



L O V E A T T H E C R O S S R O A D S

Pineville United Methodist Church

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A HISTORY OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN AT PINEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

by Nancy Yawn

One of the three founding fathers of the church had an exceptional wife. Dr. Joseph A. Ardrey was married to Eliza McClure Delaney; they had seven children. As we became a separate church, she formed, organized and served as president for many years of the Woman's Missionary Society at Pineville.

In 1882, the Woman's Missionary Society was formed and was the first Society of the Charlotte District. One of the first things the Pineville Woman's Missionary Society did was to sell lemon extract for 20 cents a bottle to raise money to put a wrought iron fence around the new church. When the fence was delivered at the Pineville Depot, the women were advised that a shipping charge was also due. Eliza ran to her husband's doctor's office to retrieve enough money to pick up the fence for installation.

The church learned quickly that it would depend on the women to carry much of the burden of keeping it up and running while the men did their daily jobs. On December 12, 1882, at the quarterly church conference, Reverend Randell stated, "The work of the Woman's Missionary Society was the best we have ever seen."

Although the name changed many times, the Society continued to be a strong force through the years, staying true to its values and beliefs.

In 1925, the Woman's Missionary Society installed new carpet in the church, paid \$80 to the conference for dues and mission work and spent

\$288 on local work in the community. The Society had 24 members and made the conference honor roll.

Eliza Ardrey died exactly 41 years to the day after her husband on August 21, 1934. After their mother's death, two of their daughters remained in the homestead located where Highways 51 and 521 cross today. Neither Louise nor Helen married. Grace Ardrey Downs' son, Kenneth Ray Downs Sr., was an active member of Pineville United Methodist Church until his death in 2009. Her grandson, Kenneth Ray Downs Jr., is still a member.

Louise Ardrey went on to lead the Woman's Missionary Society and became a trustee and Sunday School Superintendent. After her death, the church named a United Methodist Women's circle after her which still exists today.

The Mabel Cherry Circle, named after a missionary that Pineville United Methodist Women sponsored until she could no longer serve in the mission field, is also still an active circle.

Through the years, there have been many circles at Pineville United Methodist Church. One was named after Neomie Howie, another missionary who had a connection to our church in the 1940s; she was a distant cousin of Francis Howie, a current church member. We also had a circle named after Sue Cole, the wife of a minister who preached at Pineville UMC from 1931 – 1937. Neither of these two circles exists today.

The United Methodist Women today still provide services for the church, community and the mission conference; we also have many projects that go on throughout the year for the betterment of the church.