

Alleys Chapel 1884 - 2009



**Celebrating 125 Years
In God's Service**

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The particular circumstances around David J. Alley's decision to donate land for a church are lost to history but for some "private reason" he declined to make this land gift to any particular denomination. Never the less his "true piety" led him to "securing and building a church for the worship of Almighty God". Thus on the 19th day of June, 1884 David J. and his wife Mary deeded a tract of land along Black Oak Branch in Templeton Valley of Scott County, Virginia to James M. Newton for the expressed "purpose of building a church house". Two months later, on the 20th of August, 1884, James Newton deeded the Alley land parcel to William S. Lane, Amos M. Templeton, Robert Penley, John E. Pendleton and James O. Lane trustees in and for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Thus was born the Methodist Episcopal Church of Alleys Chapel. David Alley must have known what James Newton had in mind so one wonders why David did not deed the land directly to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Perhaps the reason goes back to 1844. Alleys Chapel was placed under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The original church was built almost entirely of local materials. The building dimensions were 24' wide by 44' in length. Native stone piers were placed at the four corners and floor beams were fashioned from 20" dia. Oak logs using broad axes and foot adz. Virgin Tulip Poplar trees were felled in the surrounding forest, squared using foot adz and then sawed to make stud posts, ceiling joists, rafters and roof sheathing. Flooring was sawed from White Oak and nailed directly to the Oak floor beams. The exterior walls were Dutch lap siding sawed from local trees. The only commercial materials used for the building was roofing material and grooved planking for the interior walls and ceiling. In February 1885 the Trustees of Alleys Chapel entered into an indenture in the amount of \$200 with the Virginia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to secure financial aid for completion of the church building. One condition of the indenture was that in the event the building ceased to be a House of Worship then the Trustees were to refund the \$200 plus "interest thereon from the time of reserving it".

There was a raised platform area at the front of the church for the minister and song leader. The altar was formed by a gallery rail along the front of the platform. Pews were made locally from Oak lumber and heat was provided by a pot-bellied stove located in the center of the building. The overhead chimney for the stove pipe was supported by a 12" cedar post. There was no electricity and light was provided by oil lamps located on small shelves along the walls.

James Newton was the first Pastor and Robert Penley was most likely the second although the exact years of their service are not known. Alleys Chapel was a "North" church and as a result conference records are incomplete until 1940, the year following reuniting of the North, South and Protestant elements of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In addition to Newton and Penley the following ministers are believed to have served Alleys Chapel between 1884 and 1940; C.C. Blair, D.B. Cooper, Isaac Crowder, C.E. Duncan, C.C. Greear, John Greear, Worley Hillman, E.A. King, N.P. King, C.S. Pendleton, Guy Smith, Gurney Shoupe, Arnold Vermillion, John Vermillion and Walter Winslow. Pastors between 1941 and 2009, in order of service, were ; P.M. Peters, Kenneth Williams, J.F. Richardson, Roy Jenkins, Lester Smith, Carl Jones, F.W. Snodgrass, Paul Lane, Eugene McConnell, George Odel, Leland Smith, Tom Blackburn, John Hackney, David Vaughn, Gillis Wilmouth, Jim Harless, Bill Slagle, Jim Johnson, Daryl Williams and Bob Cloud

Methodist Churches served by "Circuit Rider" ministers have variously been organized as a parish, a mission, a charge or a circuit over the years. Alleys has been all of these in addition to briefly being part of a full time charge. During its 125 year history Alleys has been on a conference charge with numerous churches including, Alley Valley, Bellamy, Blairs, Chalybeate Springs, Fairview, Gate City, Hales, Hiltons, Marble Point, Mtn, View, Mt. Vernon, Purchase and Smiths. The longest affiliation of Alleys with another church was with Bellamy Chapel. The 1914 report to the annual conference of the Bristol District states that "Two churches have been added to the Gate City Charge, one at Bellamy Chapel and the other at Gate City." Alleys and Bellamy continued on the same charge until 1976. Bellamy closed in 1984.

In 1975 the Alleys congregation approached the District Superintendent about the possibility of Alleys, Bellamy and Smiths merging into a single church with in new building to form a full time charge. Discussions were held with the three churches but ultimately Smiths decided against the merger. In early 1976 Alleys again approached the DS about adding Alleys, Bellamy and Smiths to an existing full time charge. The DS was receptive and felt the Hiltons-Mt. Vernon charge would be a good fit. A meeting was held at Alleys with representatives from Bellamy and Smiths present. Each church voted separately and Bellamy and Smiths voted to remain a circuit charge and Alleys voted to go full time. The DS honored the wishes of each church and in July of 1976 Alleys joined Hiltons – Mt. Vernon as a full time charge. That arrangement continued until 1981 when Alleys was moved to the Gate City full time charge. Alleys remained with Gate City until 1993 when the Conference decided to combine Alleys with Hales Chapel to form a circuit charge. In 1995 Alleys and Hales were separated and Alleys became a single point charge and remains so today (2009).

The first significant modification to the church building came in 1933 when the composite roof covering was replaced with tin. A Mr. Williams who owned a local store offered a contribution for a tin roof but not “an umbrella over” (this comment was prompted because a tar-paper felt covering was being considered) which motivated the congregation to raise funds for a tin roof. Rural electrification came to Scott County in the mid 30’s and electricity came to Alleys Chapel soon after WW II. In 1959 a great revival swept the church and 50 souls were saved, many of whom joined the church. This prompted the congregation to undertake a major renovation to the building. The interior was completely remodeled with dry wall, wainscot, ceiling tile and finished oak floor. The chimney was removed from above the center of the building which enabled the removal of the 12’ Cedar post. A new chimney was build on the side of the building, an oil furnace was installed, an addition was added to provide four Sunday School rooms and the entire building was covered with asbestos shingle siding. Seven globe chandelier lamps were salvaged from the P.H. Nickels Dept Store in Gate City and installed in the sanctuary. All the original church furnishings were replaced with modern church furniture.

During the 1960’s Alleys was blessed with many young folks in the congregation which resulted in a strong MYF program. It was during this same period that there was an organized Scott County Church Softball league. Alleys had a succession of young Christian athletes and won the league championship for several years. In 1989 Alleys began providing financial support to church youth that were headed to college and in 1993 the Hoyt P. Quillen Memorial Scholarship was established. The first scholarship was awarded to Mr. Quillen’s grandson. Since 1989 \$1000 scholarships have been awarded to 37 high school seniors from the Alleys church family that are headed to college.

The year 1976 marked the beginning of a series of renovations and improvements to church property that exemplify the commitment to discipleship that abides with the Alleys congregation. Between 1976 and 1978 the church foundation was strengthened, the top of the church was removed and 24’ was removed from the side walls, a trussed roof was put in place, an enclosed entry was added, demolition and earthwork provided greater access to the rear of the church and the entire structure was bricked. Additional church furnishings were added in 1981 and 1983. A lighted church marquee sign was placed in 1983. In 1984 the oil furnace was removed and replaced with a heat pump. A well was drilled in 1985 and a water fountain added to the entry in 1986. The area surrounding the church was paved in 1995. In 1999 the front entry was removed and replaced with a vestibule that included a restroom, a storage closet and handicap access. This addition also included the structural integrity necessary to support a steeple which was erected in 2000. In 2004 all windows in the Sunday school rooms were replaced with energy efficient units and a more energy efficient heat pump was installed. The sanctuary windows were replaced with stained glass windows in 2005 and a back-lighted stained glass window was placed behind the pulpit. The only outside financing for this series of improvements was a \$7000 loan in 1978 to pay for bricking the church. The loan was paid in full by 1982.

Over the years Alleys Chapel has been recognized for it spiritual worship, love of gospel singing, benevolent spirit, financial aid at the community and conference level, Christian fellowship and love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Alleys is honored to have provided the Methodist Episcopal Church and its successors with 10 ministers; Carl Bates, Claude Lane, Paul Lane, Eugene McConnell, James Newton, C.S Pendleton, Robert Penley, Steve Templeton, Daryl K. Williams and Kenneth Williams

The average attendance for Alleys Chapel in 2008 was 25.

ALLEYS CHAPEL
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
1989-2009

Daniel Armentrout
Joshua Armentrout
Brittany Barr
Dustin Barr
Jason Begley
Melissa Begley
Maggie Bishop
Daniel Bishop
Ashley Bookout
Amanda Calhoun
Jamie Calhoun
Jessica Cassell
April Ervin
Brad K. Ervin
Joshua Todd Ervin
Sarah Beth Ervin
Grant Gilliam
Jamie Gilliam
Robin Hager
Aaron Hammonds
Amy Lane

Mallory Lane
Megan Lane
Brian McDavid
Rusty Pendleton
Tommy Pendleton
Chad Price
Brad Quillen
Craig Quillen
Nicholas Quillen
Stacy Quillen
Christopher Rhoton
Ivy Slemons
Lane Smith
Wynn Sutherland
Travis Tankersley
Chris Templeton
Clora Templeton
David Templeton, Jr.
Joseph Templeton
Philip Templeton
Marc Williams

METHODIST MINISTERS
FROM
ALLEYS CHAPEL
1884-2009

CARL BATES
CLAUDE LANE
PAUL LANE
EUGENE MCCONNELL
JAMES NEWTON
C.S. PENDLETON
ROBERT PENLEY
STEVE TEMPLETON
DARYL K. WILLIAMS
KENNETH WILLUAMS