rules and discipline as aforesaid then and in that such case it shall be the duty of the Stationed ministers or preachers authorized as aforesaid who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of the said Church to call a meeting of the remaining Trustees as soon as conveniently may be and when so met the said Minister or preacher shall proceed to nominate one or more persons to fit the place or places of him or them whose office or offices have become vacated as aforesaid and furthermore if anything in this deed is lacking that is necessary to secure said lots or piece of ground to said trustees for said purposes in said State & County we do hereby say that we mean that this deed shall cover and include all and singular every point in Law & equity whether expressed or implied or not so as to secure said Lot to said Church forever and we the said John R. Magrill & Elizabeth Magrill do by these presents warrant and forever defend all and singular the before mentioned Lot and described piece of land with the appurtenances thereto belonging unto them the said John L. Camp & associate said Board of Trustees and their associates in office chosen and appointed as afore-



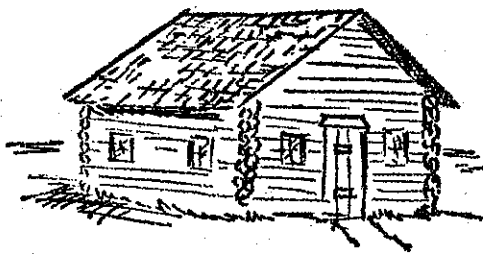
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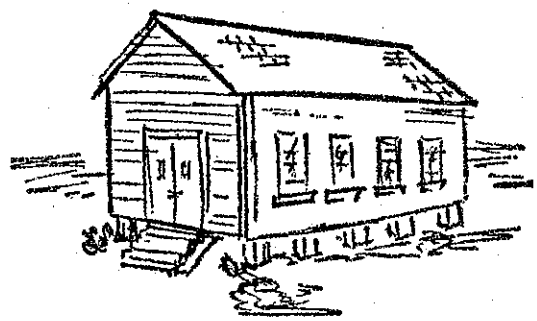


May  
Minister  
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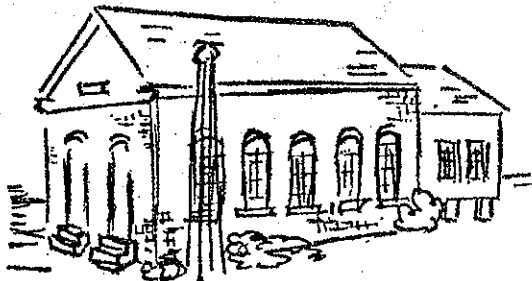
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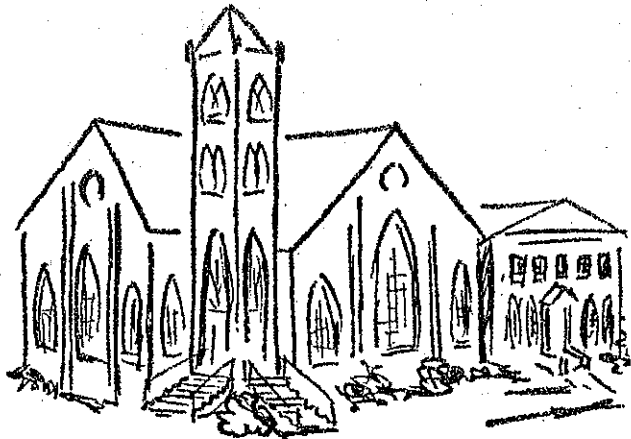
The Meeting House  
(around 1840 - 1860)



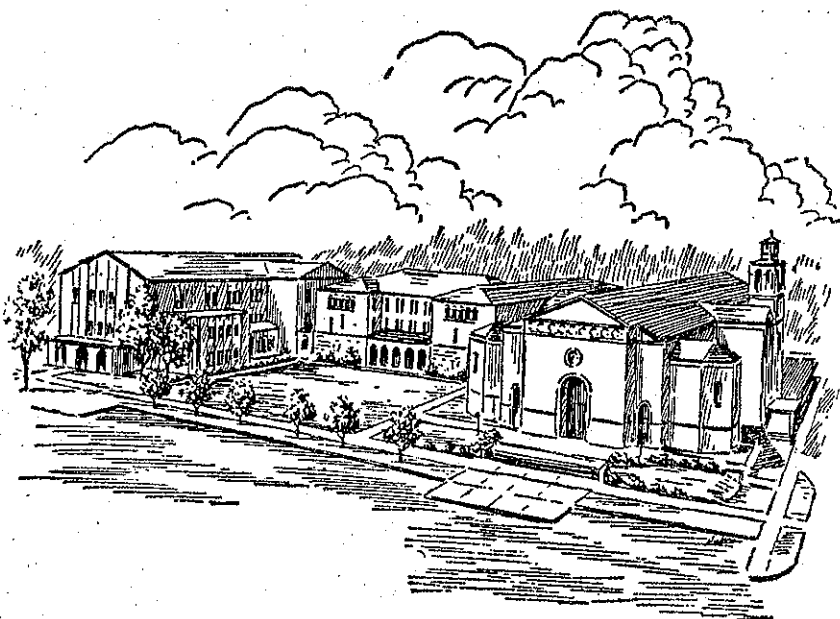
Earpville 1860 - 1875  
(1873 - moved to present site)



First Brick Church  
(1875 - 1900)



Kelly Memorial  
(1900 - 1950)



Dr. Derwood Blackwell  
Pastor

Rev. Larry Kelley  
Associate Pastor

OFFICE  
FREDONIA AT WHALEY

PHONE 753-4463

# First Methodist Church

Longview, Texas

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS

First

Methodist

Church

LONGVIEW, TEXAS

1850

1950

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## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

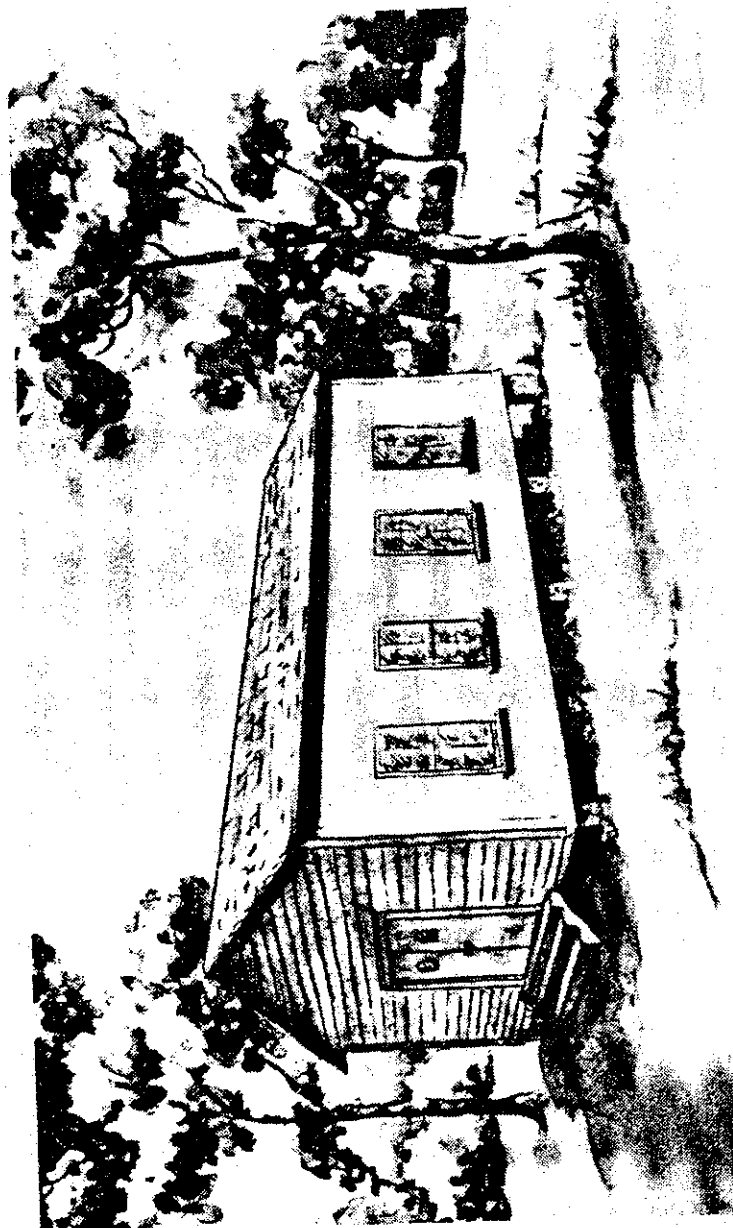
It is the purpose of this booklet to give a brief account of the first hundred years (1850-1950) in the life of the First Methodist Church of Longview. We have used all the resources at our command to authenticate the facts and figures and are grateful to the many people who furnished material.

For much of the historical data used herein we are indebted to writings of the late Mr. Leroy Trice, who was for many years active in First Methodist Church; to Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Parker; to Mr. Paul Harding, who did the abstract research; to Mr. Henry L. Foster, who was Church School Superintendent from 1923 to 1949; to Mrs. Joe Z Tower, who prepared the manuscript, to Helen Walker Coffey for the church portraits, the first two of which were painted from descriptions found in early letters, and to Mrs. Sam Jones, who compiled the list of pastors, presiding elders and bishops and typed the manuscript.

Other valuable information was obtained from Mr. Reagan S. Wyche, Auditor of Gregg County, whose grandfather was an early Methodist minister in this area. Facts dealing with the early history of Gregg County were taken from "The History of the Creation of Gregg County, Texas," written by the late Judge R. B. Levy, in 1942. Facts about our first brick church were gathered from a letter written by the Rev. D. F. Fuller, a former pastor, to Mrs. Jessie Boring Bramlette, deceased.

## I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

1. *I love Thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The Church our blest Redeemer saved,  
With his own precious blood.*
2. *I love thy Church, O God!  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And Graven on Thy hand.*
3. *For her my tears shall fall;  
For her my prayers ascend;  
To her my cares and toils be given,  
Till toils and cares shall end.*
4. *Beyond my highest joy  
I prize her heavenly ways,  
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,  
Her hymns of love and praise.*
5. *Sure as Thy truth shall last,  
To Zion shall be given  
The brightest glories earth can yield,  
And brighter bliss of heaven.*



1860-1875



## CHURCH AT EARPVILLE

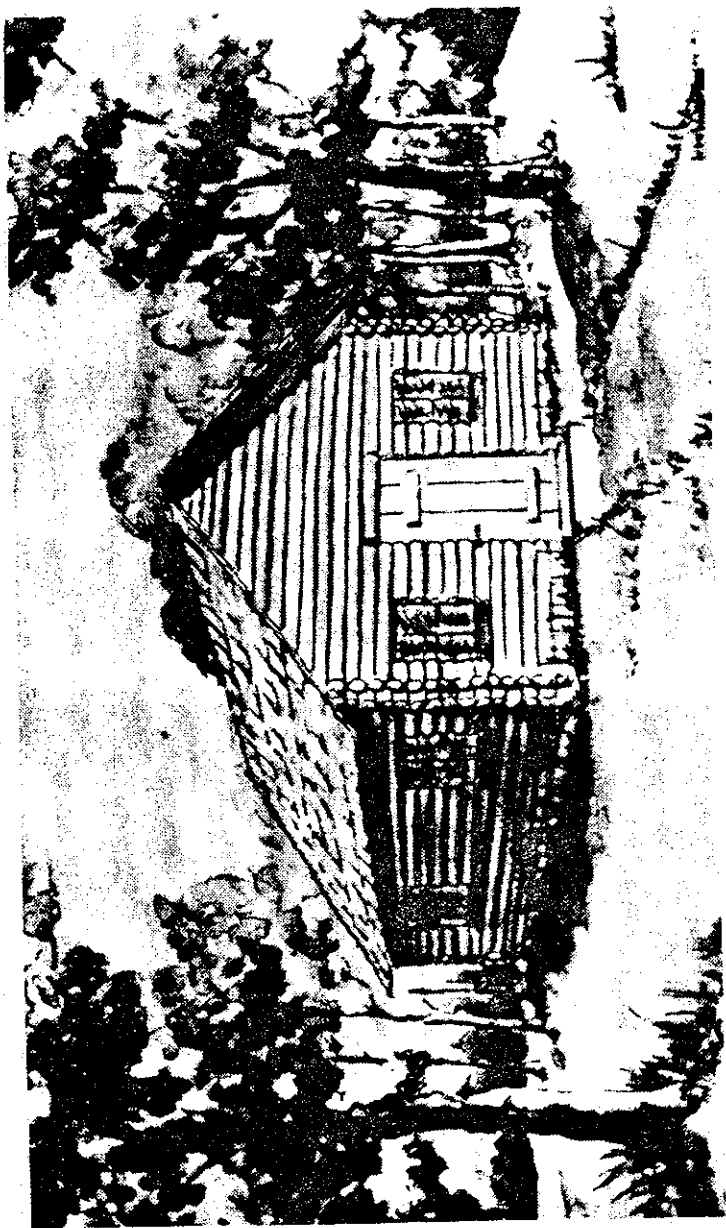
In 1853, the town of Earpville was platted on Marshall Avenue, north and east of Nuggett Hill. There was a stage coach stop where meals and lodging could be had. One room of the Sandifer home was used as a post office. River boats brought passengers and cargo up the Sabine, and more and more people, being attracted by the beauty of the landscape and the richness of the soil, came to settle in this region.

About 1860, the log meeting house was abandoned, and Dr. Job Taylor, practicing physician and local Methodist preacher, built a frame church on the Marshall and Tyler stage road, somewhere between the present Eighth and Ninth Streets.

In 1871, the Texas and Pacific Railroad built into Longview, and its terminus for a time was between Center and High Streets on Pacific. It is said that the town was named by Mr. Long, construction engineer for the railroad when his wife commented on the "long view" from a hill north of the railroad property, now known as Northcutt Heights.

In 1873, the church building was moved from Earpville to the present church site at Fredonia and Whaley Streets, which was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by the Texas and Pacific Railroad.

Some of the preachers who served the charge while this building was in use were Dr. Taylor, the Rev. D. M. Stovall, and the Rev. T. B. Norwood. The Rev. Mr. Norwood was in charge when the church building was moved. He was responsible for building churches at Summerfield and LaGrone's Chapel. Ft. Crawford, near Hallsville, was also on the charge at that time. He was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Parker with the Rev. J. W. Horner as junior preacher. Gilmer was in the charge during their ministry. The Rev. D. F. Fuller was appointed in 1874. Longview had half time and Summerfield and LaGrone's Chapel had half time, with Ft. Crawford as an afternoon appointment.



1840 (?)—1860

## ← OUR FIRST CHURCH HOME

The first building erected, on what is now College Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets, by the Methodists of the Longview area was a log church, which was called, in the manner of the times, "the Meeting House." We do not have the exact date of its building, but we know that when it was abandoned as unsafe in 1860 it gave evidence of being at least twenty years old.

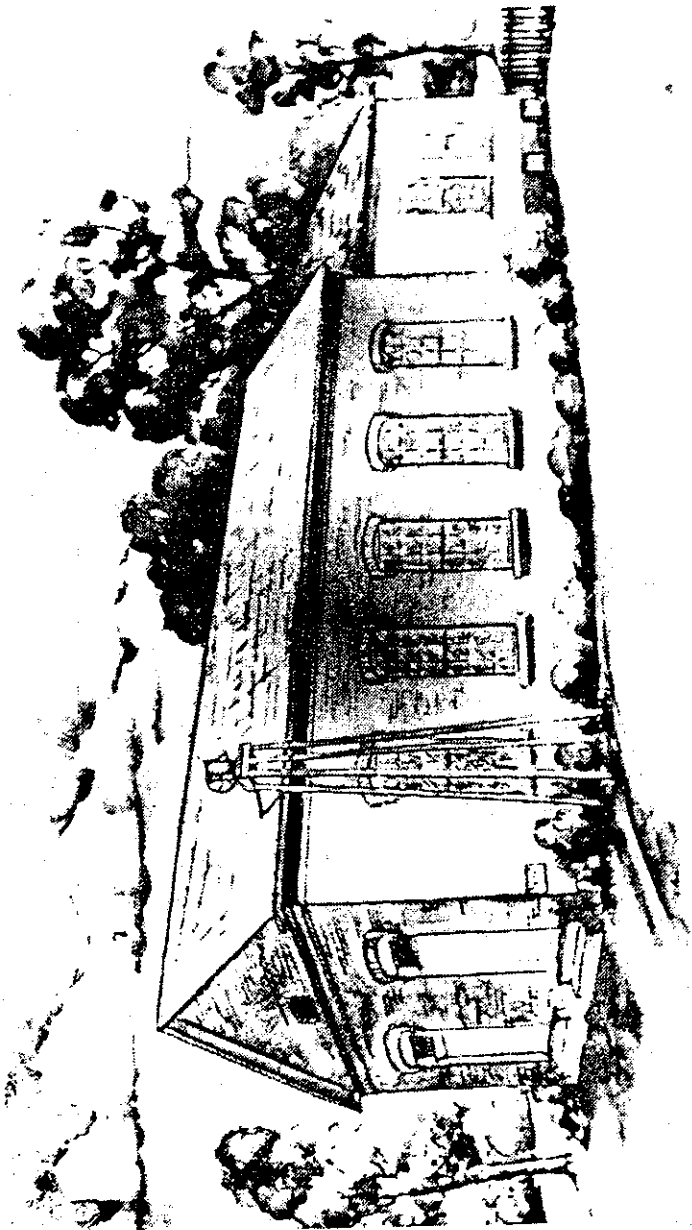
The Methodists brought Protestantism to Texas in 1833. After the revolution which freed Texas from Mexico in 1836, Methodism spread rapidly in East Texas, and circuit riders made their way on horseback from one community to another along the Sabine River. The ministers who served the circuit of which this church was a part are not listed in our records, but we do know that the Rev. Robert D. Wyche preached in the log meeting house between 1846 and 1855.

The deed to the property, which adjoined the Boring "old cemetery," was executed in 1853 by Mr. J. R. Magrill to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. There was a stage coach stop not far distant. The meeting house was used by other denominations for service and as a school and town hall.

Dr. Ellis, physician and local Methodist preacher, and the Rev. D. M. Stovall each held services here in the years between 1855 and 1860.

Evening services were held at "early candle light". There was no musical instrument, and few hymn books, so the minister "lined out" the hymns by reading two lines first and then the congregation sang them.





1875-1900



## A BRICK CHURCH

Soon after the Rev. D. F. Fuller was appointed to the Longview charge in 1874, he began agitating for a new church building. At the First Quarterly Conference, Dr. John H. McLean, the Presiding Elder, entered heartily into the plan for a brick building. The morning after the Quarterly Conference, Mr. Joseph Boring started the building fund with a gift of \$500. Mr. Alex Methvin, Mr. Tom Buttrill, and Dr. Taylor gave like amounts, and before night the pastor had \$7,000 in cash and subscriptions, the County Surveyor, Mr. Andrew Taylor, son of Dr. Job Taylor, had staked the ground, and building material was being unloaded. It is said that the need for a new church was emphasized by the rooting and grubbing of hogs under the old frame church, which disturbed the services.

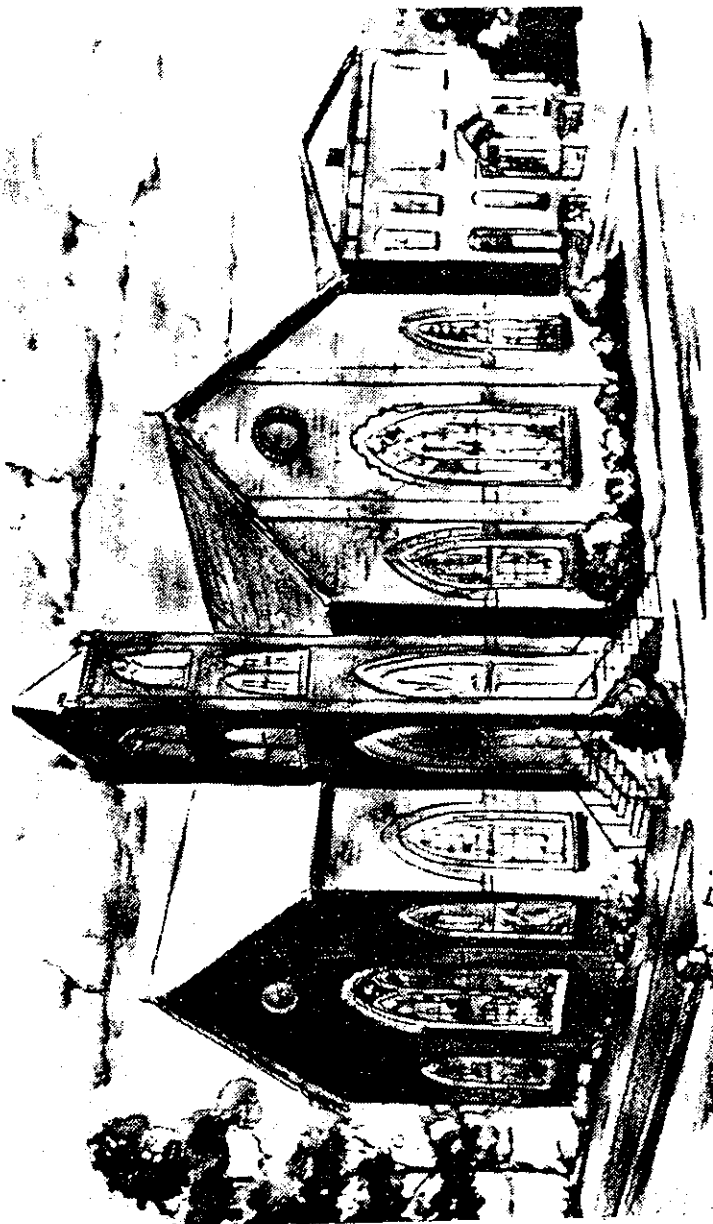
The building was rushed to completion so that Bishop George F. Pierce might preach the opening sermon early in the year 1875.

In 1896, an Epworth League room was added to the church. R. Marvin Kelly was president of the first Epworth League organized in this church, in 1893, and he later became a Conference President. The new addition was used by the Sunday School and the Woman's Missionary Society as well as by the League.

This building is said to be the first brick church building in Texas.

The pastors who served while this building was in use were: Rev. D. F. Fuller, 1875; Rev. Mr. Spurlock, 1876; Rev. H. C. Brook, 1876 (Supply); Rev. H. C. McDongal, 1877; Rev. John S. Matthis, 1878; Rev. D. P. Cullen, 1879-1881; Rev. J. T. Smith, 1882-1884; Rev. G. A. LeClere, 1885-1888; Rev. S. H. Nettles, 1889, and Rev. L. M. Fowler, 1890.

In 1883, the Longview church became a full time charge.



1900-1950

## ← KELLY MEMORIAL CHURCH

The year 1900 found the Longview congregation so large that the first brick church was no longer adequate. A larger and more pretentious church building was planned to take care of the needs of a growing congregation.

The Rev. W. W. Watts was pastor, and during this, the last year of his pastorate, he did a great deal toward getting things in shape for the building of the church. The work, which was continued by Dr. Isaac Alexander, was consummated in the year 1901, at a cost of \$12,000.

G. A. Kelly acted as both architect and contractor for the church building, saving several thousand dollars in building costs. It was Brother Watts who suggested that the church be named Kelly Memorial in honor of the man who had been the leading and guiding spirit in its construction.

In 1909, while the Rev. J. W. Bergin was pastor and Miss Virginia Kelly, teacher of the Baraca Class, Baraca Hall was built. This Hall gave more space for the Sunday School and more efficiently took care of the other activities of the church.

While the Rev. Fred E. Few was pastor and the Rev. Guy H. Wilson was Presiding Elder, in 1936, R. Marvin Kelly, son of George A. Kelly, requested that the church be renamed First Methodist Church.

The building was razed in 1950 to make room for the present structure.

# HISTORY OF THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH IN LONGVIEW

## I

In 1833, while Texas was still under the domination of Mexico and it was against Mexican law to organize anything but a Catholic church, the Methodists came across the Sabine and established the first Protestant church in Texas, meeting at the home of Colonel McMahan near San Augustine. As soon as possible, a church building was erected. Since that time there has always been a church building where a congregation worships on that same site, and the present beautiful McMahan's Chapel is the first shrine of Methodism in Texas.

With so stable a foundation and so good a start, Methodism spread rapidly after 1836 when Texas won her independence and her people were free to worship as they chose. The East Texas Conference was organized in 1840, but there was no Conference Journal until 1853. Sometime in the early 1860's the stagecoach which was carrying the trunk containing the Conference records was caught in a flood. It is presumed that the trunkful of papers floated away, as it was never seen again. Thus, we have no written records of those first Conferences and must rely almost entirely upon oral history for the early happenings in our East Texas churches.

We are reasonably sure from old letters and from stories handed down to children and grandchildren that the first Methodist church established in the area which is now within the city limits of Longview, comprised the congregation of the old log meeting house pictured on page 6.

The Rev. Robert D. Wyche, a Methodist minister, settled in 1846 on a place adjoining what is now the Gregg County Airport. There was nearby a log building used for both church and school. Dr. Massey, a physician, taught the school, and the Rev. Mr. Wyche preached there and also in the log meeting house, which was built in the Longview area in about 1840. A number of Methodist families came to Texas with the Wyches from Mississippi and settled in the same section. The Lemuel Hutchings, the Gladneys, the Reedys and the Wilsons were a part of that early congregation. The Ned Williams Negro school is

now located within seventy-five feet of the site of that first log house which was both school and church.

The first settlement was on the south bank of the Sabine, and when the stagecoach came that way a ferry was built to take the stage across. The stage route began at old Harrisburg, near Houston, and went through Nacogdoches, Camden, Jefferson, and on to old Clarksville. The first reference made to the ferry, owned by Mr. John Walling, was in 1843. At that time rather large river boats brought supplies up the Sabine to a landing near the ferry landing. Dr. Massie shipped the lumber on one of these boats to build a home.

There were several tribes of Indians located along the south bank of the river. The site of Chief Bowles' camp was somewhere in this region.

The site of the log meeting house was decided to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by Mr. John R. Magrill after the building had been in use for several years. Among the preachers who held services in this church besides Robert D. Wyche were Dr. Ellis, physician and local preacher, and the Rev. D. M. Stovall.

Between 1853 and 1860, the town of Earpville had grown rather rapidly, and since the log meeting house was becoming unsafe, it was decided to build a new church nearer the stage coach stop and more conveniently located for the greater number of people. The new frame church was built in 1860 under the leadership of Dr. Job Taylor, physician and local Methodist preacher.

In 1870, Bishop E. M. Marvin, presiding over the East Texas Conference, appointed the Rev. T. B. Norwood to the charge of which Earpville was a part. Brother Norwood built churches at Summerfield and LaGrone's Chapel. The fourth point on the charge was Ft. Crawford, near what is now Hallsville.

## II

In 1871, the Texas and Pacific Railroad built into this section, its terminus being between Center and High Streets. This caused an influx of new settlers, most of whom built their homes near the railroad terminus. In 1873, the church building was moved to a plot of ground given to the Methodist Church by the railroad company, and since that time the Methodist Church has occupied the same site. Soon after the coming of the railroad, the town was named Longview.

The Rev. D. F. Fuller was appointed to the Longview charge in 1874, and he found the small frame building inadequate. He began at once to try to persuade the church leaders to build a brick church. Dr. John H. McLean, the Presiding Elder, came to preach and hold the First Quarterly Conference. His sermon topic that night was "The Wild Man of Gadora." There was so much noise made by the hogs grunting and scratching flies on the sills under the church that the sermon could hardly be heard. Finally, a large part of the Official Board, Joseph Boring, Quincy Boring, Alex Methvin, Tom Buttrill and others armed themselves with brickbats and drove the disturbers away. The next morning the pastor met Joseph Boring on the street and asked how much he wanted a good brick church. He replied, "Five hundred dollars worth this morning." Mr. Buttrill, Mr. Methvin, and Dr. Taylor each gave \$500, and the pastor kept soliciting until, before nightfall, he had \$7,000, and the first brick church in this area, probably the first brick church in Texas, was begun.

Early in 1875, Bishop Pierce preached in the new building and dedicated it. In order that the church might be finished on time for that service, Captain May prepared the flooring plank and Mr. Sam Whitehead, Mr. Buttrill, Mr. Methvin, and the pastor, the Rev. D. F. Fuller, laid in the floor.

About this time, the Rev. B. W. Brown, a local Methodist preacher, with his wife, three sons, and five daughters moved to Longview. The Rev. Mr. Brown was a representative from Upshur County to the 13th State Legislature. He was active in bringing about the adoption in 1874 of the Act creating and naming Gregg County, which was detached from the southern part of Upshur and the northern part of Rusk Counties.

The children of the Rev. and Mrs. Brown were active in the work of the church. The sons, Oscar, Newt, and Walter, and the daughters Mattie (Carroll), Emma (Boring), Lulu (Crain), Mittie (Bruce), and Mary (Stinecomb) did much to sustain and increase the growth and influence of the church.

The first organ was purchased a few years after the brick church was built. It was an old-style Mason and Hamlin pedal-operated instrument, which was originally used in the Sunday School, since some of the old-timers objected to its use in the regular church service. Miss Alice Kelly (Yates) for the first organist, and Miss Mollie Chaney was assistant.

The town of Longview had been growing rapidly. It became the county seat in 1873. As the town grew, the Methodist congregation grew so that even "the brick church" became inadequate, and in 1900 a new building was begun. The Rev. W. W. Watts was the pastor. He was noted for his power in the pulpit, his vigorous leadership as a pastor and as a member of the Conference, and for his ability as a builder of churches. Mr. G. A. Kelly, one of the leading laymen, was one of those rare souls who are willing to put the work of the church above all else. Mr. Kelly was both architect and contractor. With such able leadership, the new building, which was finished in 1901 at a cost of \$12,000, was one of the finest in the Conference. The new organ installed in the new church was a "Vocalion," a semi-pipe organ, which had a lever to operate the bellows.

For several years, efforts were made to secure a standard pipe organ. Andrew Carnegie, who had given a few organs to churches was petitioned to no avail. In 1913, Frank T. Rembert, a successful business man, was invited to give half the price of an organ as a memorial to his father. Mr. Rembert gave \$2,500; and in 1914, the new Moller organ, costing \$5,000, was installed. Miss Pauline Yates was the first organist, and the chimes added later by her mother were a memorial to her father, J. W. Yates. The organ was dedicated early in 1915.

In 1909, while Dr. J. W. Bergin was pastor, the need for more Sunday School space prompted the building of Baraca Hall. Miss Virginia Kelly, teacher of the Baraca Class, was the moving spirit in the erection of this building, which added greatly to the effectiveness of most of the church organizations. The kitchen and large dining hall made possible many social gatherings, deepening the spirit of fellowship among the members of the congregation.

The Texas Annual Conference met in Longview in December, 1915; the Rembert memorial organ was played by Mrs. H. M. Whaling. At that time, Mrs. Whaling was a well known organist and the wife of the vice president of Southern Methodist University.

In 1943, the church found it necessary to rebuild the entire organ. When the task was completed, the organ was reopened on November 14, 1943, by a joint program given by a former organist, Mrs. George Ballard and the choir under the direction of Ethelstone Provence Chapman.

During the pastorate of the Rev. F. E. Few, 1934-40, the need for more space arose again. After much study of the needs and planning for the most effective way of

meeting those needs, a new educational building was built. The plans included the tearing away of the old building and the erection of a new sanctuary as soon as was possible to do so. In 1950, these plans reached their consummation, and the building which will live long in the memories of the Methodists of Longview was torn down to make room for a larger and more efficient place of worship.

### III

#### LAY ACTIVITIES

The Sunday School, the Epworth League, and other organizations for the spiritual and religious training of young people have always been an important part of the work in the Longview church since it was first organized. The Sunday School motto, "The church in the Sunday School and the Sunday School in the church," which was often quoted by the leaders in the early years of the century, shows the close coordination of the work. Adults and young people worked together to make the Sunday School efficient in the training of those who would be leaders in the church. Jesse Bivins Turner when a very young school girl was pianist for the Sunday School. Petite Vanita Howard, when only seven or eight years old, was often called forward and lifted up on the chancel rail by the superintendent to sing solos for the closing exercises.

In 1893, five years after the Epworth League was organized in Cleveland, Ohio, to take care of the young people's work in the Methodist churches, the Longview church organized its first chapter, a vigorous organization, with R. M. Kelly as president and with Mollie and Ada Chaney, Ed Rembert, Josie Taylor, Virginia Kelly, Mrs. Mollie Sessums Fambrough most active in its membership. Mr. Kelly became Conference President of the Epworth League three years later. In 1896 the Epworth League room was built, and it was used not only as a meeting place for the Leaguers but for the Sunday School and the Woman's Missionary Society.

The first Woman's Society of the church was an Aid Society, organized in 1885, with Mrs. Josie Taylor, daughter-in-law of Dr. Job Taylor, as president and Miss Della Brown as secretary. The organization was merged into the Home and Parsonage Association in 1893. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was formed March 5, 1896, with Mrs. G. A. LeClere, wife of the pastor, as president.

Baraca Hall, constructed in 1909, was one of the most modern structures for the church school program at that time.

Wesley Hall was built in the fall of 1927 primarily as a meeting place for the Men's Bible Class. It served the church as a general purpose building until about 1935 when the present educational building was constructed and opened for services with 1,125 present.

Another highlight came in the late 1920's when the Men's Bible Class, with W. N. Blanton as teacher reached a peak of 525 men present, winning an attendance contest with the Men's Bible Class of First Methodist Church, Marshall.

After the new educational building came into use Wesley Hall was donated to the woman of Longview and used by them as a community center until the new Community Center building was completed, at which time it was given to St. Mark's C. M. E. Church. It is still being used for a church kindergarten and community library.

The list of Sunday School Superintendents since 1870, our earliest records, are as follows: Captain Steven S. May, Joseph W. Boring, C. P. Carter, Gaines B. Turner, Samuel Proud, R. M. Kelly, 1899-1920; W. P. Carlock, 1920-21; Henry C. McCrede, 1921-23; H. L. Foster, 1923-49; Clarence Richardson since 1949.

### IV

#### NOTABLE REVIVALS

The Methodist Church was founded on revivals beginning with John and Charles Wesley. Revival meetings were held once or twice a year in our local church and were helpful in its spiritual growth and in the extension of its membership.

Some of the best known evangelists in the church have held meetings in the Longview area.

Prior to 1880, an old time Methodist Camp Meeting was started in the Winterfield Community, three miles northeast of Longview. G. B. "Doc" Richardson and his family inspired this religious movement. Longview Methodists gave hearty support, led by "Uncle Dokey" Downs. A four-acre site was secured from Thomas Hopkins and family. A tabernacle was built and a number of camping cabins. These summer camp meetings were well attended and were an inspiration to churches in this area. The meetings were continued several years, and the camp was then merged into the present thriving Winterfield Methodist Church.

In 1886, the Rev. Mr. Bennett, assisted by Evangelist Abe Mulkey, conducted a revival in the first brick church.

A few years later, Abe Mulkey held a tent meeting here, preaching to great crowds and bringing many souls into the kingdom.

In 1898, the Rev. George R. Stewart, a co-worker with the great Sam Jones, conducted a tent meeting which inspired and revived the Longview church.

In 1901, the pastor, Dr. Isaac Alexander, invited a Salvation Army group that was holding street services here to conduct a Sunday service in the new church. They were well received and stayed to hold a revival.

(Dr. Alexander organized Alexander Collegiate Institute in Kilgore in 1873 and it was noted for its character building as well as education. After Dr. Alexander entered the ministry the institute was moved to Jacksonville, and later was named Lon Morris College.)

Mrs. Zehner, of Dallas, an eloquent evangelist and temperance worker, came here to address the Woman's Aid Society. She made such an impression that she was invited to hold a two-week meeting.

In 1908, a tent was erected on the courthouse lawn, and Dr. John E. Brown, noted evangelist, conducted a union revival that was a pronounced success.

In 1915, the Rev. Glenn Flinn, pastor, conducted a "One to Win One" campaign, and on Easter Sunday received 165 members into the church.

Judge John M. Duncan, of Longview, and Attorney Cone Johnson, of Tyler, member of the State Highway Commission, delivered a number of brilliant inspirational lay sermons that were a blessing to the church.

Revivals were held in our church by the Rev. R. C. Flowers in 1927 and the Rev. Leland Clegg in 1929.

## The Church for All . . . All for the Church

*The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to Church regularly and read your Bible daily.*

## FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

Longview, Texas

Pastors and Lay Readers From the  
Earliest Records to Date

### EAST TEXAS CONFERENCE, MARSHALL DISTRICT

Year Appointed	Pastors	Presiding Elder	Bishop
1846	Robert D Wyche (occasional preacher)	S. A. Williams	Robert Paine
1847	(occasional preacher)	S. A. Williams	Wm. Capers
1855	Dr. Ellis (physician and lay preacher)	J. T. P. Irvine	Geo. F. Pierce
1856	D. M. Stovall	J. T. P. Irvine	Robert Paine
1860	Dr. Job Taylor (Lay preacher and physician) (Log church abandoned for new church at Earpville)	Richard Lane	J. O. Andrew

### TRINITY CONFERENCE, JEFFERSON DISTRICT

1870	T. B. Norwood	S. J. Hawkins	E. M. Marvin
1871	T. B. Norwood	John H. McLean	E. M. Marvin
1872	T. B. Norwood	John H. McLean	J. C. Keener
1873	Earpville church moved to Longview.		
1873	T. B. Norwood	John H. McLean	H. H. Kavanaugh

### NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE, JEFFERSON DISTRICT

1874	D. F. Fuller	John H. McLean	H. N. McTyeire
1875	D. F. Fuller	J. C. Smith	Geo. F. Pierce
1875	First brick church completed		
1876	J. F. Scurlock H. C. Booth, Supply J. L. Terry Supply	J. C. Clark	D. S. Doggett
1877	A. C. McDougal	L. B. Ellis	W. M. Wightman

### EAST TEXAS CONFERENCE, MARSHALL DISTRICT

1878	J. S. Matthews	R. W. Thompson	J. C. Keener
1879	D. P. Cullen H. M. Booth, Supply	R. W. Thompson	H. N. McTyeire
1880	D. P. Cullen H. M. Booth Supply	S. W. Turner	H. H. Kavanaugh
1881	D. P. Cullen	S. W. Turner	H. H. Kavanaugh
1882	J. T. Smith	John Adams	Linus Parker
1883	J. T. Smith	John Aspley	Linus Parker
(Station) 1884	H. M. Booth, Supply J. T. Smith	R. W. Thompson	H. N. McTyeire
1885	G. A. LeClere H. M. Booth Supply	R. W. Thompson	H. N. McTyeire
1886	G. A. LeClere H. M. Booth Supply	R. W. Thompson	Jos. S. Key
1887	G. A. LeClere H. M. Booth Supply	R. M. Sproule	W. W. Duncan
1888	S. H. Nettles	T. P. Smith	W. W. Duncan
1889	L. M. Fowler	T. P. Smith	Jos. S. Key
1890	L. M. Fowler	T. P. Smith	C. B. Galloway
1891	L. M. Fowler	John Adams	O. P. Fitzgerald

Year Appointed	Pastors	Presiding Elder	Bishop
1892	H. G. Scudday	John Adams	R. K. Hargrove
1893	H. G. Scudday	John Adams	E. R. Hendrix
1894	J. W. Downs	John Adams	R. K. Hargrove
1895	J. W. Downs	O. P. Thomas	J. C. Keener
1896	A. J. Frick	O. P. Thomas	E. R. Hendrix
1897	A. J. Frick	L. M. Fowler	Granberry
1898	C. R. Lamar	L. M. Fowler	C. B. Galloway
1899	W. W. Watts	L. M. Fowler	R. K. Hargrove
	New brick church started 1900		
1900	Isaac Alexander	C. R. Lamar	W. A. Candler
	New brick church completed 1901		
1901	Isaac Alexander	C. R. Lamar	A. W. Wilson

**EAST TEXAS CONFERENCE MERGED WITH TEXAS CONFERENCE**

1902	Isaac Alexander	C. R. Lamar	E. R. Hendrix
1903	C. J. Oxley	J. W. Downs	W. W. Duncan
1904	B. H. Greathouse	J. W. Downs	E. E. Hoss
1905	B. H. Greathouse	J. W. Downs	Jos. E. Key

**TEXAS CONFERENCE, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT**

1906	J. L. Massey	Ellis Smith	H. C. Morrison
1907	J. L. Massey	Ellis Smith	W. A. Candler

**TEXAS CONFERENCE, MARSHALL DISTRICT**

1908	J. W. Bergin	H. T. Cunningham	W. A. Candler
1909	J. W. Bergin	H. T. Cunningham	Jos. S. Key
1910	H. C. Willis	H. T. Cunningham	W. B. Murrell
1911-13	H. C. Willis	F. M. Boyles	E. D. Mouzon
1914	Glen Flinn	F. M. Boyles	J. H. McCoy
1915	W. D. White	J. B. Turrentine	J. H. McCoy
1916	W. D. White	H. C. Willis	J. H. McCoy
1917	W. F. Andrews	H. C. Willis	J. H. McCoy
1918-19	W. F. Andrews	H. C. Willis	W. N. Ainsworth
1920	W. F. Andrews	C. B. Garrett	W. N. Ainsworth
1921	H. T. Perritte	C. B. Garrett	W. N. Ainsworth
1922	C. U. McLarty	C. B. Garrett	John M. Moore
1923	Frank E. Luker	C. B. Garrett	John M. Moore
1924	Frank E. Luker	V. A. Godbey	John M. Moore
1925	J. Coy Williams	V. A. Godbey	John M. Moore
1926	W. R. Swain	V. A. Godbey	John M. Moore
1927	W. R. Swain	V. A. Godbey	Sam R. Hay
1928-29	W. R. Swain	L. B. Elrod	Sam R. Hay
1930-31	T. S. Barcus	L. B. Elrod	H. A. Boaz
1932-33	L. W. Nichols	Ira F. Key	H. A. Boaz
1934	F. E. Few	Ira F. Key	A. Frank Smith
1935-40	F. E. Few	G. H. Wilson	A. Frank Smith
1941-42	D. L. Landrum	G. H. Wilson	A. Frank Smith
1943	D. L. Landrum	Monroe Vivion	A. Frank Smith

**TEXAS CONFERENCE, LONGVIEW DISTRICT**

1944-46	F. M. Richardson	Monroe Vivion	A. Frank Smith
1947-48	F. M. Richardson	S. S. McKenney	A. Frank Smith
Since 1949	W. R. Swain	Joe Z Tower	A. Frank Smith

# AN OLD FASHION SING-A-LONG

## GREETINGS

## SINGING

## SCRIPTURES RECITED

Will Gullette, Peter Gullette, Melissa Collier, Christi Collier,  
Megan Wallace, Greg Wallace, Lacey Craig, Cody Craig,  
Mary Ellen Greenwaldt

## SINGING

DISMISS to GREET PASTOR WELCH and FAMILY

## THE HYMNS

### BECAUSE HE LIVES

God sent his Son, they called him Jesus; he came to love, heal, and forgive; he lived and died to buy my pardon, an empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. Because he lives, I can face tomorrow; because he lives, all fear is gone; because I know he holds the future, and life is worth the living just because he lives.

### BLESSED ASSURANCE

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretast of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

### HE LIVES

I serve a risen Savior, he's in the world today; I know that he is living, whatever foes may say. I see his hand of mercy, I hear his voice for cheer, and just the time I need him, he's always near. He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, he lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.

### HERE I AM, LORD

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save. I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send? Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.



## History of First Methodist Church Longview, Texas

The original 1845 Methodist Church was a one room log structure referred to as the "Meeting House" This building was used as a school, the town hall and by other denominations. J.R. Magrill executed the deed to the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1853. This deed adjoined the Boring-Leake cemetery. Rev. Robert D. Wyche held services in the log meeting house between 1846 and 1855. Between 1855 and 1860. Dr. George Ellis, physician and Methodist lay preacher, and Rev. D. M. Stovall each held services in this building. Prior to 1850, Methodism was a part of the Marshall Circuit riding district.

Evening services were held at "early candlelight". The minister "lined out" the hymns by reading the first two stanzas and then the congregation sang them. This was done because of the absence of musical instruments and hymnals.

Around 1860 the log church was abandoned and a new frame church was constructed in Earpville on the stage coach road from Marshall to Tyler. (present location of 700 block of 8th street) This construction was supervised by Dr. Job Taylor, physician and lay preacher. This church served as the center of Methodist fellowship until around 1871.

It was at this time when the Texas and Pacific railroad moved into Longview and on April 9, 1874 deeded lot 6, block 1 to B. Buttrill,

Mr. R. Marvin Kelly

Longview, Texas

My dear Mr. Kelly,

Earpville, a platted town site 1853, was the stagecoach house where meals, rooms and change of stage horses were made. It is the first name of the town. It is located north of Highway 80, between Sandifers home and the old home of Charlie Taylors father. One room of the Sandifer home was the first post office, serving the stage coach route.

On the 25th of June, 1873 an election was held to locate the County seat. Longview received 524 votes and Awalt received 125 votes. See Book A page 9 Minutes of Commissioners Court. Awalt was located approximately 1 mile south of the Pine Tree church.

The cemetery located north of the I & O N Railway track and back of the present day Salvation Army building on Cotton Street and site of the Liberty Church was deeded to the church and cemetery by Magrill, 1853. The description of the land is not clear. There is reference in the 1853 deed that the church and cemetery were donated by Magrill, 1850, but the deed was not made until 1853. The cemetery was known as Boring and Leake Cemetery. All buried in this cemetery were removed to the Longview (Greenwood) Cemetery except three (3). No one knows why they were not moved as were the others.

If the Volume and page of this deed is important, I will obtain it for you. The information with respect to the Magrill deed is from W.C. Hurst.

Trusting that I have covered the data you requested, I am -

Yours truly,

---

APPLICATION FORM  
OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

(PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH SIDES OF FORM.)

This marker is for (title or subject): FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

(Title subject to change by THC staff and/or State Marker Review Board.)

County: GREGG

Marker location (street address and city, or specific directions from nearest town on state highway map):  
400 North Fredonia Street  
Longview, Texas 75601

Distance and direction of marker topic from marker site (if applicable):  
\_\_\_\_\_



APPROVAL OF COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The application and narrative history must be approved by the county historical commission before forwarding to the Texas Historical Commission.

Signature of CHC chair or Marker Committee chair: Norman H. Mack, D.D.S., chair  
Date: 2-20-90

Address: 417 Mobberly Ave., Longview, Texas 75602  
Phone: 903-757-2261 FAX: 903-753-5337

The CHC chair or Marker Committee chair automatically will receive all copies of correspondence regarding this marker project.

PERMISSION OF OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Permission for placement of a marker must be obtained by the property owner. Please provide the name of a contact person if the owner is an institution, organization, or public entity. This section need not be completed if the marker is to be placed on right-of-way maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation.

Name: First United Methodist Church, Roy E. Price, Jr., Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Contact person (if applicable): Joanie Rathbun/Chair/Historical Committee  
Mailing address: PO Box 4023, Longview, TX 75606  
Phone: 903-757-8233 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Signature: Roy E. Price, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Do you wish to receive copies of all correspondence concerning this marker application?  Yes  No

To whom should the request for payment be addressed?

Name: First United Methodist Church-Attn: Joanie Rathbun/Chair/Historical Committee  
(Provide contact person if payee is an institution, organization, or public entity.)  
Mailing address: PO Box 707, Longview, TX 75606  
Phone: 903-753-4463 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Does this person wish to receive copies of all other correspondence concerning this application?  Yes  No

Is there anyone else to whom all correspondence concerning this marker application should be addressed? (One additional name and address only, please.)

Name: Beth Dodson  
Mailing address: 117 West Edgefield, Longview, TX 75602  
Phone: 903-753-2940 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

(over)

**SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS**

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. If the marker is to be placed on the highway right-of-way, it will be shipped directly to the district highway engineer.

Name: Gregg County Historical Commission, Dr. Norman Black

Street address: 417 Mobberly Avenue, Longview, Texas 75602

Phone: 903-757-2261

**TYPE AND SIZE OF MARKER DESIRED (Please check one only.)****Subject Markers**

This type of marker is solely educational in nature and conveys no legal restrictions to the property. Subject markers are appropriate for topics such as cemeteries, church congregations, businesses, persons, events, and institutions. These markers should not be attached to buildings. If the marker is to be attached to a surface other than the foundry-provided post, please provide the requested information in the space below.

- |                                                                           |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker with post                       | \$850 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker without post (see below)        | \$800 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker with post            | \$550 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker without post (see below)        | \$500 |

If not on post, to what (block of granite, gatepost, etc.) will the marker be attached? \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material? (wood, stone, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Markers**

Markers conveying the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation are reserved solely for historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. The RTHL designation does carry a measure of legal protection for the structure (see Marker Policies 13 through 18) and for that reason we must have a legal description (lot and block numbers) for the property to be designated. The most commonly used marker for conveying this designation is the medallion and plate (also referred to as a building marker); however, the 18" x 28" or 27" x 42" size marker may be ordered for those who wish a greater amount of historical information to appear in the marker text. Careful attention should be paid so as not to damage historic building material if the marker is to be mounted directly onto the structure. The THC staff can provide alternate ideas for mounting upon request.

- |                                                                                 |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medallion and 16" x 12" plate with post                | \$400 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medallion and 16" x 12" plate without post (see below) | \$350 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker with post                             | \$850 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker without post (see below)              | \$800 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker with post                             | \$550 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker without post (see below)              | \$500 |

If not on post, to what (building, gate, etc.) will the marker be attached? \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material? (wood, stone, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (lot and block number; metes and bounds):** \_\_\_\_\_

400 North Fredonia Street

Longview, Texas 75601

*Before forwarding your material to the Texas Historical Commission, please check to make sure you've included the following items. Incomplete applications cannot be considered and may be returned to the applicant.*

- ✓ completed application form signed by the county historical commission
- ✓ narrative history with reference notes and bibliography
- ✓ photograph of the proposed marker location
- ✓ map indicating marker location and other sites related to the marker topic
- ✓ historic photo of property and current photographs of all elevations (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ legal description of property (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ floor plans (RTHL markers only)

Mail completed applications to:

**Local History Programs, Texas Historical Commission**

P.O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711-2276

512/463-5853

Additional items, including directional signs and replacement parts for 1936 markers, are available. Please contact the Local History Programs office for a separate order form.

Rev. 1995

History of First United Methodist Church  
Longview, Texas  
Joan Agnes Rathbun

1996 will be a year of celebration for the First United Methodist Church of Longview. We will celebrate 150 years of ministry in Longview, Texas.

The original 1845 Methodist Church was a one room log structure referred to as the "Meeting House" This building was used as a school, the town hall and by other denominations.<sup>1</sup> J.R. Magrill executed the deed to the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1853.<sup>2</sup> This deed adjoined the Boring cemetery. Rev. Robert D. Wyche held services in the log meeting house between 1846 and 1855. Between 1855 and 1860, Dr. George Ellis, physician and Methodist lay preacher, and Rev. D. M. Stovall each held services in this building.<sup>3</sup> Prior to 1850, Methodism was a part of the Marshall Circuit riding district.<sup>4</sup>

Evening services were held at "early candlelight". The minister "lined out" the hymns by reading the first two stanzas and then the congregation sang them. This was done because of the absence of musical instruments and hymnals.<sup>5</sup>

Around 1860 the log church was abandoned and a new frame church was constructed in Earpville on the stage coach road from Marshall to Tyler. This construction was supervised by Dr. Job Taylor, physician and lay preacher. The Rev. T. B. Norwood served the Earpville Church from 1870 until the building was moved.<sup>6</sup> This church served as the center of Methodist fellowship until around 1871.<sup>7</sup>

It was at this time when the Texas and Pacific railroad moved into Longview and on April 9, 1874 deeded lot 6, block 1 to B. Buttrill, O. H. Methvin, Walter Paine and Stephen May, trustees of the Methodist-Episcopal Church South which is the present site of the North East corner of Fredonia and Whaley streets. This deed is duly recorded in the deed records of Gregg Co. in volume B, page 325.<sup>8</sup> In 1874 the frame church at Earpville was reconstructed at this site.<sup>9</sup> Pastors who served in this church building were Rev. Job Taylor, D. M. Stovall and T. B. Norwood. The Rev. D.F. Fuller was appointed and arrived in Longview in 1874<sup>10</sup> to find the frame building was of inadequate size to house the growing congregation;<sup>11</sup> he then led the membership in it's first building program.<sup>12</sup> When Dr. John H. McLean, the church's presiding elder, came to

preach at the First Quarterly Conference one Sunday evening, the roving hogs squealing under the open frame building disturbed the congregation so much that \$7,000 was pledged to begin the new brick building the very next day.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Andrew Taylor, County Surveyor and son of Dr. Job Taylor staked the ground; construction was started in 1874 and was completed in record time for the Bishop George F. Pierce to preach the opening services early in the year 1875.<sup>14</sup> It was said that this was one of the first brick church buildings in Texas.<sup>15</sup> This brick church had a separate bell tower approximately 20 feet high, wooden benches were used for pews, wood burning stoves, hitching post, water trough, a well and picnic tables in the back. Church members who were skilled painters and carpenters pledged their skills for the building maintenance.<sup>16</sup> Construction of this building was supervised by the following church leaders: J.W. Boring, Alex Methvin, Tom Buttrill and Dr. Job Taylor.<sup>17</sup> Pastors who served this church were: Rev. D. F. Fuller, 1875; Rev. J. F. Scurlock, 1876; Rev. A. C. McDougal, 1877; Rev. J. S. Matthews, 1878; Rev. D. P. Cullen, 1879-1881; Rev. H. M. Booth, Supply, 1880-1886; Rev. J. T. Smith, 1882-1884; Rev. G. A. LeClere, 1885-1887; Rev. S. H. Nettles, 1888; Rev. L. M. Fowler, 1889-1891; Rev. H. G. Scudday, 1892-1893; Rev. J. W. Downs, 1894-1895; Rev. A. J. Frick, 1896-1897; Rev. C. R. Lamar, 1898; and W. W. Watts, 1899.<sup>18</sup>

In 1883 the Longview Methodist Church had grown so that it became a full-time charge and taken off the Marshall circuit.<sup>19</sup> The Epworth League came to Longview in 1893 with R. Marvin Kelly as president, the first Woman's Society was organized in 1885 with Mrs. Jose Taylor (daughter-in-law to Job Taylor), president and in 1886 the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was formed with Mrs. G. A. LeClere, wife of the pastor as president.<sup>20</sup> In 1896, an Epworth League room was added on to the back of the church. This new addition housed the Woman's Missionary Society, Sunday School classes as well as the league.<sup>21</sup> A few years after the church was built a Mason and Hamlin pedal-operated organ was purchased. Organist were Miss Alice Kelly (Mrs. J.W. Yates) and Miss Molly Chaney.<sup>22</sup> Services were held in this church for approximately 26 years.<sup>23</sup>

The Methodist congregation outgrew their brick church by 1900. Rev. W.W. Watts and his successor Dr. Isaac Alexander led the church into another building program.<sup>24</sup> G. A. Kelly organized the fund drive for this new

building, as well as being the contractor and architect<sup>25</sup> and a bigger brick structure was constructed at the cost of \$12,000.00.<sup>26</sup> Wood heaters were replaced by coal furnaces and ceiling fans were installed.<sup>27</sup> This church was named Kelly Memorial Methodist Church in honor of G. A. Kelly who had been the guiding force in its construction.<sup>28</sup>

As membership into the Methodist Church continued to grow, so did the need of space. It was during Dr. J.W. Bergin's pastorship that on October 15, 1909 a called meeting of the Quarterly Conference authorized the construction of Bacara Hall.<sup>29</sup> In additions to classrooms, the building had a large dining area and a kitchen. Many social gatherings were held in Bacara Hall which strengthened the spirit of the Methodist Congregation.<sup>30</sup> In the fall of 1927 the Men's Bible Class built Wesley Hall in order to have a meeting area. Wesley Hall also served the church as a general purpose building until 1935. It was moved in 1934 to the middle of the park on Green Street, and in 1935 was donated to the women of Longview for use as a community center. It was later given to St. Mark's CME Church for use of a church kindergarten and community library.<sup>31</sup>

During the pastorate of Rev. L. W. Nichols, the Kelly Memorial Methodist church began its era of growth; plans were drawn to build an educational building but not fulfilled.<sup>32</sup> During Rev. F. E. Few's pastoral leadership, 1460<sup>33</sup> became members of the church, so the need for more space arose. New plans were drawn for the construction of the educational building, the removing of the old auditorium and the building of a new sanctuary.<sup>34</sup> Members of the building committee were elected at the Quarterly Conference held July 2, 1934 and they are as follows: W.R. Nicholson, Chair, Oliver Daniel, Vice-Chair, Cyril Parker, Harry Turner, Henry Foster, Joseph Bramlette and L. A. Sessums.<sup>35</sup> The educational building was finished in 1938 at the cost of \$60,000.00.<sup>36</sup> Pastors who served the Kelly Memorial Church were: Rev. Isaac Alexander, 1900-1902; Rev. C. J. Oxley 1903; Rev. B. H. Greathouse 1904-1905; Rev. J. L. Massey, 1906 - 1907; Rev. J. W. Bergin, 1908-1909; Rev. H. C. Willis, 1910-1913; Rev. Glenn Flinn, 1914; Rev. W. D. White, 1915-1916; Rev. W. F. Andrews, 1917-1920; H. T. Perritte, 1921; Rev. C. U. McLarty, 1922; Rev. Frank E. Luker, 1923-1924; Rev. J. Coy Williams, 1925; Rev. W. R. Swain, 1926-1929; Rev. T. S. Barcus, 1930-1931; Rev. L. W. Nichols, 1932-1933; Rev. F. E. Few, 1934-1940; Rev. D. L. Landrum, 1941-1944; Rev. F. M. Richardson, 1944-1948; and Rev. W. R. Swain, 1949-1953.<sup>37</sup>

In 1936, R. Marvin Kelly, son of G. A. Kelly requested the church be renamed First Methodist Church.<sup>38</sup> The last service held in this building was July 9, 1950.<sup>39</sup>

By the year 1950, membership had a enormous growth up to 2,016.<sup>40</sup> This necessitated the building of a new sanctuary. On July 10, 1950 the Kelly Memorial Church and Baraca Hall were razed to build the present sanctuary. Shirley Simons of Tyler, Texas was the architect and H. E. White the contractor.<sup>41</sup> During the construction time, services were held in the old Arlyne Theater.<sup>42</sup> Bishop A. Frank Smith laid the cornerstone for the new building on May 4, 1951<sup>43</sup> and on Sunday, March 2, 1952 the great day arrived, First Methodist Church had opening services in the new \$700,000.00 sanctuary with the Bishop A. Frank Smith preaching at the morning worship.<sup>44</sup>

With the ever-increasing membership of the Methodist Church, a fund raising drive was started in 1956 by Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Nicholson to build a children's building.<sup>45</sup> This building was completed at the approximate cost of \$329,500.00<sup>46</sup> and was dedicated on October 6, 1957.<sup>47</sup> The Methodist Church thrived in these buildings for approximately thirty years. Membership grew 12% from 1975 to 1985 and once again this growth necessitated another building program.<sup>48</sup> Ground breaking services were held on November 22, 1987<sup>49</sup> and the building was consecrated on February 12, 1989.<sup>50</sup> The new building houses the new main entrance to the church, offices, Sunday School classrooms and the youth department.<sup>51</sup> On November 18, 1991 at the annual charge conference the First Methodist Church had it final name change to First United Methodist Church.<sup>52</sup> Pastors who served in this church are: Rev. R. C. Terry, 1953 - 1956; Dr. Stanley Carter, 1956 -1959; Dr. Charles W. Williamson, 1959 - 1967; Dr. Derwood L. Blackwell, 1967 - 1973; Dr. Bob W. Parrott, 1974 - 1982; Dr. Conrad W. Winborn, Jr., 1983 - 1990; Dr. Larry Grubbs, 1991 - 1994, and David E. Williamson, 1995 - present.<sup>53</sup>

For over 150 years the spirit of Methodism has continued to do the work of God and spread through out Longview. "To God Be The Glory" as we honor First United Methodist Church with a historical marker.



ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Leroy Trice, "History of Methodist Church Given as Feature of Homecoming Services", Longview Daily News, (Tuesday, October 30, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> Deed Records Upshur County, (December 7, 1853), Book E, pp. 188 - 190.

<sup>3</sup> First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, One Hundred Years - First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, 1850 - 1950, (1950). p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, We Realize Our Dream Through Service, (1951).

<sup>5</sup> The History of Gregg County, Longview Junior Chamber of Commerce, (Ft. Worth, University Supply & Equipment Company, 1957).

<sup>6</sup> One Hundred Years, op. cit., p.7., p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. J. C. Howard, "Methodist Shared First Meeting House in Longview", Longview Morning Journal, (May 3, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Deed Records of Gregg County, (April 9, 1874), Book B, p. 325.

<sup>9</sup> First Methodist Church Historical Committee, Longview, Texas, A Brief History of First Methodist Church, 1843 to 1973, (1973).

<sup>10</sup> One Hundred Years, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>11</sup> Historical Committee, op. cit., and One Hundred Years, op. cit., p.14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>13</sup> Howard, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> One Hundred Years, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>15</sup> Historical Committee, op. cit., and Howard, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Historical Committee, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Howard, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Historical Committee, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, Reaching For Our Dreams.

- 20 Chamber of Commerce, op. cit.
- 21 One Hundred Years, op. cit., p. 9.
- 22 Howard, op. cit.
- 23 Cornerstone, First M E Church South, Longview, Texas.
- 24 One Hundred Years, op. cit., p. 11.
- 25 Historical Committee, op. cit.
- 26 Reaching, op. cit.
- 27 Historical Committee, op. cit.
- 28 Longview, Texas, Centennial, The Long view of a Hundred Years 1870 - 1970, (Hudson Printing), p. 38.
- 29 M E Church South, Longview, Texas, "Quarterly Conference Records", church files, (October 15, 1909).
- 30 Chamber of Commerce, op. cit.
- 31 One Hundred Years, op. cit., p. 17.
- 32 "Methodist in Longview now 100 Years Old", Longview Daily News, (May 31, 1936).
- 33 J.P. McClurken, "First Methodist Church -1846-1971", unpub., Longview, Texas., p. 20.
- 34 One Hundred Years, op. cit., p. 16.
- 35 Kelly Memorial Church, Longview, Texas, "Quarterly Conference Records", church files, (July 2, 1934).
- 36 Historical Committee, op. cit.
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- 39 Historical Committee, op. cit.
- 40 We Realize, op. cit., and  
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41 First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, "Behold I Set Before Thee An Open Door". (1952).

42 Reaching, op. cit.

43 Open Door, op. cit.

44 "First Methodist Church Building Opens Sunday" "\$700,000.00 Building to be Dedicated Formally", Longview Sunday News Journal, (March 2, 1952) and, First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, Church Bullentin, (March 2, 1952).

45 "First Methodist Starts Fundraising Drive", The Longview News Journal, (Sunday, January 1, 1956).

46 "First Methodist Builds \$329,500 Education Building" "Completion Expected in July", The Longview News Journal, (Tuesday, January 1, 1957).

47 "Methodist Open New Children's Building", The Longview Sunday News Journal, (October 6, 1957).

48 Reaching, op. cit.

49 First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, Church Bullentin, (November 22, 1987).

50 First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, Church Bullentin, (February 12, 1989), and  
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51 Reaching, op. cit.

52 First Methodist Church, Longview, Texas, The United Methodist Church Minutes of the Charge/Church Conference, Church files, (November 18, 1991).

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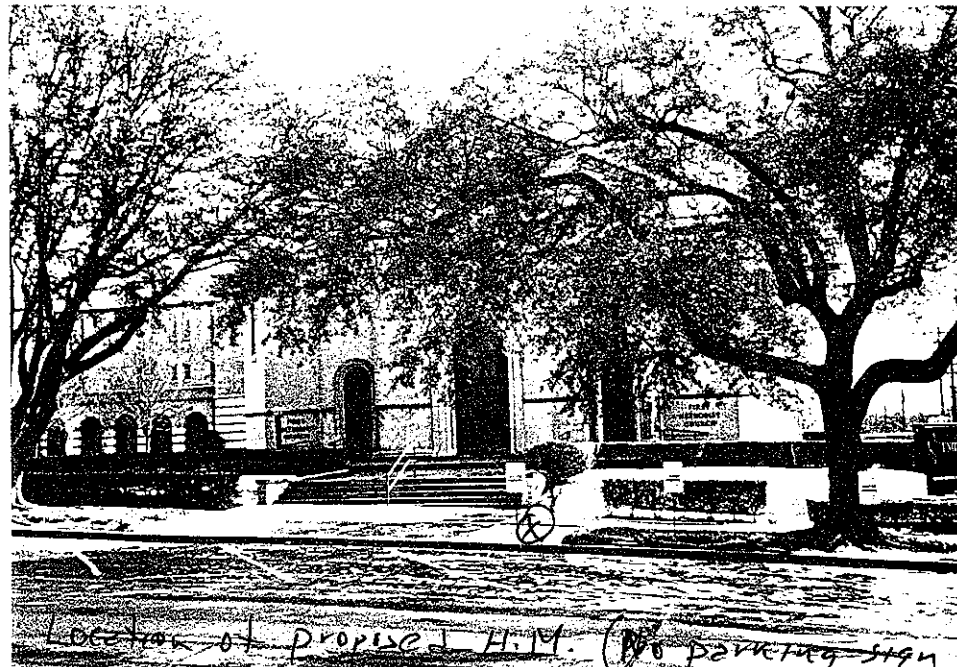
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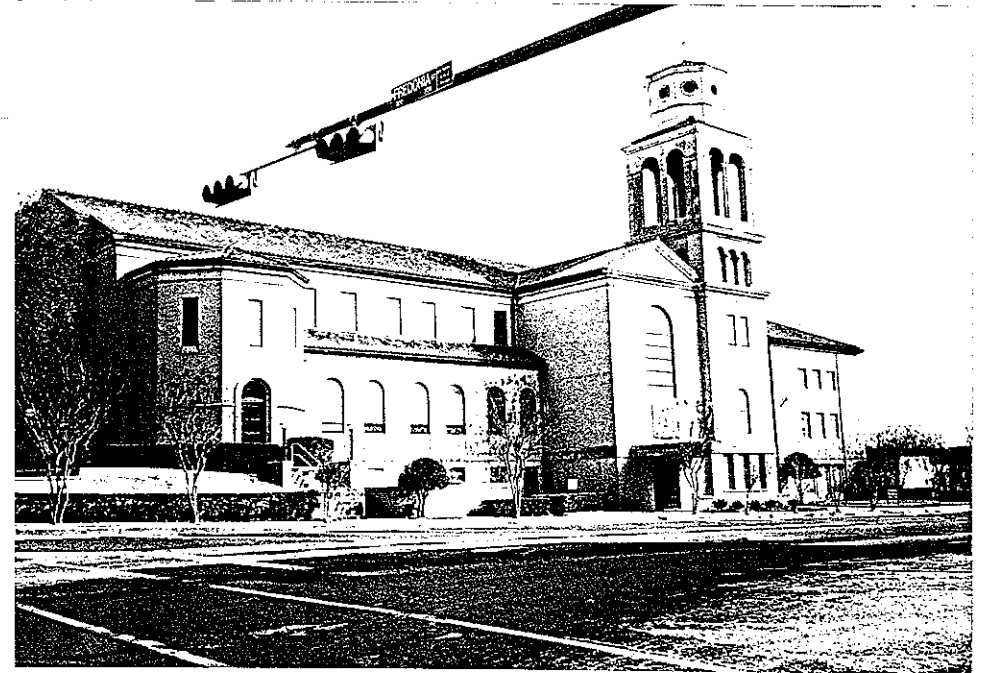
Location of proposed H.M. (No parking sign will be removed) West side (Main structure)



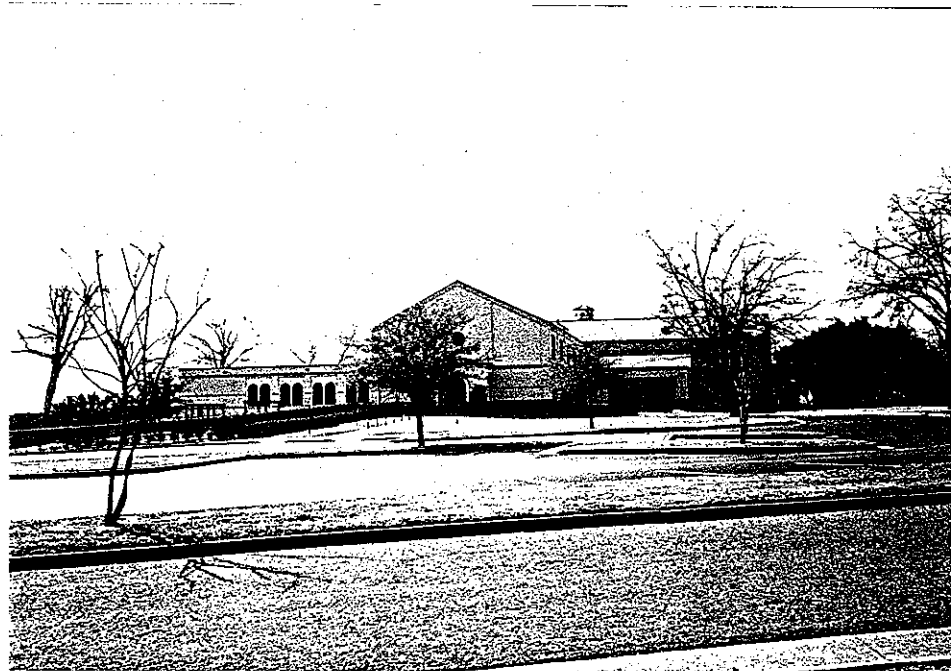
S.W. corner N. Fredon 12 (400) & E. Whaley



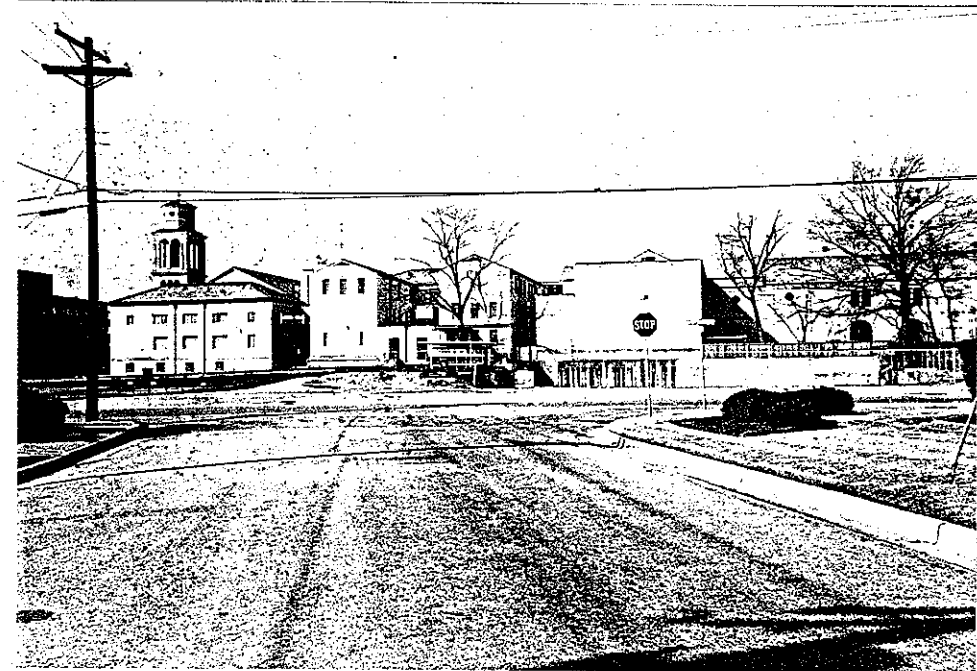
West side - educational unit



South side - E. Whaley St.



N. side from Pedon St.



E. side across N. Green St.









TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor  
John L. Nau, III • Chairman  
Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

May 30, 1996

Joanie Rathbun  
P O Box 707  
Longview, TX 75606

RE: FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF LONGVIEW  
18" x 28" marker w/ post  
Job # 15696, Gregg County

Dear Ms. Rathbun:

I am pleased to notify you that the State Marker Review Board has reviewed and approved the above-referenced topic for an Official Texas Historical Marker.

Payment for the marker, in the amount of \$550.00, is now due. Please complete and return the enclosed payment form at your earliest convenience. Once payment for the marker is received, the application will be placed in line to have the marker inscription written. The inscription will not be written until after funds have been received. When the text is prepared, a copy will be sent to you and any parties listed below for review and approval.

The Texas Historical Commission congratulates you on your efforts to record and preserve Texas history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia J. Beeman".

Cynthia J. Beeman, Administrator  
Official Texas Historical Markers  
Local History Programs

pc: Dr. Norman Black, CHC  
Beth Dodson

Texas Historical Commission Staff (WCT), 6/25/96, revised 7/24/96

18" x 28" Official Texas Historical Marker with post  
Gregg County (Job #15696)  
Location: 400 N. Fredonia St., Longview

**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH\*  
OF LONGVIEW\***

THIS CONGREGATION TRACES ITS HISTORY TO 1845, WHEN A ONE-ROOM LOG MEETING HOUSE WAS ERECTED NEARBY FOR A CHURCH, SCHOOL AND TOWN HALL. THE CHURCH WAS SERVED BY CIRCUIT-RIDING MINISTERS UNTIL 1850, THE CONGREGATION MOVED TO EARPVILLE ON THE STAGE COACH ROAD IN 1860, AND MOVED THEIR CHURCH BUILDING TO LONGVIEW IN 1874 AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD. THE CHURCH HAS GROWN STEADILY OVER THE YEARS, AND HAS ERECTED SEVERAL NEW BUILDINGS TO SERVE ITS MEMBERS AND EXPANDING PROGRAMS. THE CHURCH CONTINUES TO SERVE THE AREA AS IT HAS FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS.\*\*

(1996)\*\*\*

- \*1/2 inch lettering to contrast with text
- \*\*1/2 inch lettering
- \*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

**PLEASE CHECK ONE AND SIGN:**

- I approve this text as written.
- Please consider the revisions as noted on this copy.

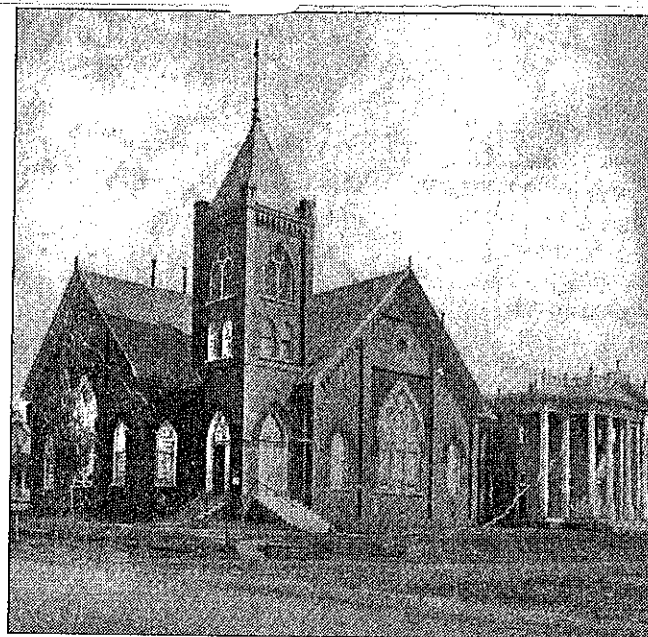
*James C. Robinson*  
(signature)

*Beth Dodson*

**B**

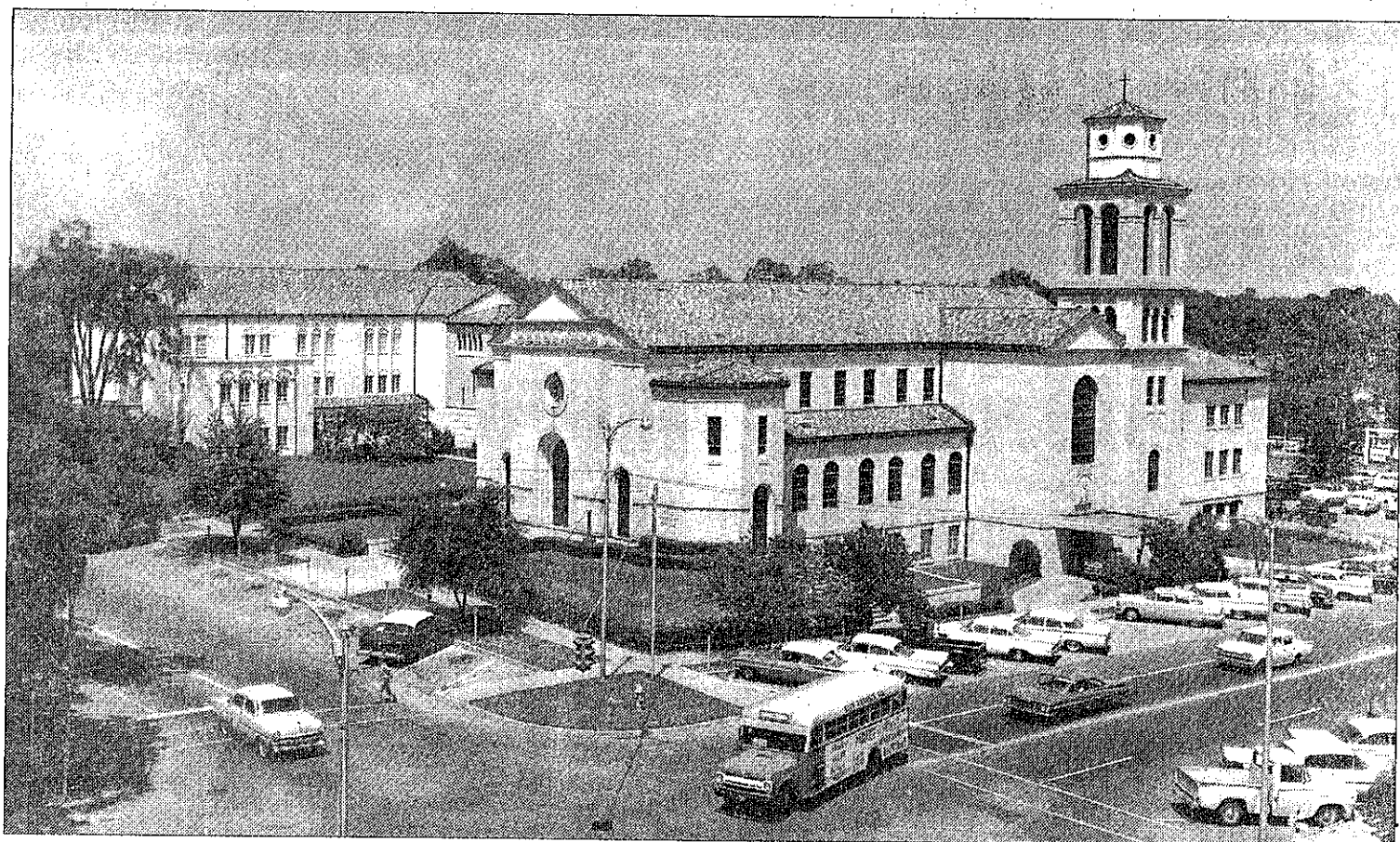
Wednesday, June 4, 1997

# Faith within the walls



Around the turn of the century, with the First United Methodist congregation outgrowing its brick church, the Kelly Memorial Methodist Church, left, was built. Bacara Hall was added to the church's property in 1909. In 1950, the Kelly Memorial Church and Bacara Hall were destroyed to make way for a new sanctuary designed to hold an even larger congregation. The new sanctuary, below, still serves the congregation today. It was completed in 1952.

Courtesy photos



## First United Methodist to celebrate 150 years, new pastor

By Dena Rains Cline  
Staff Writer

**E**loise Wilson, pastor's assistant emeritus for the First United Methodist Church, has seen many changes in the church in her 84 years there: names changed, buildings constructed, buildings razed, members joining and members leaving.

Wilson will see a first for the congregation this Sunday, though, when a state historical marker will be erected to commemorate the church's 150th anniversary.

Sunday's services will involve a dual celebration with the congregation also preparing to welcome its new pastor, the Rev. Jim Welch, whose first sermon will be delivered before the marker dedication ceremony.

Wilson's grandmother, Emma Jane Ross, was one of the Methodist church's first members when Ross and her family came to the Longview area in the 1880s, Wilson said.

### First United Methodist Church 150th Anniversary Celebration

9 a.m.: Sunday school  
10 a.m.: Worship service followed by marker dedication  
Procession follows dedication.  
Dinner on the grounds  
Cost: \$3.50 per person for meal.  
For reservations, call 753-4463.

Of course, this was after the Methodists in the area had constructed a log cabin "Meeting House," a one-room house erected at the east end of what is now College Street. Circuit-riding preachers served in both the "Meeting House" and later a frame building erected in Earpville, near what is present-day Eighth Street, after the log house was abandoned.

In 1874, after a herd of squealing pigs disrupted evening services at the frame church in Earpville, \$7,000 was raised in one day to fund the construction of a new

church. The building, thought to be the first brick church building in the state, was erected on land given to the congregation by the Texas and Pacific Railroad. The church has been located on the same plot of land ever since.

By 1900, the congregation had outgrown its brick church, and a larger building was constructed under the direction of G.A. Kelly, the owner of the G.A. Kelly Plough Co. The church was later named Kelly Memorial Methodist Church to honor the man who also helped raise

funds for the new construction.

Bacara Hall was added to the church's property in 1909, which gave the church additional classrooms and dining area. Construction on an Educational Building began around 1933 to meet the needs of the flourishing church, whose growth paralleled that of Longview after the discovery of oil in the area.

"It was just overnight; we had lots of people," Wilson said. "Before the oil boom, this area was mostly agricultural. After the oil boom, it was mostly industrial, with people who are skilled in more crafts."

Because of the number of Methodist churches springing up in the area, R. Marvin Kelly, son of the church's namesake, asked that the church be renamed First

See Church, 3B



Courtesy photo

In 1874, after a herd of squealing pigs disrupted evening services at the frame church in Earpville, \$7,000 was raised in one day to fund the construction of a new church. The building, above, was thought to have been the first brick church building in the state. It was erected on land given to the congregation by the Texas and Pacific Railroad. The church has been located on the same plot of land ever since.

## Church From 1B

Methodist Church so no other churches could claim the title, she said.

In 1950, the Kelly Memorial Church and Bacara Hall were destroyed to make way for a new sanctuary designed to hold an even larger congregation. The new sanctuary, which still serves the congregation today, was completed in 1952.

Wilson, who still volunteers much of her time at the church, said she has probably spent more time within the church's walls than any other place during her lifetime.

"Most of the things have been good times," she said. "But it's been a big mix for me. We've had wonderful people here. Membership grows every year. But people don't understand that we have a big turnover every year. Sometimes, we're good to have an increase."

The largest change in the church for her has been the increased number of church staff, she said. When Wilson started work as the pastor's assistant in 1939, the only staff members were Wilson, the pastor and the custodian, she said.

Claudette Jones is chairing the church's celebration.

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF LONGVIEW  
HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION  
Sunday, June 8, 1997, 10:00 A.M.

WELCOME

Dr. Black

Welcome to the dedication of an Official Texas Historical Marker: The First Methodist Church of Longview. This historical marker is authorized by the State of Texas and sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission, the Gregg County Historical Commission and the First United Methodist Church. In 1815, William Stevenson preached at Pecan Point in what is now Red River County. He was the first ordained Methodist to preach in Texas. Just 18 years later, in 1833, the oldest continuing congregation in Texas was founded, near San Augustine, as a Methodist Society. And only 15 years later **this** congregation had its beginnings in what is now Longview...one hundred and fifty years ago. So, one can easily see the histories of Texas and Methodism are closely intertwined. And, it is therefore fitting, that, today, this church be recognized with this Official Texas Historical Marker.

THE READING OF THE MARKER

The text of the marker will now be read by Joanie Rathbun. Miss Rathbun compiled the narrative history which was necessary for the awarding of this historical marker...Joanie.....Thank you, Joanie.

THE UNVEILING

It is most appropriate that the marker be unveiled by descendants of historically significant families of the church. **Jacquelyn Jameson** is a long-time church member and descendant of **G. A. Kelly**, who was architect, contractor and fund raiser for a new church building in 1900, forefunner to the current sanctuary building. Joining her is **Michael Best**, a new church member and grandson of former pastor,

**Dr. Conrad Winborn.** And, **Jennifer Lynch**, also a new member and granddaughter of former pastor, **Dr. Bob Parrott.**

THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Pastor Welch

THE DOXOLOGY

THE BENEDICTION

Pastor Welch

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THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Pastor Welch

THE DOXOLOGY

THE BENEDICTION

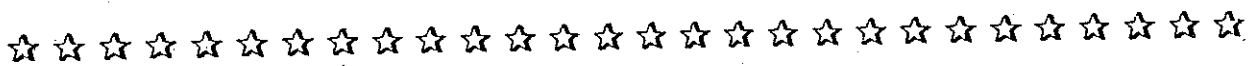
Pastor Welch



# Marker Dedication Announcement

This form may be used to announce your marker dedication in the Texas Historical Commission's newsletter, *The Medallion*; in the THC's marker dedication calendar, which is distributed to agency commissioners and staff; and in the monthly *News for County Historical Commissions*.

To announce your dedication to THC commissioners and staff in the agency's marker dedication calendar, this form needs to be received approximately three weeks prior to the dedication. The announcement will be listed in the next calendar issued after its receipt. To include your announcement in *The Medallion*, please submit this form at least two months before the marker dedication.



Title of Marker FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF LONGVIEW

Community or Nearest Town LONGVIEW

County GREGG

Date of Dedication JUNE 8, 1997

Contact Person Dr. NORMAN W. BLACK

Address 417 Mobberly Avenue

City, State, and Zip Longview, Texas 75602

Area Code and Telephone Number 903-757-2261

FAX 752-5337

Return this form to:

**Local History Programs**

Texas Historical Commission

P.O. Box 12276

Austin, TX 78711-2276



(revised 7/93)



# First United Methodist Church

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P.O. Box 707 • LONGVIEW, TEXAS • 75606-0707

PHONE: (903) 753-4463 • FAX: (903) 236-7608

**YOU ARE INVITED**

to the

**150 Year Historical Marker Celebration  
of the  
First United Methodist Church  
400 North Fredonia Longview, Texas**

**Sunday, June 8**

**10:00 a.m. worship service and dedication of marker  
followed by**

**"Dinner on the grounds" and "Old fashioned singing"**

**\$3.50 per person for "dinner"**

**Call church office to make your reservations 753-4463**

---

***First Methodist ... Sharing faith, hope and love***

**Welcome to our visitors:** We are pleased to have you worship with us today. We hope you find this service meaningful and that you will come again. If you are looking for a Church home, First United Methodist offers many opportunities for worship, learning, fellowship, support and challenge. **Come and grow with us.**

Children's Worship Activity packets are available from the basket in the Narthex.

Packets should be returned to the Narthex following the service.

A delayed broadcast of morning worship can be seen 10 a.m. Sundays on KLTV, Channel 7.

***ALTAR FLOWERS***

*The altar flowers are given in memory of Lela Castleberry and John Tomlinson, III by David Castleberry; Ann Tomlinson, Jimmy and Joey; and Eunice Shreck.*

*The flowers in the narthex are from the wedding of Renese Diane Sherman and George David Henderson.*

***CONGREGATIONAL CONCERNS***

**Hospitalized:** Mary Carden, Sadie Germany, Alice Huffman, Anne McEachern, Brannon Riddle, Jacquelyn Simpson, Gene Terrell.

**Sympathy:** To Nancy West and family in the death of her husband, Lanny West. To Lucy Harrison and family in the death of her father, Dr. John Dodson, of Hot Springs, AR. To Shirley Williamson and Lena Sanders in the death of their loved one, Ruel Sanders, of Magnolia, TX.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WEEK**

Call **753-4463** for more information.

**Sunday, June 8**

9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
8:30-10:00 a.m. Library Open  
10:00 a.m. Morning Worship  
(Rev. Jim Welch)  
Historical Marker Dedication  
"Dinner on the Grounds"  
4:00 p.m. Youth Choir  
6:00 p.m. UMYF  
6:00 p.m. **NO** Evening Worship

**Monday, June 9**

9:00 a.m. Quilters  
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Library Open

**Tuesday, June 10**

8:30 a.m. Staff Meeting  
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Library Open

10:00 a.m. UMW General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Church and Society

**Wednesday, June 11**

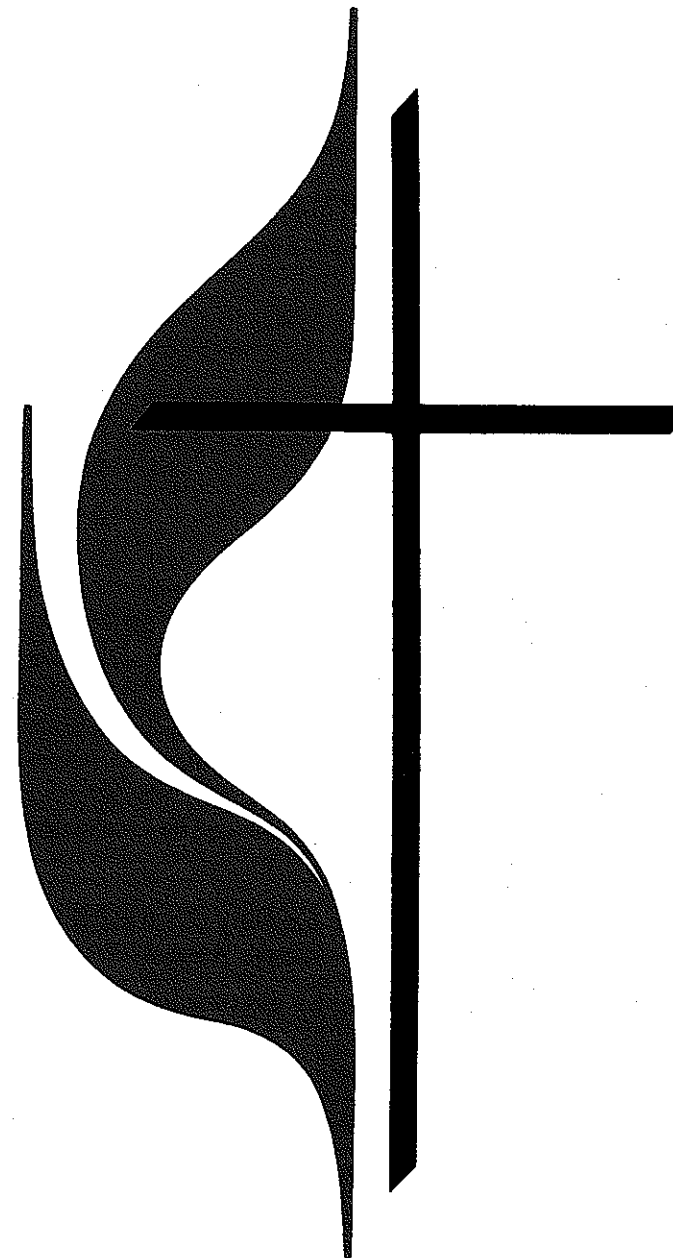
6:45 a.m. Weekly Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 a.m. Quilters  
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Library Open  
5:30 p.m. Intercessory Prayer  
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir  
7:00 p.m. JOY  
7:00 p.m. JAM  
7:00 p.m. ICU

**Thursday, June 12**

7:00 a.m. Guys' Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Library Open

**Friday, June 13**

7:00 a.m. Girls' Prayer Breakfast  
6:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Party



**First United Methodist Church**

400 North Fredonia

Longview, Texas

## MORNING WORSHIP

June 8, 1997

Third Sunday after Pentecost

### WE GATHER TO PRAISE GOD

**Prelude** "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" arr. Ron Boud  
Mike Turpin, alto saxophone

### Choral Introit

**\*Hymn of Praise** "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" No. 715

**\*Greeting** The Reverend Gary Clark  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.  
And also with you.

### \*Opening Prayer

### \*The Apostles' Creed, Traditional Version (In Unison)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### \*Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

### WE OFFER OUR PRAYERS

**Pastoral Greetings** The Reverend Bill Cunningham

**Welcome of New Pastor** Mr. Jack Peppard

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer** Pastor Cunningham

### Offertory Prayer

**Offertory** "When the Saints Go Marching In" John Rutter  
Youth and Chancel Choirs

### \*Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**\*Hymn** "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" No. 140  
(Children are invited to come for the Children's Sermon.)

### WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

**Children's Sermon** Pastor Clark  
(Children may go to the church nursery following the Children's Sermon.)

**Anthem** "The First Song of Isaiah" Jack Noble White  
Choirs, Jubilation Ringers, Brass

**The Reading from the Gospel** John 3:16-17 Page 89 N.T.

**Sermon** "And Stood There Amazed" The Reverend Jim Welch

### WE GO AS DISCIPLES

### Invitation To Christian Discipleship

**\*Hymn of Commitment** "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" No. 117

**Recognition of Guests** Dr. W. D. Northcutt, III

**The Postlude** "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" Fred Bock

**\*The Procession to the Marker**  
(Ministers will lead the way, followed by the choir and congregation, as directed by the ushers.)

**Welcome** Dr. Norman Black  
Chair, Gregg County Historical Commission

**Reading of the Marker** Joanie Rathbun

**The Unveiling** Jacquelyn Jameson, Michael Best, Jennifer Lynch

**The Prayer of Dedication** Pastor Welch

**The Doxology**

**The Benediction** Pastor Welch

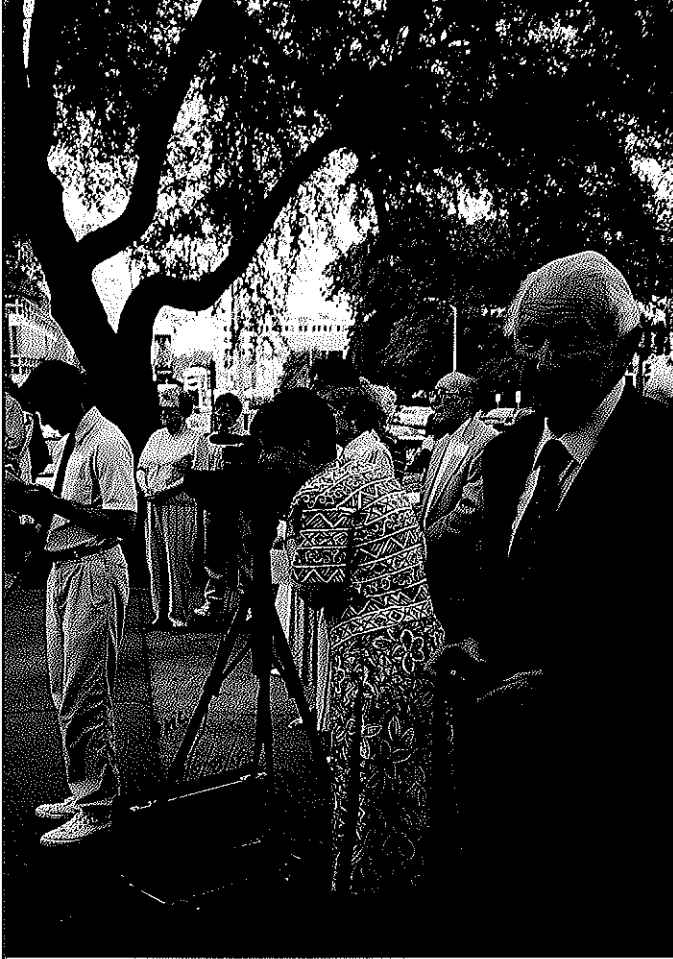
**\*The People Standing**

**Minister of Music** Kenneth Reid  
**Organist** Gwen Garrison Tomlin

**Musicians** Mike Turpin, clarinet; Brian McKinney, James Snowden, trombone  
Doyce Grant, Rodney Jones, trumpet; Chris Craddock, percussion

**Acolytes** Tim Cunningham, Aaron Fenderson

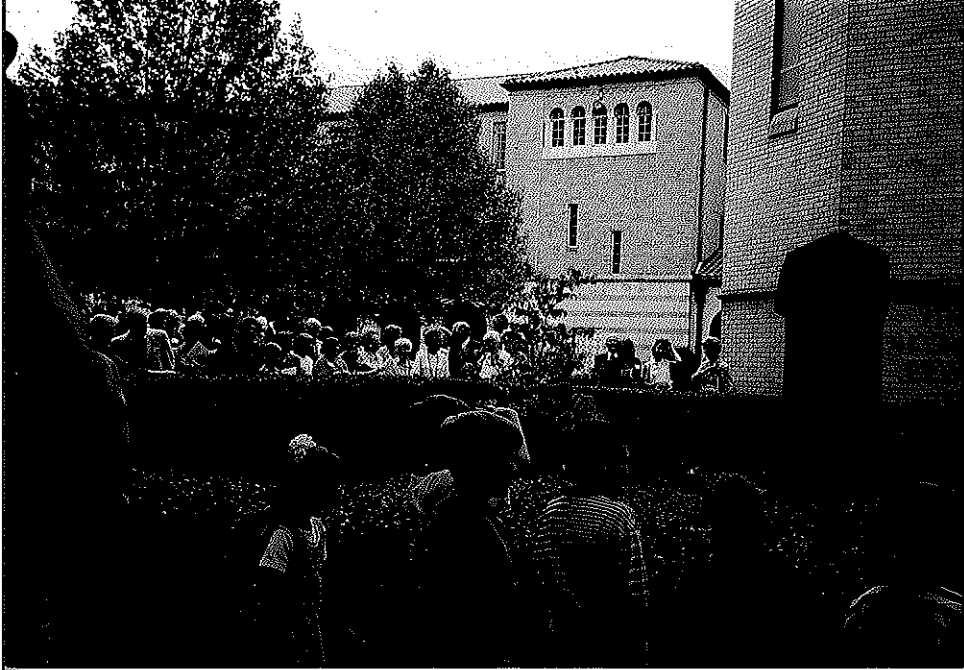




6/8/97 150yrs.  
HISTORICAL MARKER









## ARSON REPORT

Panel: Arrests up in fight against church burnings, 6A



## Inside Sports

SPECIAL DELIVERY: Karl Malone helps the Utah Jazz beat the Chicago Bulls Sunday night to even their series, Page 1B.

BRAZILIAN BASHER: Unseeded Gustavo Kuerten won the French Open men's singles title Sunday at Stade Roland Garros, Page 1B.

# Longview News-Journal

Two sections, 18 pages

Serving East Texans Since 1871

## FAITH REWARDED

### First United Methodist Church marks 150 years as congregation

By Glenn Evans

Staff Writer

The Rev. Jim Welch chose John 3:16 as the text of his first sermon as senior pastor of First United Methodist Church. He wasn't the first local Methodist to preach from that foundational Christian verse, not by a long shot.

Not by more than 150 years, which is how long it's been since Methodism took root in Gregg County. A Texas Historical Commission marker unveiled Sunday documents the downtown Longview congregation's sojourn from a one-room log home and circuit-riding ministers to the modern day.

"I am firmly aware that I stand on the shoulders of giants," Welch admitted to more than 200 members of his new congregation, who on Sunday all but filled the balcony and the folding chairs lining the narthex.

In his inaugural sermon, the minister noted the love of God to which the oft-quoted verse above refers — a love that remains constant

even though its return has been fickle.

"How often have you and I stood in this place, amazed that God would continually reach out to us in love, in Jesus Christ?" he asked. "Friends, I tell you today that I stand here totally amazed."

Afterward, the congregants filed outside to unveil the state marker at the sanctuary's Fredonia Street entrance. Norman Black, chairman of the Gregg County Historical Commission, noted the 150-plus year history of Methodism in Gregg County, and the denomination's Texas origins which date to 1815.

"One can easily see that the histories of Texas and Methodism are very closely intertwined," he said before Jacquelyn Jameson, Michael Best and Jennifer Lynch, descendants of church fathers, pulled the velvet cover from the marker.

The congregation wrapped up their celebration with a picnic on the church grounds.



Obie LeBlanc/Staff Photographer

Gregg County Historical Commission Chairman Norman Black dedicates a historical marker at the First United Methodist Church in Longview Sunday as part of the church's 150th anniversary.

# Rals pro hop

### Air Force general as candidate for

By Jim Abrams  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Gen. Ralston cut short a trip to returned to Washington Pentagon officials as his



# First United Methodist Church

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P.O. Box 707 • LONGVIEW, TEXAS • 75606-0707

PHONE: (903) 753-4463 • FAX: (903) 236-7608

June 11, 1997

Dr. Norman Black  
Gregg County Historical Commission  
417 Mobberly Avenue  
Longview, TX 75602

Dear Dr. Black:

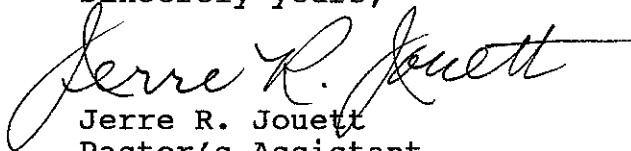
Thank you again for all your help in securing an official Texas historical marker for our church. I also appreciate all your experience and advice in putting together the dedication service.

It was truly a great day of celebration for all of our members and visitors--with spirit-filled worship, welcoming of Jim Welch, our new pastor, the dedication, and all the festivities which followed.

I am sending back your copy of First Christian Church dedication program, and also a copy of our bulletin for the day, in case you did not take one with you.

Again, my thanks!

Sincerely yours,

  
Jerre R. Jouett  
Pastor's Assistant