

OUR HISTORY: Approaching 200 years of serving God

Methodist services on Yellow Leaf Creek began about 1818 when itinerant Methodist preachers and missionaries stopped off from their travels through the Mississippi Territory and preached in the log cabins of the settlers or out in the open by the light of pine knot torches. These early inhabitants of Shelby County were soon joined by many other families, one of which was the Lesters.

In the 1830's, Alfred Musgrove Lester was an overseer on a plantation near Columbia, South Carolina. He gave up that position in 1837 to go into the newly opened Indian lands of Alabama. He and his wife, Mary Ann Poindexter Lester, as well as other companions, journeyed by wagon some six generations ago to become settlers in Shelby County on land just then ceded to the United States by the Creek and Choctaw Indians. The place near Yellow Leaf Creek where the Lesters and their associates put up their cabins, claimed the land, and erected their first log church has been known ever since as Lesters Chapel.



Lesters Chapel, c. 1915

The photo to the left is of the church's building three times removed from the current building. So far, we have been unable to determine the definite occasion that is depicted in the photo. Some people positively identified include G. W. Walton (first man in first row) and Roland M. Lester (teenager standing in right door and also great grandson of Alfred M. Lester.)



Church in 1950 with educational building added in the 1960s

Lesters Chapel's current building was completed in 1950, the fourth building so named. (The sanctuary was renovated in 1987, and a gym was added in the early 2000s.) The site of the chapel on top of a hill where the highway curves south is historic, for at the nearby spring, men were mustered into the Confederate Army, and later, at the same place, the survivors were discharged in front of the church. Highway 47 intersects and then follows the old Yellow

Leaf Narrows and Double Oak Mountain trail used by Indians, explorers, trappers, traders, and settlers going to and from the Mississippi Territory.

In 1950 Robert M. Lester, a grandson of the founders of Lesters Chapel, said, "The small country church is an essential element in American life and must be maintained." May the people of this Shelby County community continue to sustain Lesters Chapel in the years to come.

The church building was recently listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

Sources: Robert M. Lester,
Joan Garrett

Our Future: 200 More Years of Spreading God's Love



Current building, with gym added in 2005

We invite you to visit our website's Events page to see some of our immediate plans for the future. Better yet, come visit us in person at Lesters Chapel. We pray that our loving congregation and relaxed traditional worship will help you to experience God's love!

