MELINA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GABLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

A LEGACY OF FAITH, FREEDOM & COMMUNITY

1865 – PRESENT

Our History Is Our Heritage.
Our Faith Is Our Foundation.
Our Legacy Is Our Responsibility.

A Dedication to Those Who Came Before Us

We honor the visionaries, founding families, ministers, elders, trustees, church mothers, and faithful members whose prayers, sacrifices, and commitment established and sustained Melina Presbyterian Church. Their faith laid a foundation that continues to support generations.

May we never forget where we started, the sacrifices made along the way, or the responsibility we have to preserve what has been entrusted to us. May Melina continue to be a place of worship, hope, education, advocacy, fellowship, and service.

The Beginning: A Foundation Built on Faith (1854–1865)

The history of Melina Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is deeply rooted in faith, determination, and the pursuit of spiritual freedom. Established in 1865, during the period following the Civil War, Melina Presbyterian Church stands as a

testament to the faith and resilience of African Americans who sought to establish a place of worship, education, fellowship, and community leadership.

Between 1854 and 1865, Mr. Robert E. McFadden, Sr., held religious gatherings each Sabbath under the trees or in his home for enslaved African Americans. During these gatherings, he read sermons written by various ministers, providing spiritual encouragement and an opportunity for worship during a time when freedom and independence were severely restricted.

Following the conclusion of the Civil War, a group of African Americans sought to establish their own house of worship. Recognizing the importance of their vision, Mr. McFadden conveyed three acres of land for the establishment of a church and school. He also assisted in the construction of the first church building.

While the church was being constructed, worship services were held beneath a brush shed. The original church was a rectangular frame structure measuring approximately 25 by 60 feet. It was constructed of hewn timber and featured a straight tower with a bell on the roof.

In 1865, Melina Presbyterian Church was organized by Mr. W. R. Miller. What began as small gatherings under the trees and in a private home developed into a permanent place of worship and a foundation for generations to come.

Expanding the Foundation: Land, Education, and Community

As the congregation grew, additional land was secured to support the church's expanding ministry and community presence.

In 1907, Mr. Frank E. DuBose, Sr., conveyed two and one-quarter acres of land to the trustees of Melina Church: Messrs. M. W. McFadden, E. A. Coleman, and Wesley Wilson. In 1910, Mr. DuBose conveyed an additional two and one-quarter acres to the church trustees.

In later years, Mr. Frank E. DuBose, Jr., conveyed an additional 0.31 acres to the trustees. The surviving members of the Odd Fellows Lodge also conveyed 1.09 acres to the church. These contributions helped establish and preserve the physical foundation upon which the church's ministry would continue to grow.

In 1918, an addition was made to the original church structure. A six-room manse was also constructed and later served as a community house, further demonstrating the church's commitment to meeting the needs of the surrounding community.

The Early Pastors and Spiritual Leadership

The first minister of Melina Presbyterian Church was Reverend Davis, a white missionary who served from 1865 to 1867. Reverend Lestrat, a Northern African

American minister, became the church's first resident pastor, serving from 1868 to 1878.

Over the years, many ministers faithfully answered the call to lead and shepherd the congregation. Those who served included:

- Reverend John Simon
- Reverend Rainey
- Reverend I. D. Davis
- Reverend Eddie Allen
- Reverend George T. Dillard
- Reverend James M. McKay
- Reverend Walter Thomas Bruton
- Reverend James W. Manoney
- Reverend Fritz Cannon
- Reverend John Rosebrough
- Reverend Robert C. Johnson
- Reverend George E. Spellen

Through the leadership of these ministers, along with dedicated elders, deacons, trustees, and church members, Melina continued to grow in faith, service, and commitment to the community.

A New Church and a Growing Ministry (1963)

Under the leadership and vision of Reverend R. C. Johnson, efforts began to construct a new church facility. Although Reverend Johnson was called to serve another congregation before the new building could be completed, the congregation remained committed to moving forward.

In 1963, a new sanctuary and educational building were constructed by Coker's Builders of Turbeville, South Carolina. The original church building was subsequently sold to Mr. Eddie Wilson, a member of the congregation.

This new facility represented another significant chapter in Melina's history, providing an expanded place for worship, Christian education, fellowship, and ministry.

Forty-Five Years of Leadership: Reverend Carnell Hampton (1965–2011)

In September 1965, Reverend Carnell Hampton came to Melina Presbyterian Church as Stated Supply Pastor. In June 1966, he was officially installed as pastor.

Under Reverend Hampton's leadership, Melina experienced significant spiritual, numerical, and physical growth. Throughout his 45 years of pastoral service, lives were transformed, individuals committed themselves to Christ, and the congregation continued to strengthen its presence in the community.

During his tenure, numerous improvements and additions were made to the church property and facilities. These included:

- €Construction of a new manse.
- €Development of an educational unit.
- €Improvements and expansion of the sanctuary.
- €Construction of an activity center.
- €Paving of the church parking lot.
- €Acquisition of an additional 28 acres of land.

Beyond the physical improvements, Reverend Hampton's ministry was marked by spiritual development, community involvement, and services designed to strengthen the congregation and extend the church's outreach.

His 45 years of faithful leadership represent a significant and lasting chapter in the history of Melina Presbyterian Church.

Continuing the Legacy: Reverend Samuel L. Sparks, III

Following Reverend Carnell Hampton's retirement, Reverend Samuel L. Sparks, III, began serving Melina Presbyterian Church as Temporary Supply Pastor in May 2011 then moved into the Pastoral Role . His service continued the church's longstanding tradition of pastoral leadership, worship, spiritual guidance, and commitment to the congregation. Melina Senior Ministry started under his leadership and continues today.

A Continuing Legacy of Faith, Leadership, and Congregational Strength

Following Reverend Samuel L. Sparks, III's illness and the conclusion of his pastoral leadership, Melina Presbyterian Church entered another important chapter in its history. During this period, New Harmony Presbytery provided leadership, guidance, and support by helping coordinate several Temporary Supply Pastors to ensure that the church remained spiritually grounded, active, and strong.

Among those who have served during this transitional period are Dr. Reverend Ella Busby and, currently, Dr. Larry Hill, who continues to provide pastoral leadership as Temporary Supply Pastor.

Throughout this season of transition, the elders and congregation have played an instrumental role in preserving Melina's history, maintaining its ministry, and sustaining its presence in the Gable community. Their dedication, commitment, and willingness to serve have demonstrated that the strength of a church is found not only in its pastoral leadership but also in the faith and determination of its people.

Melina Presbyterian Church remains a strong community-based church, serving as a cornerstone and a source of strength, encouragement, and advocacy for the surrounding community. Its commitment to strengthening families, supporting individuals, providing spiritual guidance, and responding to community needs continues to reflect the mission and vision established by those who came before us.

As Melina prayerfully seeks its next permanent pastoral leader, the congregation remains strongly supported by New Harmony Presbytery. The leadership of the teaching elders, ruling elders, church officers, committees, boards, and faithful membership continues to work together to preserve the church's legacy and advance its ministry.

Through every season of change, Melina has remained steadfast. The congregation continues to worship, serve, encourage one another, and make a difference in the community.

Melina remains strong—not simply because of its history, but because of the faith, unity, leadership, and commitment of the people who continue to carry that history forward.

A Legacy That Lives On

Throughout its history, Melina Presbyterian Church has been much more than a place of worship. It has served as a spiritual home, a center of fellowship, a source of encouragement, and a beacon of hope for the Gable community and surrounding areas.

From its humble beginnings beneath the trees and in the home of Mr. Robert E. McFadden, Sr., to the establishment of its first church building and the development of its present-day ministry, Melina's story reflects generations of faith, sacrifice, determination, and service.

From these sacred grounds, sons and daughters have grown in faith, received an education, developed leadership skills, and gone forth to make meaningful contributions in their families, churches, communities, and throughout the world.

The foundation laid by those early visionaries continues to remind us that a church is not simply defined by its buildings or the land it occupies, but by the people who serve, the faith they share, and the lives they touch.

Melina Presbyterian Church stands as a living testimony to the generations who came before us, the congregation serving today, and the generations yet to come.

THROUGH EVERY GENERATION, OUR FAITH REMAINS STRONG.

Melina Presbyterian Church: Historical Timeline

1854–1865	Robert E. McFadden, Sr., holds Sabbath gatherings under the trees or in his home.
1865	Melina Presbyterian Church is organized by W. R. Miller; three acres are conveyed for a church and school.
1865–1867	Reverend Davis serves as the first minister.
1868–1878	Reverend Lestrat serves as the first resident minister.
1907	Frank E. DuBose, Sr., conveys two and one-quarter acres to the church trustees.
1910	Frank E. DuBose, Sr., conveys an additional two and one-quarter acres.
1918	An addition is made to the original church; a six-room manse is built and later used as a community house.
1963	A new sanctuary and educational building are constructed.
1965–1966	Reverend Carnell Hampton arrives as Stated Supply Pastor and is installed as pastor.
1966–2011	Reverend Hampton leads the congregation through 45 years of pastoral ministry and physical and spiritual growth.
May 2011	Reverend Samuel L. Sparks, III, begins serving as Temporary Supply Pastor.
Following Reverend Sparks's illness	New Harmony Presbytery supports the congregation through several supply pastors, including Dr. Reverend Ella Busby and Dr. Larry Hill.
Present	The elders, congregation, teaching elders, committees, boards, and New Harmony Presbytery continue supporting Melina as it seeks its next permanent pastor.

A Legacy of Faith, Freedom, and Community