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Reverend M. T. Steele led Mt. Zion in 1916 and 1917 and Mr. W. R. "Will" Gentry was Sunday School teacher. The church was appointed by the Stokesdale Circuit in 1901. The six churches in the circuit at that time were: Mt. Zion, Eden, Mt. Taber, Mt. Carmel, Glencoe

HISTORY OF THE MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

During the early 1800's a group of Methodist Protestants broke off from the Methodist Episcopalians who were strong in Guilford County and in Southern Rockingham County. Most of the churches were formed after the Civil War and there is recorded evidence of Mt. Zion as early as 1877. Mt. Zion, which was Methodist Episcopal, is said to have been first started near Pine Hall in a blacksmith shop. The blacksmith shop was near the Dan River and where the people crossed the river was known as Lad's Ford. The church was established by Mrs. Eliza Pegram Lasley. Mrs. Lasley, who had only one hand due to a cane mill accident, was born November 22, 1827 and died October 20, 1907. It is believed that she was middle age when the church was started. Her husband died during the Civil War at the Orange County Court House in Virginia.

A handwritten deed dated April 1, 1883 records a gift of land given to the Methodist Episcopal Church South by H. L. Gant and his wife, Mary A. Gant. Mr. and Mrs. Gant's words on the deed are as follows: "for and in consideration of the love we bear for the cause of Christ and from an earnest desire to promote heritage on Easter do give and grant and by these presents convey unto W. P. Southern, J. S. Lasley, J. W. Moore, J. A. Colley and B. J. Satterfield and their successors in office a certain tract or parcel of land." On this tract of land, which lies about sixty yards southwest of the present church building, the first church was built. The church building was a one room structure sealed out of wide plank with small oil lamps hanging on each side wall. These lamps were backed with reflectors to provide better lighting. The community surrounding the church was then known as Rocky Springs.

The first burial at the church was recalled by Richard "Dick" Joyce before his death. He recalled helping bring the first body to the cemetery for burial on a horse drawn wagon. This was sometime in 1886 and the body was either Mr. or Mrs. W. B. Vaughn, one of the grandparents of the late Talmadge F. Vaughn.

In 1897 Reverend F. F. Gibson of Summerfield was pastor of Mt. Zion as well as Mr. Carmel and Mt. Pleasant in Stokesdale. At that time the Rocky Springs community had a population of 40.

In 1901 Mt. Zion was on the Stokesdale Circuit in the Winston-Salem District of the Western North Carolina Conference. Reverend T. H. Pegram led the spiritual growth of the church from 1901 to 1902. From 1903 to 1906 Dr. V. E. Edwards of Stokesdale filled as a supply pastor for the 425 members on the circuit. In 1906 when Reverend A. R. Bell was pastor, the membership had grown to 499. In 1908 Reverend L. T. Hendren was assigned to the Stokesdale Circuit and served the circuit for four years. The circuit was changed from the Winston-Salem District to the Mt. Airy District at the 1910 conference. From 1912 to 1913 Reverend G. W. Williams was pastor on the circuit and the membership increased to 655 members. Reverend T. J. Folger served the circuit in 1914 and Reverend R. L. Doggett led the people in 1915 when the membership increased to 737 members.

J. F. "Frank" Webster recalls one of the Sunday School teachers as early as 1914 to be Mr. W. R. "Will" Gentry. Frank Sherron was the Sunday School Superintendent before entering the service during World War I and his mother, Betty, was a Sunday School teacher. T. Graham Cain was Sunday School Superintendent in 1917 and his daughter, Elma Cain, played a pedal organ for the church. Mrs. A. G. "Eva" Angel recalls sweeping the churchyard with a dogwood brush broom and washing the oil lamps and filling them with oil. She often worked at the church with her mother-in-law, N. Carolina Angel, who was the daughter of the church's founder. Mrs. Angel also played the organ for the church on various occasions.

Reverend M. T. Steele led Mt. Zion in 1916 and 1917 and Mr. W. R. "Will" Gentry was Sunday School Superintendent in 1916. In 1918 Reverend T. V. Crouse was appointed to the Stokesdale Circuit and remained on the circuit until 1923. The six churches on the circuit at that time were: Mt. Zion, Eden, Mt. Tabor, Mt. Carmel, Glencoe and Stokesdale. Mr. W. W. Beasley was the Sunday School Superintendent for the years 1918 and 1919 and Mr. A. D. McGee served as Superintendent in 1920. The membership of the circuit decreased to around 600 members in 1921 and 1922 when Mr. Grady Vaughn served as Sunday School Superintendent. The circuit membership increased to 646 in 1923. Reverend J. H. Capps served as minister and J. M. McMichael led the Sunday School.

On April 4, 1925 the land was purchased for the present church building site. Trustees of the church, Grady Vaughn, A. S. Knight, S. J. Albert, W. W. Beasley and A. J. Neal, bought the land from Rufus W. Turner for the sum of \$150.00. Money to build a new church was raised by ice cream suppers and other fund-raising projects. Much of the lumber in the church today was given by Bessie Joyce Gentry, W. A. "Will" Joyce and David R. Joyce, Sr. The small white frame church was completed July 24, 1925, a date which can be found on the front steps of the church today. The date was etched in the concrete step by Sunday School Superintendent Joe Vaughn when the steps were poured. The church building was a sanctuary with two wings on each side at the front of the church. Gas lamps swinging from the ceiling provided lighting and a big wood or coal stove sitting out in the floor heated the small church. The church bell, which was hung then and rings today, is said to have come from the old town clock of Winston-Salem. The first alter rail in the church was built by W. A. "Will" Joyce at a later date. Reverend M. E. Leftwich, who was appointed to the circuit in 1924, led the people in praises to God for their new place of worship.

In 1928 the Stokesdale Circuit was placed in the Greensboro District of the Western North Carolina Conference. Reverend C. F. Tate was appointed to the circuit in that same year and remained until 1931. Reverend Tate was paid \$207.00 annually by the 135 members of Mt. Zion. The conference appointed Reverend J. J. Edwards to the circuit in 1931. At that time the average Sunday School attendance was 100. Reverend Edwards served the circuit until 1935.

In the early 1930's a group of the women of the church formed the Women's Society of Christian Service. Three of today's church members, Betty V. Shumake, Emily V. Bullock and Edna Vaughn, are charter members of the group. Betty Shumake recalls she and Emily attending the meetings with their mother, Emma Vaughn, when they were small children. Records indicate that the group had ten members in 1936. Their number grew and averaged twenty members for the next thirty years. In 1973 the Western North Carolina Conference changed the group's name to the United Methodist Women and the Mt. Zion group was twenty-seven members strong. Over the years the United Methodist Women have contributed to their church as well as the community. For almost twenty years a Christmas party has been given for the mentally retarded children at Dillard and Elliot Duncan Schools in Madison. Money, cards and Christmas favors have been sent to the Brooks Howell Home in Ashville. The group sponsors a child at the children's home each year. The United Methodist Women put the first carpet in the church and then replaced that carpet with new in 1982. They have also bought two pianos for the church. The newest piano, which was bought in 1979, is in the church sanctuary and the other piano is in the fellowship hall. In 1983 the sixteen member group contributed \$2,000 toward paying of the church parking lot and drive. The money raised to support the group's activities comes from bazaars with homemade items, Stanley parties, the printing of Mother's Day and Father's Day booklets and the continuous selling of cards, danny duzits scouring pads and pecans at Christmas.

In 1935 the church membership had grown to 142 members when Reverend J. E. B. Houser came to Stokesdale. During the three years he served the circuit he received an annual income of \$176.00. In 1937 electricity came to the area and electric lights filled the homes of church families as well as the church building.

Reverend W. T. Albright was appointed to the circuit in 1938 when Mr. Joe Vaughn was Sunday School Superintendent, and the membership had grown to 160 members with an average of 90 in Sunday School. The following year strength came to the Methodist churches and the Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Protestant churches merged. In 1968 they became the United Methodist Church. Reverend A. D. Shelton came to Mt. Zion in 1944 and remained on the circuit until 1948 with an annual salary of \$260.00.

On May 27, 1949 a tract of land was purchased from A. H. Tucker and his wife, Della, to build a church parsonage. The three churches on the circuit were Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church, Eden United Methodist Church and Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. A trustee from each church signed for the land purchase. These trustees were J. F. Webster of Mt. Zion, H. G. Gibson of Eden and T. L. Sharp of Mt. Tabor. A construction agreement was signed on August 6, 1949 for a thirty-two foot by thirty-six foot house to be built for the sum of \$6,190.00. Reverend Joe L. Erwin, who served the circuit from 1949 to 1955, and his wife moved into the parsonage when it was completed.

In 1952, under the leadership of Reverend Joe L. Erwin, the people of the church planted a tobacco crop to raise money for the church. The crop was called the "Lord's Acres". Proceeds from this project, along with help from the Methodist Conference, were used to brick the outside church structure. The memory of the land work lingers today but does not surpass the Christian fellowship experienced in that project.

By 1954 Mt. Zion had grown to 194 members and was paying a pastor salary of \$650.00 annually when Reverend C. W. "Bill" Sartin was appointed to the circuit in 1955. Mr. Wilbur McGee served as church lay leader from 1956 to 1959 when the Sunday School had an average of 145 members. In 1956 the church property was valued at \$20,000. The church grew in spirit and number. In 1959 the members decided to expand the church building. Reverend Ronald A. Overcash, who was assigned to the circuit from 1958 to 1962, led the people while the building addition was made. The building addition consisted of three Sunday School classrooms and a basement which were added to the back of the church.

During the early 1960's the church continued to fellowship through church picnics. Some of these picnics were held at Hanging Rock State Park, Tanglewood Park in Winston Salem and Battleground Park in Greensboro. In August of 1965 the church built its own picnic shelter by the edge of the woods behind the church.

The years of 1961 and 1962 brought beautification to the church. In 1961 the sidewalk in the front of the church was paved, the stained glass windows were added and offering plates were bought. The two offering plates were bought in memory of Robert Lee Angel by his wife Emma C. Angel. Seven stained glass windows replaced frosted glass windows originally put in the church. The windows were bought in memory of or in honor of loved ones. Inscriptions on the windows are as follows: In honor of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Hilton by the children; In honor of Mr. and Mrs. W. Z. Vaughn and Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Bullock by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bullock and family; In memory of Mr. and

Mrs. Thomas Joyce and family by the grandchildren; In memory of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Neal by Louise, Lula, Nettie, Mattie, Abb, Edd, Jule and Daniel Neal; In memory of A. J. Gravett, Elmer Gravett, Ira W. Gravett, William H. Gravett by Mrs. A. J. Gravett; In memory of Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Webster by the children. In 1962 folding doors were added to separate the two side wings from the sanctuary. New pulpit furniture was bought and maple trees were planted in the churchyard.

Mr. Phillip Vaughn served as church lay leader in 1960 and 1961 and Mr. Gorrell Parrish served as the circuit lay delegate to the conference from 1961 to 1964. In 1962 when Mr. Ralph Bullock was serving as lay leader, Reverend E. L. Murphy came to the circuit. He served until 1966 and received \$1,120.00 annually for his services.

The United Methodist Men were formed at Mt. Zion in February of 1963. Sunday morning breakfast meetings were held after the kitchen was added in the church in 1964. There were twenty-four members. The group was inactive for several years but in January of 1978 when Paul Moore was elected president, the group began to function again. The first goal for the men was to pave the church parking lot and drive. The men, with the help of the United Methodist Women, had Saturday night suppers for the community to raise money. Stews were cooked two or three times a year also. A 100 gallon stew pot was bought and a furnace was built at the church picnic shelter to prepare the stews. This was paid for by the United Methodist Men. Suppers have also been given to raise money for sick members of the community.

On May 5, 1963 the Mt. Zion church was changed from the Stokesdale Circuit to the Huntsville Circuit. In July of that year church members purchased new hymnals for the church. Reverend Ebby Lee Murphy and the 169 members sang praises to God from The Broadman Hymnal. Mr. Everette Shumake was serving as church lay leader.

In 1964 more improvements were made at the church. A well was dug and plumbing facilities provided for bathrooms and a kitchen sink in the basement. On February 16, 1964 a pulpit Bible was given to the church in memory of W. D. Rumley and family. An illuminated cross was given in memory of Mrs. Emma Vaughn by the Women Society of Christian Service on April 5, 1964.

Reverend Dwight Ludwig served the Huntsville Circuit from 1966 to 1967. In 1967 Reverend E. L. Murphy returned to the circuit for two years. Mr. Everette Shumake was the church lay leader for five years starting in 1967. The conference changed the Huntsville Circuit from the Greensboro District to the Winston Salem Northeast District in 1968, at which time the church property and building were valued at \$50,000.

At the annual conference in 1969 Reverend Stanley B. James was appointed to the circuit. Mt. Zion had 200 members with an average Sunday School attendance of 99. Reverend James left the circuit in 1971 and Reverend Frank A. Jeffers came to lead the people for one year. Mr. Luther York served as lay leader of the church from 1972 to 1975. Reverend Robert C. Bogan was sent to lead the circuit in 1972 at which time the church paid an annual pastor salary of \$2,675.00.

The pews in the church today were put in the church in January of 1973. These pews replaced the ones put in the church in 1944. Both sets of pews were purchased by individual church members for the church.

The year of 1974 was a year of challenge for the Mt. Zion church people. An educational building was needed. In March of that year a building fund was set up by the church trustees. A building committee was appointed by the official board. Members of this committee were Ralph Bullock- chairman, Stella Webster-treasurer, Shirley Angel- secretary, Betty Shumake, Oscar Shumake, Everette Shumake, Jay Angel, Roger Southern, Tom Rumley, Jack Angel and Gorrell Parrish. Led by Reverend Bogan, the building committee employed architect Robert E. L. Peterson of Greensboro to draw up the plans for the educational building. When the plans were approved, Beaman Projects, Inc. was contracted for the construction. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in early January of 1977 and construction began. The money to pay for the new building was raised in many ways. Grants were given from the Duke Endowment. Money was given in memory of and in honor of loved ones. The United Methodist Women gave money raised by several projects. Building fund pledges were made by the church people. The church trustees, Gorrell Parrish, Tom Rumley and Ben T. Webster, accepted the completed building in August of 1977 and a dedication service was held at Homecoming, August 21, 1977. The completed building consisted of a fellowship hall with a fireplace, a kitchen, four classrooms and restrooms.

In May of 1975 an Alter Cross set consisting of a cross and two candle holders was given to the church in memory of Georgia and Van Joyce by D. R. Joyce, Sr. and family. During that year Mr. Luther York served as lay leader for the 184 church members.

On July 4, 1976 a bicentennial celebration was held at Mt. Zion. The people dressed as their ancestors did 200 years ago. The women wore long dresses and bonnets while the men dressed in their best overalls. A picnic lunch was held on the church lawn and praises to God were sung for America's freedom to worship. Also a United States flag and a North Carolina State flag were presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. Luther York.

The church purchased an organ for the sanctuary on January 16, 1977. Reverend Bogan was still leading the 187 members for an annual salary of \$4,794.00. The church property and building were valued at \$190,000 that same year. In October of 1978 a dedication service was held for flower vases and tables given to the church by the Sam Henline family in memory of Van Joyce and in honor of the late Mr. Art McGee.

In 1981 Reverend Budd Ellington, Jr. was appointed to the Huntsville Circuit. The 201 members paid him \$6,675.00 annually for his spiritual leadership. Remodeling in the sanctuary in the spring of 1982 provided a choir loft behind the pulpit and a new altar railing. The United Methodist Women had new carpet installed in the sanctuary to match the new green pew cushions. Reverend Ellington led the church in a dedication service for the carpet and furniture on May 16, 1982.

In 1983 under the guidance of the United Methodist Women, new hymnals were purchased for the church. One hundred and twenty-seven hymnals were bought by the church members in memory of or in honor of loved ones. After five years of hard work to raise money, the United Methodist Men's dream came true. With donations from the church people and the United Methodist Women, the church parking lot and drive were paved in August of 1983, just in time for Homecoming of that year. The United Methodist Men are now in the process of having a church sign placed on the church's front lawn. The church paid Reverend Ellington \$7,420.00 annually and the church property and buildings were valued at \$285,000.

Listed below are the ministers who have been appointed by the conference since 1901 to lead the spiritual growth of the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church:

At the 1984 annual conference Reverend George A. Carnwright was appointed to the Huntsville Circuit. In August of that year Mr. and Mrs. Luther York donated brass organ and piano lamps to the church.

Today at Mt. Zion, Reverend Carnwright is still leading the spiritual growth of the 199 members. Sunday School is held each Sunday morning and worship services are held twice a month. The membership at Mt. Zion has remained constant for the past twenty years but the work for the Lord has continued to grow. As we look back at the brief history given here we pray that the Lord will continue to bless our church as He has in the past.

Reverend E. L. Doggett	1915 - 1916	Reverend E. L. Murphy	1962 - 1966
Reverend M. T. Stelle	1916 - 1918	Reverend Dwight Ludwig	1966 - 1967
Reverend T. V. Crouse	1918 - 1923	Reverend E. L. Murphy	1967 - 1969
Reverend J. H. Capps	1923 - 1924	Reverend S. B. James	1969 - 1971
Reverend M. E. Laffwich	1924 - 1928	Reverend F. A. Jeffers	1971 - 1972
Reverend C. F. Tate	1928 - 1931	Reverend A. C. Bogan	1972 - 1981
Reverend J. J. Edwards	1931 - 1935	Reverend Budd Ellington, Jr.	1981 - 1984
Reverend J. E. B. Houser	1935 - 1938	Reverend G. A. Carnwright	1984 - present

Listed below are the many faithful members who have led the Sunday School since 1916:

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|-----------------|--------------------|
| W. E. Centry | W. A. Branson |
| T. G. Cain | Tom Taylor Webster |
| W. E. Seasley | Philip Vaughn |
| A. D. McGee | Ralph Bullock |
| Grady Vaughn | Everette Shumake |
| J. M. McMichael | Oscar Shumake |
| T. G. King | Harmon Brown |
| Joe Vaughn | Correll Parrish |

Many people have been contacted and many sources have been researched to compile the above historical data. We wish to express our sincerest appreciation to all of those who contributed to the writing of this history.

Mrs. Stella F. Webster
Mrs. Denise J. Angel

References:

- Minutes of the Western North Carolina Conference- 1931 - 1983
- The Journal of Rockingham County History and Genealogy, Volume VII No. 1 June 1982

Listed below are the ministers who have been appointed by the conference since 1901 to lead the spiritual growth of the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church:

Reverend T. H. Pegram	1901 - 1903	Reverend W. T. Albright	1938 - 1944
Dr. V. E. Edwards	1903 - 1906	Reverend A. D. Shelton	1944 - 1948
Reverend A. R. Bell	1906 - 1908	Reverend T. V. Crouse	1948 - 1949
Reverend L. T. Hendren	1908 - 1912	Reverend Joe L. Ervin	1949 - 1955
Reverend G. W. Williams	1912 - 1914	Reverend C. W. Sartin	1955 - 1958
Reverend T. J. Folger	1914 - 1915	Reverend R. A. Overcash	1958 - 1962
Reverend R. L. Doggett	1915 - 1916	Reverend E. L. Murphy	1962 - 1966
Reverend M. T. Stelle	1916 - 1918	Reverend Dwight Ludwig	1966 - 1967
Reverend T. V. Crouse	1918 - 1923	Reverend E. L. Murphy	1967 - 1969
Reverend J. H. Capps	1923 - 1924	Reverend S. B. James	1969 - 1971
Reverend M. E. Leftwich	1924 - 1928	Reverend F. A. Jeffers	1971 - 1972
Reverend C. F. Tate	1928 - 1931	Reverend R. C. Bogan	1972 - 1981
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Reverend J. E. B. Houser	1935 - 1938	Reverend G. A. Carnwright	1984 - Present

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W. R. Gentry	W. A. Branson
T. G. Cain	Tom Taylor Webster
W. W. Beasley	Philip Vaughn
A. D. McGee	Ralph Bullock
Grady Vaughn	Everette Shumake
J. M. McMichael	Oscar Shumake
T. G. King	Harmon Brown
Joe Vaughn	Gorrell Parrish

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Resources:

Minutes of the Western North Carolina Conference- 1901 - 1983
The Journal of Rockingham County History and Genealogy, Volume VII No. 1 June 1982