

Mt Calvary Presbyterian Church and Cemetery

To God be the Glory for over 200 years of Christ-Centred Ministry

In 1806,

- Thomas Jefferson was president;
- Napoleon Bonaparte was Emperor of France.
- The national debt was around 600 million dollars.
- Robert Fulton's steamboat was under construction.
- President Thomas Jefferson issued an order for the arrest of former vice president Aaron Burr who was involved in a scheme to seize portions of Spanish territory.
- Alabama was part of the Mississippi territory.
- The Louisiana Purchase was three years old.
- Lewis and Clark were somewhere in the Pacific Northwest,
- Michael Keens exhibited the first cultivated strawberry.

And a group of Scotch Irish pioneers began meeting together for worship in the area formerly known as Ayers, the birth place of MT Calvary Presbyterian Church.

- In 1823, we became part of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.
- In 1910, we were part of a group that reunited with the Presbyterian Church USA.
- In 1981, concerned by the drift away from Biblical principles, we joined the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

Wars, fires, deadly epidemics and doctrinal controversies have come and gone. MT Calvary is still here, held captive by the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God.

A cemetery is an ugly place....

A place filled with the glaring fact that this world is bent and twisted ... that people die. All around us are men who died in battle, children who died in infancy, women who died in childbirth ...many who died from accidents or simple old age.

A cemetery is a place of grief and tears. But ...a Christian cemetery is also a place of beauty and hope. It's a quaint but meaningful custom that in many Christian cemeteries, the graves are all facing toward the east. Airplane pilots have been known to get a heading fix by observing this from the air. The reason for it is so that when Jesus returns, the dead will rise already facing the right direction.

Now, we don't know how things will happen on the Day of Resurrection, but this is a visible reminder of what the Bible tells us about sin and death. Christians don't grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope because we believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

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For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again. This is the key to the faith of those who buried their loved ones here for the past 200 years. They understood that our problem is not death, but the sin that brought death. And that God, who is rich in mercy, sent Jesus Christ to suffer and die in the place of His people so that whoever puts their faith and trust in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

So the cemetery becomes a place of beauty and hope ... a place like that tomb far away that could not hold Jesus.

Some Highlights of the History of MT. Calvary Church

Circa 1806 - MT Calvary Church was founded by a group of frontier men and women of mostly Scotch-Irish heritage who were passionate for hearing the word, desirous of people coming to know the Lord as their Savior, and needing a place for baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The original building was constructed of logs and located across the road from the present site.

During the period between 1800 - 1804, exhorters and lay preachers were sent into the territory of Alabama from the Old Cumberland Presbyterian in Southern Kentucky.

One of these men, Benjamin Lockhart, settled in Clayton's Cove. From 1813 - 1814 - the Creek Indian War was fought in East and South Alabama. 1817 - An ordained and seminary-trained man, James L. Sloss, came through the Alabama Territory and reported back to the Synod of North Carolina / South Carolina of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church that he had "found a man named Mr. Newton at Canoe Creek trying with help to hold a gathering together. The man is not a minister but has been in the area about six to eight years. Found him so weak and decrepit physically that he can hardly do any work." Canoe Creek has its beginnings from the spring located (where Lake Zamora is now) behind MT Calvary Church. He also reported "dense woodlands and mountains, very sparse settlements connected by narrow trails, raging and wide rivers, and the area crawling with snakes, wild animals, and Creek Indians."

1819 - Alabama became a state. March 1823 - Benjamin Lockhart of Clayton's Cove helped MT. Calvary become established as a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Jesse Taylor (1795 - 1860) and wife Catherine Holt Taylor (1796 - 1877) came from Columbia, Tennessee in the early 19th century. He was a Cumberland Presbyterian minister / farmer and settled in this area. He was the minister for many years, possibly the first of the established church. They reared twelve children of whom one served as pastor - Thorny B. Taylor. A grandson, R. Pate Taylor, also served the church two different times.

On February 15, 1856, Jesse Taylor, "for the affection and regard I have for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at MT. Calvary in the State and County aforesaid have released and by this deed by convey unto the said church a tract of land including the meeting house and graveyard.. " About this time a frame structure was built on the present site. Possibly there could have been two log buildings prior to this.

The War Between the States of 1861 - 1865 divided not only the states but also the Presbyteries of the churches between the north and the south. In 1906, two-thirds of the Cumberland voted to reunite with Presbyterian Church USA. MT. Calvary joined around 1907 -1911. The church burned on a Monday morning in 1925; this was the second time that the church had burned, destroying many of the historical records. The church building, our present stone sanctuary, was rebuilt shortly thereafter.

In 1981 MT. Calvary united with the Presbyterian Church in America.

Soli Deo Gloria, past, present, and future.