

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MELINA CHURCH

The Melina United Presbyterian Church was organized in 1865 by a Mr. W. R. Miller. Between 1854-65, Mr. Robert E. McFadden, Sr., held meetings each Sabbath under the trees or in his home for Negro Slaves. He read sermons by different ministers to them. At the close of the War between the States, a group of Negroes sought to establish their own house of worship. Mr. McFadden conveyed three acres of land to them for a church and school and helped them to build a church. The rectangular frame structure 25 x 60, was built of hewn timber with a straight tower (Bell) on the roof. While the church was being built, services were held under a Brush Shed. In 1918, an addition was added to the original structure. A six-room manse was also built and was later used as a community house.

In 1907, Mr. Frank E. DuBose, Sr., conveyed two and one-quarter acres of land to the following trustees of the Melina Church: Messrs. M. W. McFadden, E. A. Coleman, and Wesley Wilson. In 1910, Mr. DuBose conveyed another two and one-quarter acres of land to the Melina trustees. Also, the surviving members of Odd Fellows Lodge conveyed 1.09 acres to the trustees of the Melina Church.

Reverend Davis, a white missionary, was the first minister. He preached from 1865-67. Reverend Lestrat, a Northern Negro, was the first resident minister. He preached from 1868-78. Other ministers who have served the church are: The Reverend John Simon, Rainey, I. D. Davis, Eddie Ailen, George T. Dillard, James M. McKay, Walter Thomas Bruton, James W. Manoney, Fritz Cannon, John Rosebrough, Robert C. Johnson, and George E. Spellen. Under the leadership of these ministers, along with dedicated elders and members, the church grew both in service and devotion.

With the zeal and leadership of the Reverend R. C. Johnson, efforts were made to build a new church. However, before the new building could be erected, Reverend Johnson was called to serve another congregation. This did not falter the efforts of the congregation, and in 1963, a new church and educational building were built. The contractor for the new church was Coker's Building of Turbeville, South Carolina. The old church was sold to Mr. Eddie Wilson, a member of the church.

In September of 1965, the present minister, Reverend Carnell Hampton, came to us as Stated Supply, and in June of 1966 was installed as pastor. The church has made great progress under his leadership.

The Church is proud of 131 years of history and find it filled with many joys and sadness. However, we thank God for His "Grace" which has sustained us through these years. The Melina Church has been a center for our lives, and a lighthouse and power station in the community. From these sacred grounds, our sons and daughters have gone to take their places of leadership in the world.

Melina is proud of its rich heritage and of its faithful members and officers, past and present who have sacrificed, worked hard, and are still sacrificing and working hard to bring God's kingdom here on earth.