

KEDRON UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH



CELEBRATING OVER ONE HUNDRED
AND FIFTY YEARS OF WORSHIP,
SERVICE, AND FELLOWSHIP

TREASURES NEW AND OLD

"Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Matthew 13:58

Some Sunday in 2001 I parked in my usual place, in front of the sign proclaiming "Kedron United Methodist Church." This time I noticed it also reads, "Established 1852." Well, that makes 2002 our 150th anniversary, I mused. We ought to celebrate. Humans love marking off time in nice big round numbers. As we began looking into our history yet again, it became obvious that the congregation of "the people called Methodists" in this area began prior to that. In fact, the 1852 date was not for the church proper, but only for this building. The Methodist first met in "societies" in homes and had at least one previous building located nearby. So 150 is the age, not of the congregation, but of its latest meeting hall. Since discovering this I have been jokingly referring to Kedron as the oldest "new" church in the conference.

I learned a song in my childhood,
The Church is not a building,
The Church is not a steeple,
The Church is not a resting place,
The Church is the people.

Of course, we often refer to the building as the church, when we really mean the Church's meeting place. Sometimes buildings outlast congregations. Sometimes congregations outgrow buildings. Sometimes the two grow and evolve together, like an old married couple, until it is nearly impossible to think of the one without the other or the part instead of the whole. Kedron is such a place/people.

Over the years Kedron (both "we" and "it") has changed. Our denomination was split and rejoined again with other like-minded Christians to become "United Methodists." When the road in front of the building was moved, the back became the front, and front became the back. Through all these twists and turns Christ has been a sure foundation keeping us as steady as the tablerock under our physical plant.

There are reminders of earlier times around. The two doors at the back of the sanctuary harken back to the times all Methodist meeting houses had separate men's and ladies' entrances. A proper meeting hall would also have had a rail down the center to keep the genders apart. There is no rail now, but if you look closely on most Sunday mornings there are still more men on the left and more women on the right. Most couples and families still sit in the middle, but now together, without barriers.

There are no longer kerosene lamps or a wood stove to fire up on winter mornings, nor open windows and funeral home fans in the pews come summer. Over the years the building has had indoor plumbing, class rooms, and a spacious fellowship hall with kitchen added. Progress has been met and embraced. Yet, to see the simple frame structure from the outside, comfortably snuggled into the green meadow slanting down to a ford in the creek might, at first casual glance, give one the impression of a congregation stuck in the past. It fooled this preacher.

My first time inside the building, I immediately noticed the pews slightly canted, this way and that, like boats bobbing on a gently rolling lake. I figured that time and

gravity had settled the building into this state so slowly that it probably was not even noticeable to the local folks. A couple of weeks into my appointment one of the trustees cut a hole in the floor to see what was going on and discovered wet rotting joists sagging under the floor. I worried what this old, small, rural congregation could do. They didn't worry. They sprung to action. Contractors were contacted. Bids were accepted. A timetable was set. Special collections were called for. The floor was entirely removed, including the rough-hewn cedar beams which had held the floor up for nearly a century and a half. After just a few weeks of services in the fellowship hall, we returned to a renewed sanctuary, level and sturdy and ready to support more generations of folks coming to worship. The support of present and past members had the job completely paid for by the time it was done.

There is a calm stability in the Church at Kedron. There is respect for and comfort in tradition and history. There is also a vibrant vitality, ready to seize the day, step up to any task, and seek God's leading into the future. There is a willingness to reach out and draw in. Like a tree, our rootedness strengthens our ability to branch out and to grow up. Our task now, as we meet a new millennium, is not to be known as the oldest new church around. The Church is not a resting place, the Church is the people. As the people of God, we must live out the mission of the Church God has planted here with such freshness, joy, and hope that we become known as the "newest" old church around.

—Rev. Tom Gibson



EXCERPT FROM “EARLY HISTORY OF KEDRON SOCIETY,” 2001

The land was given in 1841 by James and Rebecca S. Coleman and was recorded in Murfreesboro, TN in 1845. His brother Archer Coleman was one of the five trustees.

The first church building was a log building built between 1842-45 and was located south of the present building. Sometime before 1875 the present sanctuary was built. About 1900 the church building reversed directions, having new entrance cut in the eastern wall, this change was caused by change in road.

...[The deed] states that the land be used to erect a building to be used for a house of worship for the use of the “Methodist Episcopal Church” in the United States of America.

I believe the first meetings started about 1838 (called the “Methodist Society”) in the homes of James Coleman, William A. Coleman, Joel Lee, Thomas Bennett and perhaps Joseph Adams, John Nance, and Jessie Pearson as these last four were named trustees along with William A. Coleman.

—Margaret Hoover et al.

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF FAITH: KEDRON’S CONGREGATION FROM THE MID-NINETEENTH TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

This list is based on handwritten membership records found in a ledger, *The Complete Church Register of Kedron Society Tennessee Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South*. Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1882. The entries into this book seem to have been made from the 1880s to the 1910s. However, it appears that some efforts were made to record the membership of persons who joined the church prior to this period. The ledger has columns for each person’s name, means of membership such as baptism, transfer from another church, etc., the date of joining the church, pastor, and the date for the end of a person’s membership due to death, transfer of membership, or other causes. However, many of the entries are incomplete. The list below includes each person’s name in the order it appears in the register and any available information concerning the date each person joined Kedron congregation.

Although this list certainly does not contain the list of all the members of Kedron from its earliest beginnings to the 1910s, it provides a partial portrait of the congregation.

Thomas Bennett [before 1867]
Henry L. Bennett [before 1870]
William A. Coleman [before 1869]
Frances Coleman [before 1883]
Jane Coleman [before 1889]

David A. Coleman [before 1899]
Melvina Allen [before 1886]
John T. Neal [before 1896]
Caroline Neal [unknown]
Usely [?] Neal [before 1872]

Martha F. Neal [before 1882]
 Eliza N. Hodge [before 1867]
 James J. Hodge [before 1916]
 Thomas P. Barnes [unknown]
 Sarah E. Barnes [before 1875]
 William C. Coleman [before 1874]
 Rebecca Coleman [before 1874]
 Edwin C. Coleman [before 1889]
 Mary Coleman [unknown]
 Robert P. Coleman [before 1910]
 Mary L. Coleman [unknown]
 Emaline Jones [before 1882]
 William Lawrence [before 1872]
 Agnes Lawrence [unknown]
 James W. Alexander [unknown]
 Senora Alexander [unknown]
 Matilda Alexander [before 1871]
 Armstead R. Neal [before 1896]
 Sarah Neal [before 1880]
 Beverly Tucker [before 1870]
 Dicy Tucker [before 1871]
 Richard H. Lee [unknown]
 Sarah Lee Mrs. Joel T. Lee [about 1838]
 William Shelton [unknown]
 Sarah Shelton [unknown]
 Nancy J. Dillon [unknown]
 Joseph M. Bennett [before 1903]
 Catherine Bennett [before 1883]
 Elizabeth J. Bennett [before 1900]
 Catherine Shelton [before 1905]
 Elizabeth Shelton [before 1900]
 Sherod W. Beaty [unknown]
 Mary A. Beaty [before 1892]
 William F. Foster [unknown]
 Elizabeth Foster [unknown]
 Will Tombs [unknown]
 Jane Toombs [unknown]
 John M. Tucker [unknown]
 Catherine Job [unknown]
 Jane Hall [unknown]
 Elizabeth Lucy [unknown]
 Mary Sanford [unknown]
 Sarah E. Noe [unknown]
 Sarah Hodge [unknown]
 Virginia Pascall [unknown]
 John Council [unknown]

Dollie A. Coleman [Sept. 1866]
 Julie Hodge [Sept. 1866]
 Nancy E. Hodge [Sept. 1866]
 Mary Neal Stone [Sept. 1866]
 Eliza Harrison [Sept. 1882]
 Elisabeth Price [Sept. 1883]
 Lu Jane Potts [Sept. 1883]
 James Tom Sanders [Sept. 1883]
 Peyton Sanford [Sept. 1883]
 Elizabeth Toombs [Sept. 1866]
 Rebe Toombs [Sept. 1866]
 Elizabeth Lambert [Sept. 1866]
 Mary Lee [Sept. 1866]
 Nancy Ray [Sept. 1866]
 Caroline Coleman [Sept. 1866]
 Martha Williams [Sept. 1866]
 Fannie Williams [Sept. 1866]
 Henry Warren [Sept. 1866]
 William Allen [Sept. 1866]
 W. L. Warren [Sept. 1866]
 T. B. Carter [Sept. 1866]
 W. B. Coleman [Sept. 1866]
 Irby [?] C. Allen [Sept. 1866]
 Beverly Tucker Jr. [Sept. 1866]
 William Lambert [Sept. 1866]
 J. L. Toombs [Sept. 1866]
 Parthenia Starkey [Sept. 1866]
 Susan Covington [Sept. 1866]
 William Epps [Sept. 1866]
 William B. Neal [Sept. 1866]
 Sesemby [?] Lawrence [Sept. 1866]
 Susan Tucker [Sept. 1866]
 J. F. Tucker [Sept. 1866]
 J. A. Jordan [1860s]
 John Peay [Sept. 1868]
 Willis Toombs [Sept. 1868]
 Jacob W. Council [Sept. 1868]
 Caroline Council [Sept. 1868]
 Eliza Coleman [Sept. 1868]
 Elizabeth Epps Tucker [Sept. 1868]
 Henry D. Stone [Sept. 1868]
 John Starkey [Sept. 1868]
 Sarah Covington [Sept. 1868]
 James Rowlett [Sept. 1868]
 Tabitha Rowlett [Sept. 1868]
 Manda H. Neal Epps [Sept. 1868]

Josie Tucker [Sept. 1868]
 Martha Eubanks [Sept. 1868]
 A. J. Covington [Sept. 1868]
 Joel T. Lee [Sept. 1868]
 John B. Shelton [Sept. 1868]
 Susie Shelton [Sept. 1868]
 Margaret Shook [Sept. 1868]
 Caroline Tucker [Sept. 1868]
 Nicie J. Vaughan [Sept. 1868]
 Lucinda J. Potts [Sept. 1868]
 Martha Corder [Sept. 1868]
 Martha Rogers [Sept. 1868]
 Elizabeth Haley [?] [Sept. 1868]
 John Shook [Sept. 1868]
 Martha Shook [Sept. 1868]
 Armstead Coleman [Sept. 1868]
 Mary Coleman [Sept. 1868]
 John F. Hodge [Sept. 1869]
 Jos. M. Shelton [Sept. 1869]
 Issac G. Wright [Sept. 1869]
 James J. Riley [Sept. 1869]
 Benjamin W. Bennett [Sept. 1869]
 W. A. Ray [Sept. 1869]
 Sarah M. McClenden [Sept. 1869]
 Mary E. Floyd [Sept. 1869]
 Evan G. Bennett [Sept. 1869]
 Hannah Gambriel [Sept. 1869]
 J. L. Coleman [Sept 1869]
 Alex Tucker [Sept. 1869]
 Matilda Lee [Sept. 1869]
 Zachariah Potts [Sept 1869]
 Joseph Ray [Aug. 18, 1872]
 J. L. Ray, Jr. [Aug. 8, 1872]
 G. A. Coleman [August 8 [?], 1872]
 B. F. Epps [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Mary J. Jones [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Levinia Edwards [Aug. 8 [?] 1872]
 Josephine C. Haly Tucker [Aug. 8 [?],
 1872]
 Henry Bennett [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Bess Shelton [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Francis Wheeler [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Sarah G. Neal [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Mary C. Stone [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]
 Martha Pillow [Aug. 8 [?], 1872]

Dillia Beasley [1872]
 Alfred J. Davis [1872]
 Nancy Davis [1872]
 Eliza Tucker [1872]
 Walter Wheeler [1872]
 William D. Shelton [1872]
 Joseph Ray, Sr. [1872]
 Susan Ray [1872]
 Martha J. Owen [1872]
 Mary Sue Owen [1872]
 Milton Stevens [1872]
 Martha Stevens [1872]
 Catherine Haley [1872]
 Elijah W. Haley [Aug. 15, 1873]
 George B. F. Neal [Aug. 15, 1873]
 James F. Neal [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Benjamin Bennett [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Lena Covington [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Josie T. Tucker [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Emma Williams [Aug. 15, 1873]
 James Riddle [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Bonapart Neal [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Frank Covington [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Medora J. Epps [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Nancy J. Tucker [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Philly Shelton [Aug. 15, 1873]
 Sarah C. L. F. Coleman [Aug. 20, 1873]
 Mary J. Hinson [Aug. 20, 1873]
 Mary A. Covington [Aug. 20, 1873]
 Martha Coleman [1873]
 Martha Irving [unknown]
 Nancy Ray [unknown]
 William S. Stevens [before 1878]
 Pleasant W. Brown [before 1888]
 Martha Brown [before 1888]
 Essie E. Brown [before 1889]
 Nannie E. Epps [unknown]
 Susie F. Brown [unknown]
 Pattie T. Coleman [unknown]
 M. L. Brown [unknown]
 De Manson Coleman [unknown]
 George W. Jones [unknown]
 Martha E. Ray [unknown]
 Dora E. Stone Hawkins [unknown 1901]
 Bettie Whitby [unknown]

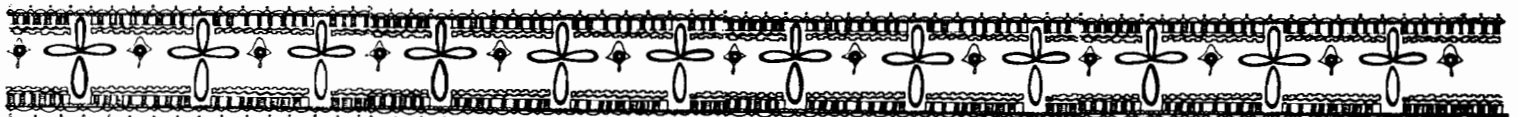
Sarah D. Shelton [before 1909]
J. W. Williams [unknown]
Eb E. Bennett [unknown]
Jennie P. Mullins [unknown]
William K. Coleman [unknown]
Jas[on] Will Coleman [unknown]
Ocia Cheny [unknown]
Winnie Shelton [unknown]
Willie Alexander [unknown]
Lun A. Coleman [unknown]
Jane Coleman [unknown]
Maggie Shelton Coleman [unknown]
Samuel Philpot [before 1904]
Jimmie Alexander [1880]
R. Anzie Coleman [1880]
Jane Philpot [unknown]
Thomas J. D. Brown [Oct. 1881]
Rufas A. Brown [unknown]
John Davis [unknown]
James Vaughan [unknown]
William T. Lee [unknown]
Sarah A. Lee [unknown]
Allen Christopher [unknown]
Francis Warpool [unknown]
Bettie Wheeler [unknown]
Henrietta Ray [unknown]
Mattie Shelton [unknown]
P. J. Whitby [unknown]
John H. Coleman [unknown]
Cora Coleman Johnson [unknown]
Alexander Coleman [unknown]
Ossella Coleman [before 1886]
Fannie Carter [unknown]
Etta Wheeler [1884]
Tom Ables [unknown]
Jo Vaughan [unknown]
Tom Delbridge [unknown]
Joseph Ray [unknown]
M. R. Brown [before 1886]
Sallie Harrison [unknown]
Mary Harrison [unknown]
Mollie Shelton [unknown]
William Tom Shelton [1884]
Edward J. Wheeler [1884]
Kenneth Sanders [1884]
Sallie Bennett [1885]

Jennie McBennett [1885]
William T. Edwards [Aug. 2, 1885]
Mattie Sanford [Aug. 2, 1885]
Mary Sanford [Aug. 2, 1885]
Mattie Bennett [1885]
John L. Johnson [1885]
Mattie Harrison Shaw [1885]
Emerson Hodge [1885]
George Painter [1885]
Thomas Smittie [1885]
Henry Lee [unknown]
Robert D. Harrison [unknown]
Mattie V. Brown [unknown]
Jane Long [1886]
Sallie M. Shelton [Aug. 29, 1886]
Laura Elizabeth Tucker [1886]
Mary Judie Davis [1886]
Sallie M. Davis [1886]
Emma E. Davis [1886]
Mollie Williams [1886]
Susie Williams [1886]
Arthur T. Alexander [1885]
Elijah Tucker [1886?]
Ida Ray [unknown]
Mary E. Hodge [Sept. 25, 1886]
James W. Ray [Aug. 29, 1886]
William K. Painter [Aug. 9, 1885]
James Smittie [Oct. 2, 1886]
Albert J. Sanford [Oct. 2, 1886]
William A. Sanford [Oct. 2, 1886]
John Vandorn Sanford [Oct. 2, 1886]
Mattie D. Coleman [Oct. 2, 1886]
Ida Harrison [Oct. 2, 1886]
Alice Thomas [Oct. 2, 1886]
Hattie Bennett [Aug. 8, 1888]
Ida Ray [Aug 8, 1888]
Susie Bennett [Aug. 24, 1888]
Martha J. Brown [Jan. 1889]
Allie Shelton [Aug. 1889]
Sammie Pomeroy [Aug. 1889]
Charlie Hodge [Aug. 1889]
Munsey Alexander [Aug. 1889]
Joe Foster [Aug. 1889]
John Shelton [Sept. 29, 1890]
Elisabeth Tucker [unknown]
Lee P. Neal [Sept. 21, 1892]

Dasie Ray Toombs [Sept. 21, 1892]
 Ada V. Epps [Sept. 21, 1892]
 Susie Ray [Sept. 21, 1892]
 Ida Potts Batey [Sept. 21, 1892]
 Mary E. Ray [Sept. 21, 1892]
 Bettie T. Tucker [Sept. 22, 1892]
 Osammie [?] Toombs [Sept. 22, 1892]
 Pleas [?] Toombs [Sept. 23, 1892]
 J. R. Toombs [Sept. 23, 1892]
 Mary A. Potts [Sept. 23, 1892]
 Addie Neal [Sept. 23, 1892]
 Kate Toombs [Sept. 23, 1892]
 Katie Bennett [Sept. 23, 1892]
 Mary Toombs [Sept. 24, 1892]
 W. H. Scales [Sept. 24, 1892]
 W. D. Carter [Sept. 24, 1892]
 Fitzhugh Lee [Sept. 24, 1892]
 Henry Toombs [Sept. 24, 1892]
 Jennie Lee [Sept. 24, 1892]
 Emma C. Lee Bennett [Aug. 23, 1893]
 Melvina Tucker [Aug. 24, 1893]
 Caroline Tucker [Aug. 24, 1893]
 Jimmie Joe Ray [Aug. 24, 1893]
 Lou Ella Lee [Aug. 24, 1893]
 Mary Sue Whitby [Aug. 24, 1893]
 Mary Sanders [Aug. 24, 1893]
 Tollie [?] Epps [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Fannie Saunders [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Maggie Tucker [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Myrtle Whitby [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Price Webb [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Dr. T. J. Bennett [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Rilla Toombs [Aug. 25, 1893]
 Sallie Webb [Aug. 25, 1893]
 J. R. Thomas [Oct. 9, 1893]
 Elizabeth Toombs [Jan. 1, 1894]
 Hyberna Toombs [Jan. 1, 1894]
 J. R. Reeves [Aug. 1, 1894]
 Mrs. Clark Polk [Sept. 23, 1894]
 William A. Polk [Sept. 23, 1894]
 Eliza Harrison [May 16, 1895]
 Sallie Harrison [May 16, 1895]
 Mary Reeves [May 16, 1895]
 Alice Harrison [May 16, 1895]
 James W. Thomas [July 22, 1896]
 Sallie Tucker [July 22, 1896]
 George Sanford [Nov. 28, 1897]
 James Smithy [Nov. 28, 1897]
 Thomas Smithy [Nov. 28, 1897]
 Frank Bennett [Aug. 22, 1897]
 Clarence W. Sanford [Aug. 5, 1898]
 Eula H. Polk [Aug. 5, 1898]
 Joel M. Polk [Aug. 5, 1898]
 Earnest Coleman [Aug. 26, 1898]
 Johnie L. Bennett [Aug. 26, 1898]
 Mary B. Bennett [Aug. 26, 1898]
 Annie L. Bennett [Aug. 26, 1898]
 Henry L. Johnson [Aug. 26, 1898]
 James M. Alderidge [Aug. 28, 1898]
 William Potts [Aug. 28, 1898]
 Joe T. Tucker [Aug. 28, 1898]
 Thomas M. Coleman [Aug. 28, 1898]
 Hollis A. Epps [Aug. 28, 1898]
 James W. Tucker [Aug. 28, 1898]
 Lottie [?] Lee Coleman [Aug. 28, 1898]
 Minnie Tucker [Aug. 28, 1898]
 Maggie Stanley [Sept. 11, 1898]
 Lillie Kerr [Sept. 11, 1898]
 Mattie Cook Neal [unknown]
 Thomas P. Barnes [Oct. 16, 1898]
 Lida May Coleman [Aug. 1897]
 Willie Ray [Aug. 1897]
 Jennie Potts [Aug. 1897]
 Leslie Brown [Aug. 1897]
 Sue May Epps [Aug. 1897]
 Sam M. Coleman [Aug. 1897]
 Marvin Lee [Aug. 1897]
 Elma C. Brown [Aug. 1897]
 Willis J. Brown [Aug. 1897]
 T. H. Carter [Aug. 1897]
 Ed Coleman [Aug. 1897]
 John Burr Edmonson [Aug. 1897]
 Clemons [?] O. Brown [Aug. 1897]
 Dave C. Coleman [Aug. 1897]
 Anna L. Coleman [Aug. 1897]
 Marks Lee [Aug. 1897]
 Mattie May Tucker [Aug. 1897]
 Ida Irene Sanford [Dec. 18, 1898]
 Mary J. Smithy [April 2, 1899]
 Lillian Carter [Sept. 19, 1899]
 Addie Caldwell [Sept. 19, 1899]
 Willie W. Coleman [Sept. 19, 1899]

Virgil Pain [Sept. 19, 1899]
Magie [?] J. Stanley [Sept. 19, 1899]
Ola Amie Thomas [Sept. 19, 1899]
Donie P. Thomas [Sept. 19, 1899]
Patsie Tucker [Sept. 19, 1899]
Cora Batey Alexander [Sept. 21, 1899]
Pearl Neal York [Sept. 19, 1899]
Evie Pain [Sept. 19, 1899]
Minnie Thomas [Sept. 21, 1899]
Thomas Coleman [Sept. 21, 1899]
Walter Carter [Sept. 19, 1899]
Emilie Lee [Sept. 19, 1899]
William Carter [Sept. 19, 1899]
Boum [?] Burnett [Sept. 19, 1899]
J. R. Thomas [Sept. 22, 1899]
James W. Thomas [Sept. 22, 1899]
Alice Thomas [Sept. 22, 1899]
Ola Thomas [Sept. 22, 1899]
Minnie Thomas [Sept. 22, 1899]
Donie Thomas [Sept. 22, 1899]
Frankie Coleman [Sept. 22, 1899]
Willie W. Coleman [Sept. 22, 1899]
Mary Coleman [Sept. 22, 1899]
Bessie Coleman [Sept. 22, 1899]
Ella Bennett [Sept. 22, 1899]
Amzia Johnson [Sept. 22, 1899]
Wrather [?] Coleman [Sept. 22, 1899]
John Hodge, Jr. [Sept. 22, 1899]
James Tucker [Sept. 22, 1899]
Silus Carter [Aug. 15, 1902]
John B. Baugh [Aug. 15, 1902]
Willie Bennett [Aug. 15, 1902]
Ruth Ella Darris [Aug. 18, 1903]
Mary Sue Tucker Aug. 18, 1903]
Elizah J. Vaughan [Aug. 20, 1903]
Robert E. Williams [Aug. 21, 1903]
Susan E. Williams [Aug. 21, 1903]
Rilla Toombs [Aug. 21, 1903]
Alice E. Epps [Aug. 21, 1903]
Mary A. Coleman [Aug. 21, 1903]
Unie [?] Thomas [Oct. 4, 1903]
Sarah Bennett [Sept. 16, 1904]
Cora Coleman [Sept. 16, 1904]
Minnie Tucker [Sept. 16, 1904]
Louise Coleman [Sept. 16, 1904]
Jessie Smithey [Sept. 16, 1904]

Lillie Hayes [Sept. 16, 1904]
Fannie Hampton [Sept. 16, 1904]
Abbie Haynes [Sept. 16, 1904]
Charlie Batey [Sept. 16, 1904]
Willie G. Potts [Sept. 16, 1904]
Waranathy [?] Johnson [Sept. 16, 1904]
J. D. Massey P. C. [unknown]
Lee Coleman [Sept. 16, 1904]
Willie D. Coleman [Sept. 16, 1904]
Hattie Edwards [Sept. 16, 1904]
W. K. Bennett [Sept. 17, 1904]
Wat W. Epps [Aug. 18, 1905]
Mary Green [Sept. 10, 1905]
Margareet Coleman [Sept. 10, 1905]
Mary Kate Walpoole [Sept. 10, 1905]
Callie M. Coleman [Sept. 10, 1905]
Bertha M. Cordell [Sept. 10, 1905]
Adair Stevens [Dec. 14, 1905]
Sam C. Bennett [unknown]
Kurtice A. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Francis T. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Mary T. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Laura E. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Sallie M. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Elenor T. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Emily E. Oakley [Feb. 4, 1906]
Martha Alice Hampton [Feb. 18, 1906]
E. Ethie [?] Hampton [Feb. 18, 1906]
Minnie Bell Hampton [Feb. 18, 1906]
Thomas N. Bennett [Aug. 5, 1906]
Rebecca M. Coleman [Aug. 5, 1906]
Mattie T. Neal [Aug. 5, 1906]
Annie I. [?] Coleman [Aug. 6, 1906]
Leon M. Bennett [Oct. 1, 1906]



CHURCH CONFERENCE MINUTES FROM THE 1890S

These quotes come from the following ledger designed for recording the minutes of charge conference meetings: *The Church Conference Record. Kedron Charge, Franklin District, Tennessee Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South*. Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1889. These documents tell the story of a lively rural congregation deeply committed to their faith. The meeting minutes also demonstrate that during this period, Kedron was firmly integrated within the overarching institution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In addition to contributing to the minister's salary, Kedron paid apportionments, contributed to church missions, and kept the Sunday School classes supplied with literature published by the denomination.

"I From the Preacher in Charge [I. W. Keathley]

Question 1 How many times have you preached this quarter

Answer 22

Question 2 How many visits have you made

Ans 127"

—From the Record of Church Conference, March 23, 1890

"5th Can any thing more be done to Strengthen and build up the church in the community and to advance the Cause of Christ

ans a Resolution to arrange a Church Choir was past [sic] and a committee was appointed to make the necessary arrangements Namely J. M. Bennett W. H. Alexander Alexander Coleman was appointed"

—From the Record of Church Conference, April 10, 1892

"Ques 3 have you had any Conversions at your appointment

ans. I [W. T. Hart] have had 68 Conversions and 47 additions to our Church"

—From the Record of Church Conference, October 16, 1892

"ques) 6 is there a Report from the Superintendent of the Sunday School

ans) there is. we have 7 officers & Teachers 69 Pupils we have an average of 40 attendants our Sunday School is Supplied with our literature"

—From the Record of Church Conference, April 16, 1898

A LEGEND FROM KEDRON'S PAST

Truth or not, I do not know because I have just heard it over the years... They were having something at Kedron, and everybody swore they saw a ghost the night before at that service. The next morning or the next day when people got out and around, they said that an elderly lady who was one of my relatives was muddy from her knees down. Her gown was just muddy all over. They figured she had walked in her sleep that night, and that's what they saw at Kedron.

—Ernestine Clark

REMINISCENCES

When I was young, we went to church in a buggy. If we went anywhere we rode on horseback, in the buggy, or walked. We didn't have a car. There weren't many cars. Most people had horses and buggies.

There was a big old black oak tree right out there about where the recreation hall is. I've sat on that old tree's roots and stump. People used to sit out there and talk. When I was a little kid, I climbed all over that tree.

The preacher always visited in church members' homes a lot. The preacher used to go home with somebody every Sunday for dinner. They would come to my grandmother's. They would come to our house. They would go somewhere nearly every Sunday.

—T. M. Lee

At first the church was just one room. Then, they built the Sunday school rooms. Later on they added the vestibule on the front.

—Lillie Lee

Before the classrooms were built, we had Sunday school in the sanctuary. Around each corner near the door, they would draw a curtain around to make Sunday school class areas. On the ladies' side was the little folks' class. On the other side was the younger group. In the center was the older group. Where the choir sits now, is where Mrs. Lelia Epps taught her class. Then, on the other side in the corner is where the men's class was.

There used to be kerosene lights. There were chandeliers that had about three or four oil lamps in them. There was one in the back and another in the front. There was one lamp on the wall over where the ladies sat. Then, we had a gas lamp over by the piano. There were two flues with a heater in each aisle. Then, they did away with them and built the chimney on the side opposite from the choir and put one big stove.

—Lytle Hodge

My mother and father started attending Kedron in 1947. About 1954, my brother and sister decided that they were going to go to the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF). So, my brother kept begging me to go with them. He said "We have such a good time. You have just got to go." Well, he talked me into going one night, and I guess I never missed another time. That changed my life. The MYF absolutely changed my life.

My father told me, when he was little—he was born in 1908—he was raised near the church on Dell Thomas Road. They had a large family, and they used to come to Kedron to church. He remembered that when he was about eight years old, one time his dad hooked the horses to the two-horse wagon. My grandmother put all the children in the wagon, and they came to Kedron to church. Well, back then, services didn't last for an hour. They might last for two hours. Dad's brother Norman was a little fellow, and he crawled up on the front seat of the church and went to sleep during the service. When they headed home, everyone forgot about Norman. When my grandmother started counting heads when they got out of the wagon, they realized they had left Norman at Kedron church. Granddaddy had to turn around and go back down there and get him.

He said that Norman was still sound asleep on that front seat. Granddaddy woke him up and took him back home.

Kedron is a great little church to attend, and I have felt blest to be a part of it.

—Dorothy Presley

Starting in the 1950s soon after I married Lytle Hodge, he and I worked with the church youth group. We had a lot of fun. We would meet with young people at other churches in the area. We served as chaperones at parties and other events.

I remember Marie Tucker when she was a little girl. She'd tell me she wanted to see me after church, and she would bring me vegetables. I thought that was so sweet.

I remember the older people who sat on the side across from the choir near the wood stove. One was Mr. Will Lidge Tucker. He would pray the most beautiful prayers. They used to call on people in the church to pray. I remember his prayers so well.

—Marie Hodge

The choir started out as a youth choir. There were about twelve or fourteen young people from eight to probably fourteen years old. Cindy was the youngest one, and she was eight. I remember the first song they sang was "Break Thou the Bread of Life." Then, Larry Fraley decided that Dorothy Presley and I needed to join the choir and help them out. We've had some good times. I think we've done some good music, and some fancy songs for a little church. We've had to work hard.

I went to Sunday school from the time I was child when I was at Bethel. I've always been in Sunday school. It's just part of Sunday. You got up and went to Sunday school and church. When I first came to Kedron in 1956, we only had preaching every other Sunday. We would have the church service with preaching and then meet for Sunday school. The weeks when we didn't have preaching, we just had Sunday school. I taught the adult women's class for several years, and then when the women and men's class joined together in the 1960s, I served as a teacher for that class.

Homecomings used to be outside. We lined up long tables on the north side of the church. We made big containers of lemonade. There were lots of children, and they played outside in the afternoon while groups sang inside. The windows were up in the church. There was no air-conditioning, and it was hot. Ever since I've been there, we've had gospel singings, and the Bud Stevens Quartet has come all those years. The church would be full on Sunday afternoons when we had the singings. People would come back that had been there before, and we had a church full. We've always enjoyed it.

—Naomi Lee

In September 1950, the Bud Stephens Family Singers and the Frost Brothers were asked by Kelly Lee and myself to sing for the Kedron Homecoming. The Stephens Family and others have been singing each year since that time, which is fifty-two years.

—Buster Gentry

My memories of attending Kedron U.M.C. go back to the mid-forties. Our Sunday school class was in the back right hand corner of the church separated from the rest of the room by brown domestic curtains. We sat on backless wooden benches. Our class was taught by Mrs. (Aunt) Jewel Lee from literature that had a Biblical scene on the front and the story on the back.

One of my first memories of losing a friend and cousin near my age to death comes from memories of being in Sunday school with Eloise Lee. She was a pretty little girl with rosy cheeks and in the winter wore a plaid, wool scarf. I can remember coming to church and learning that Eloise at around the age of four had taken ill suddenly and passed away. I missed being able to sit next to her in our class.

The revival meetings were always enjoyable as this was one of the main social events of the summer. We would have the current minister and the guest minister and their families for supper one night during the week prior to going to church. This meant Daddy having to get through in the field and milking early enough to eat and get to church in time for the service.

With the heat of the summer, the windows were all raised for cross ventilation of air, and everyone used a hand fan. With the windows open, you could hear the frogs croaking and crickets. My cousin, Emily, would tell that that it was snakes that we were hearing.

The doors of the church opened out on an uncovered concrete porch. The old doors were just pulled up with no locks as in those days you didn't worry about anyone breaking in or destroying church property.

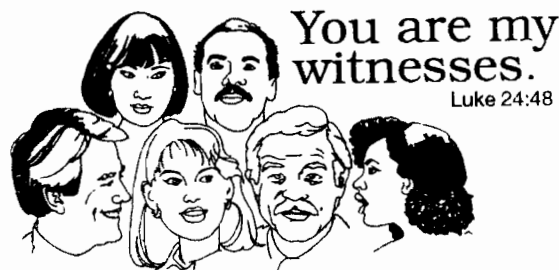
We always enjoyed collecting acorns and buckeyes after church, of course being warned that buckeyes are poisonous. The oak tree stood to the left hand corner of the front of the church, and the tables for homecoming were set up in its shade. There were very few empty seats on the day of homecoming. It was always great when my aunts would come from Nashville for the whole day of homecoming activities.

The source of heat in the cold weather season was a pot-bellied stove that stood to the left side of the altar. There was an old cane bottom chair that was occupied every Sunday morning beside the old stove by Uncle Sam Lee and at other period of time by Mr. Tucker.

During the late fifties and early sixties, we had lots of fun in M.Y.F. (Methodist Youth Fellowship). Dot York Presley would load us all in her car to go to Brown's Chapel (Blackman) for our joint M.Y.F. meetings and to other activities.

My wedding and my children's weddings were held at Kedron.

—Sue Harris



The following is a list of the Sunday School classes in 1949 compiled from *The Complete Sunday School Record Book, Kedron Sunday School, Location Smyrna Tennessee 1949*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.

Teacher: not listed

Emily Lee, Larry Lee, Gerald Lee, Bill Lee, Ray Lee, Sue Lee, Jane Price, Carol Gentry, Braden Lee, Richard Gentry, Jerry Malone, Joshua Malone, Carolyn Malone, Joe Tucker, Maria Tucker, Bruce Gentry, John Hill

Teacher: Mrs. John [Estelle] Lee

Cecil Lee, Robert Kelly Lee, Tommy Hughes, Joe John Patton, Betty Patton, Joan Gentry, Jerry Gentry, Bill Gentry, Joyce Tucker, Margaret Beale, Frances [?] Hill, Jean Bogle

Teacher: Mrs. Watt [Leila] Epps

Lytle Hodge, David Hughes, Margaret Hughes Dixon, Inez Jones, Evelyn Lee, Harold Lee, Catherine Lee, Grace Davis Graves, Ewing Graves, John Lee, Jr., Bobby Stevens

Teacher:

Mrs. Jewell Lee

Mrs. W. E. Hodge, Mrs. Willie [?] Price, Miss Mary Ray, Mrs. Minnie Potts, Mrs. Mary Smith, Miss Patsy Tucker, Mrs. Eda Jones, Mrs. Jeff Price, Mrs. W. O. Tucker, Mrs. Eli Smith, Mrs. Jim [Louise] Tucker, Mrs. Louise Hillard, Mrs. Edd Stevens

Teacher: not listed

Watt Epps, Henry Price, Emmett Lee, Kelly Lee, John Lee, W. T. Lee, William W. Lee, W. E. Tucker, J. P. Tucker, Jeff Price, Eddie Tucker, F. E. Gentry, Sam Brown, Wallace Gentry, Hershel Lee

About thirty-eight years ago, my brother Danny and I got in my Fairlane Ford car in Winchester, Tennessee and speeded along about a hundred miles an hour towards Smyrna. When we got near where the little country church was supposed to have been—I'd been there maybe once or twice—Danny and I drove past the road where you turn to go to the Kedron. And, lo and behold, Fay's Aunt Lucille Webb ran us down and made sure we got to the wedding on time.

—Larry Fraley



I was church treasurer for about thirty-two years. I kept the records and made the treasury reports. During this time, we made quite a few improvements to the church building. We built the fellowship hall in 1982.

—Raymond Lee

Lee and Carlene Smartt began attending the Kedron United Methodist Church of Smyrna, Tennessee in the year of 1987. When we had been attending for a few months, we both felt God could use us here in this church congregation. We were received into membership of the church. We already knew several of the families living in our neighborhood that attended. Lee and I had worked in many other church congregations after becoming Christians. Different ones made us feel welcome at Kedron, and we had work to do here.

A fond memory of ours is of Mr. J. D. Price, who sat on the seat in front of us. When we sang, he would turn his head so he could hear better. He told us he enjoyed our singing.

We renewed our wedding vows June 27, 1989, our fortieth anniversary, by Brother Art Smith.

One of the greatest moments was when our granddaughter Andrea Johnson accepted Jesus Christ in her heart, was baptized, and joined the church congregation.

—Carlene Smartt



When we began attending Kedron, both of us remarked that it reminded us of the church we attended as children. We liked the friendly congregation and decided to make this our church home.

—Ken and Jackie Smith

When I think of special moments at Kedron, there have been many. One that comes to mind is when Pastor Henry Lynn was there. When we would sing his favorite song “Victory in Jesus,” you could look up front and just see in his countenance his faith, his conviction, and his peace. That always touched me.

—Fay Fraley

OUTREACH PROJECTS AT KEDRON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

In January 2002, we began our giving to the Smyrna/LaVergne Food Bank. The food bank helps those people who need help getting back on their feet due to unfortunate circumstances. Many of those that are served are grandparents who are taking care of their grandchildren, and in some instances great-grandparents have had to step in to care for their loved ones.

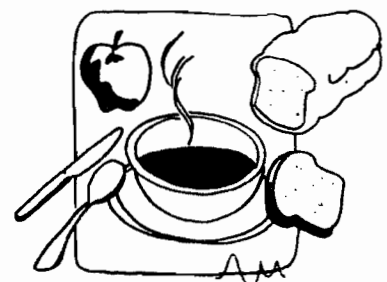
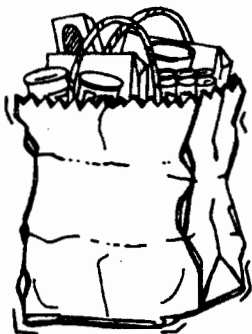
On the first Sunday of each month we have specific items that are brought to the church and are taken to the food bank. This year we also had an extra drive for school supplies which was very successful. The food bank staff expressed their appreciation for the support of small congregations like our church. Kedron has truly been blessed by this project!

In the Meals-On-Wheels (MOW) program, Kedron is represented by Reverend Tom Gibson and me. We deliver meals to those who are elderly and on a fixed income, live alone, are handicapped, or have an illness that keeps them from cooking for themselves. Many people are able, in time, to get back to cooking for themselves, but many are not able to do that and then MOW can step in and help.

Some of the people you see are those who have no family in the area, some who have no family left, many whose family don't visit. It is so hard to imagine not seeing anyone at all until the doorbell rings, and someone brings you a little cheer and a warm meal. It means the world to so many.

—Anne Hitch

*"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need,
And shuts up his heart from him, how does the love
Of God abide in him? My little children,
Let us not love in word or in tongue,
But in deed and in truth."
1 John 3:17, 18*



KEDRON MINISTERS

Throughout the history of the church, many pastors have inspired congregations at Kedron. The following list, compiled by Naomi Lee, contains the names and terms of appointment for those ministers known to have served at this church.

Larry Bryant, 1865-1866
J. B. Myers, 1868-1869
S. M. Cherry, 1871-1874
Joseph Webster, 1874-1877
W. W. Graves, 1877-1880
Joseph Myers, 1880-1882
Thomas B. Marks, 1882-1883
R. P. Gray, 1883-1887
I. W. Keathley, 1887-1890
O. W. Cullum, 1890-1891
W. T. Hartt, 1891-1893
J. D. Byrne, 1893-1897
Joseph Webster, 1897-1901
John Massey, 1901-1905
W. H. Klyce, 1905-1906
A. P. Walker, 1906-1907
John L. Kellum, 1907-1909
H. Walter Carter, 1909-1911
W. H. Lovell, 1911-1913
W. H. Gilbert, 1913-1914
Edmondson, 1915-1916
J. M. Oakley, 1917-1918
O. C. Hailey, 1918-1920
O. H. Lane, 1920-1924
C. R. Wade, 1927-1928
John A. Allison, 1929-1930
T. Earl Hilliard, 1930-1931

C. R. Cunningham, 1931-1935
A. C. Parker, 1935-1937
E. F. Hudgins, 1937-1940
W. J. Fesmire, 1940-1943
Carl Elkins, 1943-1947
J. B. Gibbs, 1947-1948
W. J. Vaughn, 1948-1950
Harold W. Coke, 1955-1956
Norman Pennington, 1957-1958
Roger Thompson, 1958-1960
O. H. Lane, 1959-1960
John Anderson, 1960-1961
Jessie Brawner, 1961-1962
William T. Steele, 1962-1967
Gene Taylor, 1967-1969
Jerry Harber, 1969-1970
O'Hara Sturgell, 1970-1972
Larry Helton, 1972-1974
Marvin Champion, 1974-1980
Marvin Vose, 1980-1981
Walter Schaerer, 1981-1982
Leland Carden, 1982-1986
Joe Nunley, 1986-1987
Art Smith, 1987-1989
Paul Hudgins, 1989-1991
Henry Lynn, 1991-1997
Tom Gibson, 1997-to the present
Katherine Paisley, 2007-2008
Gale Watson, 2008

