

Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

**White Chapel United Methodist Church
6332 Woodstock Tower Rd
Fort Valley, VA 22652**



A brief history

As early as the mid-1840s, a Methodist Episcopal congregation was flourishing in the Caroline Furnace area, serving the community around the iron furnace in the upper Fort Valley. (See the write-up for the Oak Level United Methodist Church.) At the time, this evolving denomination combined a traditional formal Anglican/Episcopalian structure with "Methodism," the livelier and more extemporaneous way of conducting services originated by John Wesley in England. Sometime between the end of the Civil War and

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1900, this Methodist Episcopal South congregation divided, with those members living at a distance from the furnace site, near the center of the Fort Valley, starting their own congregation at the Cross Roads Union Church. In winter 1904, under the leadership of Pastor Tommy Jones, carpenter Zachary Taylor and his sons constructed a church building on a lot which had recently been sold to the church trustees by Jacob Lichliter for \$1.00. After some disagreement over its name, the new church was dedicated in August 1904 as the White Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church South, a part of the Woodstock Mission.

Several pastors served White Chapel for brief periods of time, among them Pastor Elmer Sloane who, in 1915 held a revival at which 22 new members joined the church. Despite his success in attracting members, the little church had to close its doors during World War I, possibly because many members, including the pastor, were called to service. It reopened in 1919 under the leadership of Pastor W. G. Winton. The 1920's were marked by growth in numbers and improvements to the structure, including a new galvanized roof, interior plaster, carpeting, and fresh paint inside and outside. Methodist Hymnals were purchased in the 1940's, and restrooms were added in 1973. In May 1990, the Reverend Dr. Arthur Stanley dedicated a new Sunday School wing. The church members celebrated the completion of their new picnic pavilion a short time later.

The research for much of this history had already been done by White Chapel members back in 1994, when they printed anniversary booklets for their Anniversary Celebration. Member Eunice Shipe provided a wealth of information. She was then 93 years old and had belonged to the church since 1915. Sadly, Mrs. Shipe passed away in January of that year, just a few months prior to the celebration. Ten years later, White Chapel's Centennial Celebration in 2004 was presided over by the Reverend Sherry Waddell. Today, "Pastor Sherry" still ministers to this very active congregation, as well as serving the Oak Level United Methodist Church.

Submitted by Meg Trott, January 2013