

Old Bethel Methodist Church Ohio County, KY

By Jerry Long



(Old) Bethel Methodist Church
Picture taken by Jerry Long
On 19 November 1987

The Bethel Methodist Church, in Ohio County, KY, was established in 1804. On Highway 62 about four miles east of Beaver Dam turn north onto the Bethel Church Road. Down about three-fourths of a mile is the (Old) Bethel Methodist Church and cemetery.



View looking toward back of Bethel Church & cemetery (old section).
In edge of woods to the right of the church is the Bethel African
American Cemetery. Picture taken by Jerry Long on 23 April 1980.



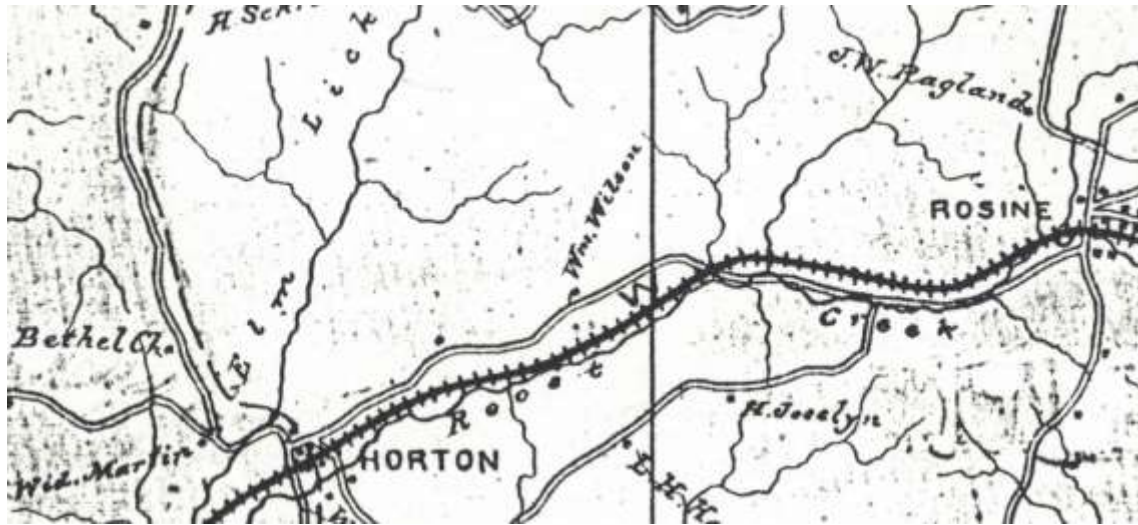
New section of cemetery opened in 1922, on the west side of the road in front of church.
Picture taken by Jerry Long on 23 April 1980.



Picture taken by Jerry Long on 27 April 1993



Bethel Methodist Church – 1967; third church building, erected in 1900



From 1886 Map of Ohio County, KY, by John J. McHenry – Bethel Church in lower left corner



From 1979 map of Ohio County, KY – Bethel Church in upper right corner



The History of Methodism in Kentucky, Volume 1, by Rev. Albert Henry Redford, D.D., Nashville, TN, Southern Methodist Publishing Company, 1870, pp.456-457:

The Livingston Circuit, which had been formed in 1803, under the indefatigable labors of Jesse Walker, had so extended its boundaries previous to the Conference of 1804 as to embrace the counties of Henderson and Ohio.

In the Minutes of 1804, the work in this department is recognized under the style of "Livingston and Hartford," to which Jesse Walker and Joshua Barnes were appointed.

Previous to the Conference of 1804, a quarterly meeting was held at Isham Browder's, in Hopkins (then Henderson) county, embracing the 17th and 18th days of August, at which the following official members were present: Lewis Garrett, Presiding Elder; Jesse Walker, Assistant Preacher; Miles Harper, Joshua Barnes, Thomas Taylor, James Axley, Wiley Ledbetter, Josiah Moors, John Travis, Benjamin Parker, Taylor White, Isham Browder, Pleasant Axley, Moses Shelby.

At this Quarterly Conference, James Axley and Joshua Barnes were "recommended to travel."

Before Mr. Walker had embraced Ohio county in the Livingston Circuit, under the efficient labors of a few local preachers, societies had been formed at Goshen, Bethel, and No Creek, in that county.

"The first Church organized in Ohio county was at Goshen, two miles south of Hartford, in the year 1804. **Very shortly after this, in the same year, another Church was organized at Bethel, seven miles north-east of Hartford.** Next, and about the same time, in the same year, No Creek Church was organized."

These Churches were established as the result of a great revival which took place in December, 1803, commenced by the Presbyterians, in connection with two or three local preachers, who had settled in this part of the country.

"The first and leading local preacher connected with this work was Thomas Taylor, a man of more than ordinary ability and decisive character; and, through his influence, the masses of the converts were led into the Methodist Episcopal Church.

" Associated with him was Lodwick Davis, also a man of good preaching ability; also Joshua Barnes, of ordinary talents.

"During the Conference-year commencing in the fall of 1804, this circuit was blessed with extensive revivals of religion. They swept, like fire in dry stubble, all over the country. The people went from far and near to attend them were awakened, and converted to God." [Letter from the Rev. H. C. McQuown, of Hartford, Kentucky.]

These early societies were a nucleus, from which went out a fine religious influence into all the surrounding country. From the time of their first organization to the present, they have prospered, being the scenes of many revivals of religion. The society at Goshen now worships in a neat and commodious frame church, numbers nearly eighty members, and enjoys an average degree of spirituality. The society at Bethel enjoyed a fine revival of religion last spring, in which thirty-five were converted, and thirty-eight added to the Church. Class-meetings are kept up by them. They have a neat frame house of worship... – Letter to the author from the Rev. H. C. McQuown, dated Hartford, Kentucky, January 23, 1867.



Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, 21 January 1955, p.7:

History of Bethel Methodist Church

By Harry D. Tinsley

The name and place Bethel. The name Bethel appears in the Bible in at least twenty-eight different places. One passage is found in Genesis 28 18-19 and reads: "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil

upon the top of it. And called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first."

The location of the place Bethel of which I am writing is in Ohio county about two miles from Horton.

The beginning of the history of Bethel church must of necessity date back to 1786, the year in which Francis Asbury, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, for the first time assigned ministers to the District of Kentucky. These first ministers were Benjamin Ogden and James Haw. However, the first Methodist minister to preach in Kentucky was the Rev. Francis Clark, who came to the Kentucky frontier in 1783.

Shortly thereafter, in 1798 and 1799, a great revival was started on the western frontier by Reverends John and William McGee, two brothers, the former a local Methodist preacher and the latter a Presbyterian minister. During this revival "camp meetings" as they were called, originated. They were perhaps also the origin of the indoor revivals, latter called "protracted meetings."

Peter Cartwright

During this period of revival on the frontier, early in the new century, young Peter Cartwright, with his father, moved from Logan County to a new home in Livingston County. But before leaving his old home, Peter was licensed to "exhort," as it was pressed in those days by the Rev. Jesse Walker, and invested by the Rev. John Page, presiding elder, with authority to, in the words of the Rev. A. H. Redford in his book "History of Methodism," "travel through all that destitute region, hold meetings, organize classes (congregations or churches) and, in a word, form a circuit, and meet him next fall at the fourth quarterly meeting of the Red River Circuit, with a plan of the new circuit, number of members, names of preachers, if any, exhorters, class leaders, etc." Rev. Cartwright was successful and, in the fall of 1803, reported to the Revs. Page and Walker the establishment of the Livingston circuit, with about 100 members, to which, at that time, the Rev. Walker was appointed pastor.

The first Methodist church organized in Ohio county was at Goshen in 1804. Very shortly after this in the same year Bethel church was organized. Next and about the same time, in the same year No Creek church was organized.

These churches were established as the result of a great revival which took place in December 1803 carried on at first by the above named ministers – the McGees – and in connection two or three local preachers who had settled in that part of the country.

The first and leading local preacher connected with this was Thomas Taylor. Associated with him was Lodwick Davis and Joshua Barnes. Other local Methodist preachers in early Ohio county were Otho Williams, John James, Daniel and John Pinkston, Ignatius Pigman, Thomas Stevens, John Daviess, Joseph Miller and John Phipps.

Bethel, along with Goshen and No Creek was reported in the conference minutes of 1805 under the name "Livingston and Hartford circuit," to which the Rev. Walker alone was assigned; and the next year was merely listed as "Hartford circuit," from the custom of designating many organizational units by the name of the county seat, though there seems to be no evidence of a Methodist church organization existing in Hartford until 1811.

The first church building at Bethel was built prior to 1814 and was of hewed logs. It was the first church building erected in Ohio county by the Methodists. Goshen was erected about the same time and No Creek in 1819. Before the erection of the building camp-meetings were for many years at Bethel.

The deed to the church property recorded in Book D. p.p. 138-139, Clerk's office reads as follows:

This indenture made this 30th day of April 1814 between Samuel T. Beall of the county of Nelson and Commonwealth of Kentucky of our part and William Stevens, John G. Stevens, John Duke, Stephen Statler and William Cooper, trustees of a Methodist church in Ohio county of the other part Witnesseth that the said Samuel T. Beall for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings current money to him paid, hath given grant bargain hold and by these presents doth convey to the said trustees and their successors forever in trust for the use and benefit of the Methodist Episcopal church a meeting house called "The Bethel Meeting House," and two acres of land adjoining the same and surrounding said house and bounds as follows: Beginning at a stake and running thence West 16 poles to another stake South 20 poles to another stake thence East 16 poles to four Dogwoods. thence North 20 poles to the Beginning. To have and to hold the said Meeting House and two acres of land in trust as aforesaid for the sole use and benefit of said Church and for no other use and purpose whatever. In Testimony of which the said Samuel T. Beall hereto subscribes his name and affix his seal this day and year written.

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of Samuel Tevis, P. Thompson.

Samuel T. Beal, Seal.

We do not know how long the log building stood, in 1867 the year in which Dr. Redford's book was published, the Rev. H. C. McQuown, of Hartford, sent the author of the book the following note on Bethel church, as well as some notes on Goshen and No Creek. The note stated:

"The society at Bethel enjoyed a fine revival of religion 1as spring (1866) in which thirty-five were converted and thirty-eight added to the church. Class meetings are kept up by them. They have a neat frame house of worship."

The third and present church edifice was erected in 1899, the late Henry Sibert, who once resided in Hartford, being the carpenter.

The pastors assigned to this circuit, during its first and only year as the Livingston and Hartford circuit, were the Reverends Jesse Walker and Joshua Barnes. The next year, 1805, Rev. Walker alone was assigned to the Ohio county circuit, which included Bethel for the first time after organization.

This area at that time, included 15,000 square miles, comprising not only today's. Ohio county but also all of the present Daviess county as well as parts of six other adjoining counties, as they now are.

After the close of Rev. Walker's terture in 1806, until 1826, in approximately the order in which they served, the pastor's serving the Bethel church were Benjamin Edge, John Craig, William Lewis, Samuel Sellers, Jacob Truman, Marcus Lindsey, Francis Travis, James Porter, John Allen, Benjamin Malone, George McNelly, William F. King, William Allison and John Smith.

There is not available a list of the pastors from 1826 to 1899; however, a portion of that time Bethel, was, no doubt, on the Hartford Circuit of which circuit we have a complete list of pastors with dates beginning in 1844. The church book contains the names and dates of the pastors from 1899 to the present, with the exception of from 1916 to 1934. The list is as follows: Smith Given 1899-00; G. J. Bean, 1900-01 (He finished Given's second year); B. F. Lawhern, 1901-02; S. A. McKay 1902-03; J. A. Savage, 1903-04 (resigned in July); Joe Randolph, 1904; J. F. Baker, 1904-06; Joe Goodman, 1906-08; R. E. Bailey, 1908-10; E. B. Cooney, 1910-11; James P. Van Hoy, 1911-16?; W. E. Burdette; M. E. Wilcox; Quine Allen; R. H. Bow, 1934-35; S. L. Whittaker, 1935-36; D. R. Gant, 1936-38; E. C. Whitworth, 1938-39; L. H. Miller, 1939-40; Ferd N. Royster,

1940-42; W. F. Sharpe, 1942-44; Hugh E. Delaney, 1944-45; C. R. Hodges, 1945-47; Elza C. Morgan, 1947-49; C. R. Hodges, 1949-50; F. O. Sharp, 1950-52; Ivan Allen, 1952-54 and Clancy B. Barnes, 1954-.

The four oldest members of the church are Frank Maples, Mrs. Luther Chapman and Mrs. Clarence Bartlett, all of near Beaver Dam and Larry Smith, of Jennings, La.

References: "Methodism in Kentucky" by A. H. Redford, The History of No Creek, Ohio County, Kentucky by yours truly, Record of the late Rev. Thomas Stevens, of Livermore, who was born and reared at Bethel, and the son of William Stevens (first trustee) and the Bethel church book.

(The above article was written and read at the church's sesquicentennial, last October 24th, by the author, at the request of the members of the church).



The following are some of the oldest marked graves in the Old Bethel Church Cemetery:

- John Taylor (1769-1822), son of Harrison Taylor & Margaret Jane Curlet



- Hannah Taylor (c1796-1823), daughter of John Taylor & Elizabeth Davis
- William Stevens (1769-1826), son of Richard Stevens & Lydia Garner
- Nancy Pigman Stevens (1773-1826), wife of William Stevens and daughter of Nathaniel Pigman & Nancy Waters
- Elizabeth Davis Taylor (1776-1834), wife of John Taylor
- Elizabeth Taylor Duke (1811-1836), wife of Thomas Duke and daughter of John Taylor & Elizabeth Davis

John J. Monroe (1749-1837), a Revolutionary War veteran, is believed to be buried here in an unmarked grave.



Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 23 May 1900, p.2:

Attention, Carpenters.

We will on the 2d day of June, 1900, let to the lowest and best bidder the entire carpenter work and painting of a church to be erected at the Old Bethel church. For plans and specifications. Apply to. All bids to be in by 1 o'clock p. m.

J. H. THOMAS,
O. T. DUKE,
L. B. DABNER, } Com.

Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 15 August 1900, p.3:

The new Bethel church, near Horton, was dedicated last Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. The dedicatory sermon was preached by the Presiding Elder, Virgil Elgin, assisted in the services by the Rev. G. J. Bean, pastor in charge. There was a large crowd present and dinner on the grounds for all and lots to spare. The church debt was all liquidated except about \$60 and that was assumed by the members.

Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 14 April 1922, p.8:

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are opening up a new plot for a burying ground adjacent to Bethel Church, hitch lot west side of road. This will be permanently dedicated to purpose above named regardless of rumors to the contrary. Area will be increased as demand requires, without stint. Lots \$10.00 each, with a clear title, 16½ x 16½ ft. square. Make your selection now. You have till September 1st, 1922 to pay. Yours for a square deal and a bona fide transaction.

C. I. STRATTON,
S. H. HOOVER,
Horton, Ky.

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Ohio County Times, Hartford, KY, 12 June 1975, p.17:

Twenty-five Attend Old Bethel Church Reunion, Picnic May 25

A reunion was held at Old Bethel Church east of Beaver Dam Sunday, May 25. Seventy-seven people were in attendance. Much of the day was spent in reminiscing of bygone days Many of those who came brought flowers for the graves. Everyone brought food and they had dinner on the ground. In the afternoon, they assembled in the church and while Mrs. Nola Rock Allen played the piano, they sang the old hymns they have sang here so many years before. When they left late in the afternoon, they were thinking about returning next year for a similar reunion.

Those attending were: Ariel Allen, Bessie Felix Austin, Earl Austin _ Bartlett, Sarah Thomson Bell, Elsie Rock Bivens, Edward Black, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Black, Guy Black, Donald Bray and his son Donald, Jr., Everett Brown, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. _ter, Shirley Hoover Craig and son Larry, Flora Ashford Daniel, Jesse and Vera Carson Daniel, Kermit Daniel, Otis and Nancy McDowell Garrett and their sons Steve and Stacy, Tilman Gray, Elizabeth _, Jeanette Lively Hester, C. C. and Thelma Black Hoover, Marvin Kennedy, Willis Leach and Kim, Madeline Smith Lively, Louise Porter Long, Roy and Edna Tindle McDowell, Sam and Lucille Mitchell McDowell, Sam McDowell, Jr. and daughter Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. _ Myers and their grandson, Joe, _ Patton, Jack and Mary _, Edith Black Pool, Eula Black Pool, Clyde Porter, Wilma Porter, Mr. and Mrs. A. R. _, Alma Patton Roeder, Clark and Dorothy Smith, Mr. and Mrs. _ Temple, Mary Tindle, _ and Kay Westerfield and baby daughter Pam, Reathel Westerfield and Anna Lorene McDowell, Beulah Smith Woosley, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Wright, Frank and Nancy Wright, Kenneth Wright, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Wright, Pearl Wright, and Cindy Hester Young.

Restoration of the cemetery will resume on June 28, Gregory Sutton has hauled four loads of topsoil to be used in filling the sunken graves and plans to haul more. Elmer and Oscar Wright have offered to use their equipment to move the topsoil after it has been hauled. Herbicide will also be applied on that day. Much help is needed for a great deal of work remains to be done.

[Note –On the microfilm of this edition part of the left hand side of the page could not be deciphered and the above list could not entirely be completed. This was the first annual Old Bethel Church Reunion.]



**Journal 2007, Chapter 7 – Resolutions & Petitions,
The Kentucky Annual Conference of
The United Methodist Church, kyumc.org (Resources), p.291:**

RESOLUTIONS ON DISCONTINUANCE

Resolution for the Discontinuance of the Old Bethel United Methodist Church:

Whereas, the Old Bethel United Methodist Church in Ohio County in the Owensboro District has declined in the membership, and

Whereas, the remaining members could no longer support the Old Bethel United Methodist Church and voted to discontinue. A service of Leave-Taking of a Church Building was held on Sunday, May 6, 2007.

Be it resolved that the 2007 Kentucky Annual Conference held at Louisville, Kentucky, June 10-14, 2007 declare that the Old Bethel United Methodist Church be discontinued as a United Methodist Church, and the proceeds from the sale of the building and property will be used by the Owensboro District at the discretion of the District Superintendent and the Owensboro District Building and Location Committee.

Be it further resolved that the remaining members of said church have the privilege of moving their membership to the church of their choice, with the membership roll being deposited with the District Superintendent

[Signed]

James R. King, Jr., Resident Bishop

Mark Girard, Ashland District

Mike Powers, Bowling Green District

Darren Brandon, Columbia District

Terry Faris, Corbin District

Terry Reffett, Covington District

Coleman Howlett, Elizabethtown District

Kenneth Cummings, Frankfort District

Paige Williams, Lexington District

Michael Gibbons, Louisville District

Jay Smith, Madisonville District

Dale Carden, Owensboro District

Lowell Ogden, Prestonsburg District



In 1860 the New Bethel Methodist Church was organized in the north-central part of Ohio County. The Bethel Church, near Horton, subsequently was also referred to as the Old Bethel Methodist Church. The Old Bethel Methodist Church was disbanded on 10 June 2007. The church's old records are located at the Methodist repository at the Kentucky Wesleyan College Library in Owensboro Ky. The church building that formerly housed the (Old) Bethel Methodist Church continued as a meeting house for other denominations. In 2010 it was the home of the There is Hope Community Church, an interdenominational, Pentecostal-style church, founded by its pastor, Darrell Blacklock. The former Old Bethel Church was destroyed in a fire on 15 June 2010.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 17 June 2010, p3C:

**Ohio County church burned to ground
Pastor's home also burned,
both incidents under investigation**

By Joy Campbell, Messenger-Inquirer

Multiple agencies are investigating two fires Tuesday night in Ohio County that destroyed the There Is Hope Community Church on Bethel Church Road and the pastor's home at 7245 U.S. 231 South in Cromwell.

