

A New Season, A New Name, A Historic Church

When does a church begin? Who has the dream? Who lays the fire—arranges the tinder—fans the sparks—carries the glowing ember?” How did it happen that a Methodist Church, now known as the Medina Community Church, was established in 1881?

To find answers to these questions one must go back to the earliest settlers and the earliest history of the vicinity. This early history, which may seem remote and unrelated, does not answer the questions fully, but it furnishes a basis for many significant happenings, all of which influenced in one way or another the establishment of a church.

The church is located on the banks of the Medina River in one of the most beautiful sections of the state of Texas. The name, Medina, dates back to 1689, when the Spanish explorer, Alonso De Leon, came through the country on his first expedition. He crossed and named on his way northwestward the rivers Nueces, Hondo, Medina and Guadalupe. In a translation of his diary, it is stated that the Medina River was named on April 11, 1689.

From the earliest days, people coming into this section have spoken of the beauty of the land. The hills, the valleys, and the clear sparkling streams truly manifest the handiwork of God. One would think that in such a place a church would have been established at an earlier date, but this did not happen. It takes people to form a church, and those people were not here. The white man was late in settling on the upper waters of the Medina River. It was not until the 1860's and '70's that settlers were beginning to come into the region. However, these people were by no means the first inhabitants. Different tribes of Indians had been around for hundreds of years. The many Indian mounds and burial sites in the vicinity, the arrow heads, spears, tomahawks and other implements made of flint, which have been found to be so numerous, are mute evidence of this fact.

This section of the state seemed to be a favorite of the Indian and one can understand why so well. The beautiful region with its hills and streams, its tall grass, wild berries, and abundance of game made it a paradise for the Indian with his type of life.

As the years went by, the white man began venturing into the region. First, hunting trips were made; later, shingle camps were set up along the streams; and finally, a few settlers began to arrive. Over the years, struggles, and savage warfare developed between the white man and the red man. Only the courageous remained.

These early residents lived in constant danger of raids by the Indians and suffered many losses in both life and property. In time, the Texas Rangers and the Bandera County

Minute Men, a local organization for protection against Indians, did much to help eliminate the raids. Two well-known local men, "Big Foot" Wallace, a part-time resident, and "Seco" Smith, were members of the local group. Both men led scouting groups in this section in pursuit of raiding Indians. "Seco" Smith later became an active member of the Medina Church, and a daughter, Beulah Smith Moore, served the church more than forty years as pianist and Sunday School teacher.



MR. AND MRS. W. D. "SECO" SMITH
Early members



BEULAH SMITH MOORE
Pianist and Sunday School teacher

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In time, as the Indians were driven out, more and more white people were moving in. Small settlements were soon found on Hicks Creek, Laxson Creek and on the North Prong and West Prong of the Medina River.

For several years, the Indians continued to come in occasionally from Mexico and the border area, making raids down the river valleys. The last time a person was killed by a raiding group of Indians in Bandera County was in the latter part of 1876. The Indians came down Wallace Creek, crossed below where the town of Medina now stands, and went on to Sabina! Canyon. At Seco Pass they encountered and massacred Mr. Jack Phillips, a Deputy Sheriff who lived on Winan's Creek, who was traveling horseback on official business. This incident delayed the starting of a settlement at Medina. Mr. H. H. Carmichael, a graduate of Columbia University, came to Texas, was married on

October 22, 1876, and moved directly to Bandera County. He bought land that included the future site of the Medina Methodist Church. He was having a house built on his property about three hundred yards from where the church now stands. It was almost finished when the Indian raid occurred. Having no neighbors nearby and thinking it was an unsafe place to live, he had his house torn down and rebuilt in Bandera. It was two years later in 1878, before another house was built at the same site. This was the first house in Medina. Shortly afterwards, other families began moving in and a town was started.

However, Methodism in the Medina area is older than the town itself. Some of the earliest settlers were devout Christians who knew the need of religious training for their families. Thus, the Methodist circuit riders received a hearty welcome when occasionally they came into the territory. When a preacher would arrive at someone's home, word would be sent to all the neighbors, who dropped whatever they were doing and gathered to hear the parson preach.

In one respect, the early settlers were fortunate in that most of the circuit riders who came were some of the greatest preachers in the Southwest. Among these were Rev. John W. DeVilbiss and Homer S. Thrall, two volunteers from the Ohio Conference, who came to Texas in 1842 to assist in the ministry in the state. Both were young, well educated, and very capable preachers. Rev. DeVilbiss preached the first protestant sermon in San Antonio in April 1844 and organized Travis Park Methodist Church in June, 1846. "At that time the work in what is now the Southwest Texas Conference had developed until there were three stations among the appointments – Austin with H.S. Thrall as pastor, San Antonio with J.W. DeVilbiss as pastor, and Corpus Christi with John Haynie as pastor."

Rev. DeVilbiss built a home on the Medina River in Bexar County and lived there at the time of his death in 1885. During his lifetime he made many trips into all the surrounding territory, preaching and conducting camp meetings. The first sermon by a Methodist minister to be preached in Bandera was by Rev. DeVilbiss in 1861.



HOMER S. THRALL
Presiding elder for the
West Prong Church
1882-1886

From 1882-1885, Rev. Homer S. Thrall was presiding elder of the San Antonio District. The Bandera-Medina charge was in the San Antonio District at that time, and every time there was a quarterly conference the early settlers had an opportunity to hear him preach. Church records reveal third quarterly conferences were always held following services conducted by the presiding elder. Many times, there would be a series of services for several days while the presiding elder was there.

Rev. Thrall visited in many of the local homes and had a tremendous influence in the lives of the people.

The second Methodist minister to preach in Bandera was Rev. Andrew Jackson Potter in 1862. Rev. Potter first met Rev. DeVilbiss in Kerrville in that same year while DeVilbiss was conducting a quarterly conference there.



ANDREW JACKSON POTTER
Early preacher and presiding elder

Rev. Potter was an Army Chaplain stationed at Camp Verde during the Civil War. When he heard that DeVilbiss was to be in Kerrville, he got permission from his commanding officer to attend the conference. Rev. DeVilbiss asked Rev. Potter to take turns with him in preaching during the series of services. Rev. Potter said, "The good Lord poured out His Spirit upon us and we had some glorious seasons of divine grace." There was no preacher that year on the Kerrville circuit because of the war. The only preaching the people had was when the quarterly meetings were held. Rev. Potter said the Kerrville quarterly conference meeting was truly a happy occasion for him. He said that a friendship developed between him and Rev. DeVilbiss that lasted the rest of their lives. The two men were so different. Rev. DeVilbiss was described as a mild, gentle person who never carried a gun as he traveled the circuit in Indian occupied territory. He was fortunate that he never encountered Indians on his trips. On the contrary, Rev. Potter was a fiery, aggressive person who had been a gambler, a horse racer, and an Indian scout before he was converted and became a preacher. He was never found to be without his gun, whether it was to be used in hunting game or as a protection against wild animals, Indians, or outlaws. Even when preaching, during times of danger, his gun was always within reach.

Rev. Potter had many friends in this area. He owned a place and lived on Mason Creek in Bandera County for several years. He was known by friend and foe alike as "Fighting Jack" Potter. Many stories have been told about his experiences during his lifetime.

He was a brave, courageous, dedicated person who preached anywhere he could get an audience, whether it was in a home, school, church, store, saloon, or on a street corner. He knew how to handle tough characters and outlaws and many times had them listening to his preaching instead of being involved in mischief and wrongdoing.

While stationed at Camp Verde he preached to prisoners, soldiers, and inhabitants of the surrounding area. Having only one song book to use in congregational singing, he decided to teach some of the songs to a group of soldiers. They memorized the songs and sang them quite well. Sometimes they would accompany him on his preaching missions to neighboring communities and would assist with the singing. This added a great deal to the services and pleased the congregations immensely.

After the war was over, Rev. Potter was assigned to the Kerrville circuit which included the Bandera and Medina area. He organized the Bandera Methodist Church in 1867 with fourteen charter members. Two of the charter members, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Stevens, who lived on Hicks Creek near Medina, traveled to Bandera by wagon pulled by oxen in order to attend church services. They had to use oxen because the Indians stole all horses brought into the country. Mr. Stevens stated that he had all his horses stolen on two different occasions and had to resort to the use of oxen.



**YOUTH GROUP IN J. T. STEVENS'
HACK, DRIVEN BY HOMER STEVENS**

From 1867 to 1871, Rev. Potter served the Bandera Mission, which included all of the surrounding territory. He never missed an opportunity to visit in homes and carry the message of God to the frontier people. Usually, in those early days, the preacher would spend the night when visiting a family. The mode of travel, the distance traveled, and the threat of being attacked by Indians made this necessary. Through these visits, a close Christian fellowship usually developed.

Rev. Potter was the local minister when the Harvey Stanard family moved to Laxson Creek in 1871. Soon after their arrival, Rev. Potter called on the family. Years later, Mrs. Stanard told of that first visit by Rev. Potter. She said that in the evening prayer before retiring for the night, he asked for "God's blessing upon the poor widow and her orphan children." It being such an impressive prayer, she waited until the next morning to tell the parson that she was not a widow; that her husband had gone to San Antonio to get supplies. She said that first visit was followed by many more in their home, and that Bro. Potter was always a welcome guest.



HARVEY A. STANARD
Donor of land for the Medina Church



MRS. HARVEY A. STANARD
Organizer of first Sunday School at Laxson Creek

Mrs. Stanard, seeing a need for religious training, organized a Sunday School in her log cabin home and invited all the neighbors to attend. Rev. Potter encouraged her in her work because he was a strong believer in Sunday School. Later, for quite some time, Dr.

Hudspeth of Bandera would ride over to assist Mrs. Stanard with her Sunday School work. Evidently, according to records found, this was the first organized Sunday School in the Medina vicinity.

Shortly after organizing the Sunday School, Mrs. Stanard also started teaching a school in her log cabin home. The following year, the neighbors helped build a log cabin schoolhouse nearby for her to use. Afterwards, Sunday School and church services were held in the schoolhouse,

One of our present members tells of her grandmother talking about attending church services at the Laxson Creek school house. She said they traveled from their West Prong home in a wagon pulled by oxen. The men would always carry their guns and stand them in the corner of the room during the services. She said that sometimes, following the services, Indian tracks would be found outside. Also, she said, at times, the oxen would become frightened by the Indians, break loose and run off with the wagons. In those early days, people faced many dangers and hardships, yet they would travel ten to twenty miles, or more, in order to attend religious services.

In 1880, Mr. and Mrs. O. W. McBryde moved to Medina and settled on the West Prong of the Medina River about two and one-half miles above the town. By this time, there being no longer a threat from Indians, a number of families were moving in and establishing homes.

In 1881, the people, seeing a need for regular church services for their families, organized the West Prong Methodist Church, which later became the Medina Methodist Church. George Killough was the first minister. There were eighteen charter members. They were:

Most of these people continued to live in the community and were faithful members of the church for the rest of their lives. Two of them, Mr. J. P. Akin and Mr. J. S. Akin became local preachers and assisted a great deal with the preaching after other churches were organized in nearby settlements. One year, J. P. Akin preached regularly at the Polander Springs church and made reports at quarterly conferences concerning his work. He performed many marriages in the vicinity. A number of our local residents say that their parents were married by Bro. Akin.



MR. AND MRS. O. W. McBRYDE
Charter members and donors of land for the West Proeng School



MR. AND MRS. J. T. STEVENS
Charter members, and some members of their family.

During the years that followed the establishment of the church, names of charter members are found listed repeatedly as official members attending quarterly conferences.

They were listed as stewards, trustees, or Sunday School superintendent. Also, several of them served as delegates to District conferences. Mr. O. W. McBryde served many times, especially when the church was a member of the Llano district. At one time, his wife stated that she did not think her husband ever missed a district conference, rain, or shine.

Mr. W. B. Baker was another faithful worker and attendant at church services. He attended so regularly that his horse became well trained. One day he hitched his horse to the buggy and went to town to buy some supplies. He left the horse with the reins loose for a short time while he was in the store. When he came out, the horse and buggy were gone. He looked at home, thinking the horse might have gone home, but it was not there. When he found the horse, it was standing very contentedly at its customary place in front of the church.

On September 1, 1881, the people in the West Prong community petitioned the commissioners court for a free public school. Mr. Isum Chisum took the petition to Bandera and a school was granted. Mrs. Chisum was hired to be the first teacher. Mr. O. W. McBryde donated land for the school. The house was built by the people of the community near the West Prong cemetery at the mouth of Coal Kiln Creek. When the building was completed, Sunday School and church services were held there regularly for the next eight years.

In the 1900 flood the building was washed away. After the flood was over. the men went down the river, found the boards and brought them back. The schoolhouse was rebuilt on higher ground nearer the cemetery.



WEST PRONG SCHOOL HOUSE, where church was organized in 1881.

A few years ago, one of our local citizens told about remembering the camp meetings that were held at West Prong. At times, cedar brush arbors would be built. He said that people would come from all around and camp for the week or two of the services. Sometimes the entire flat would be covered with wagons and camps. To help with the food supply, several men would usually donate calves which were butchered for meat. He said there were some great preachers in those days who inspired the people with their powerful sermons.

Years later, after there was no longer a West Prong School building, memories still lingered. One day Mr. O. W. McBryde, who was over 90 years of age, was sitting on his front porch, looking across the river at the site where the building once stood. He was reflecting on years past. While talking to himself his granddaughter overheard him making the following comments: "Sez I to myself, 'those little boys need an education; so, I donated land for the school. I went to Center Point and bought lumber, and the neighbors helped me build the schoolhouse'." The granddaughter, who overheard those remarks is now a very active member of the Medina Church. During the years, others have spoken fondly of the days when they attended school and church at West Prong.

Little is known about the activities of the church during the first two years after it was organized. No quarterly conference records for those years have been found.

Fortunately, a short church history was written by Mrs. Fred Whisenhunt and Mrs. Carl Bush in 1934 while a few of the charter members were still living. This history reveals many important facts. An error, possibly a typographical error, in that history lists 1886 as being the date of the first written Sunday School records. In fact, the first written conference records found were those for a conference held at Bandera on January 25, 1884. The record contains minutes concerning both Sunday School and church for the last quarter of 1883. Evidently, Sunday School was organized about the same time as the church because there was a Sunday School in 1883 as the minutes show. Some reports and direct quotations taken from quarterly conference records, especially those from the pastor's reports, are being used in this history, because they reflect a true picture of the progress of both the Sunday School and church.

The following information was taken from the first written quarterly conference records found. These minutes reveal that the West Prong Methodist Church was a member of the Bandera Charge, San Antonio District, West Texas Conference. The presiding elder was absent when the conference began, so A. G. Nolan the preacher in charge, occupied the chair following services that he conducted. After some business and the pastor's report on the state of the Sunday Schools and churches, it was decided on motion to postpone

further business and await the arrival of Homer S. Thrall, the presiding elder. On January 28th, the conference resumed with Rev. H. S. Thrall in the chair.

The minutes show that for the preceding year \$105.00 was listed as the pastor's salary. It was recorded that \$114.00 had been paid. For presiding elder, \$30.00 was listed with \$22.22 having been paid. For bishop \$2.50 was listed and \$2.50 was paid. For conference claimants \$5.80, foreign missions \$4.00, and domestic missions \$8.50, each of which was paid. For Sunday School supplies \$6.25 was spent. J. R. Coe, James A. Hudspeth and B. F. Langford were elected district stewards. It was recorded that the next quarterly conference would be held at West Prong. The minutes were signed by H. S. Thrall, presiding elder and B. F. Langford, secretary and recording steward.

At the second quarterly conference on April 19, 1884 at the West Prong School House, it was reported that \$39.50 had been collected during the quarter for the support of the ministry. Bandera had paid \$20.00, West Prong \$18.50 and Polander Springs \$1.00. The minister reported that there were three Sunday Schools. One was at Bandera with seventy-five enrolled and forty-five in regular attendance, having a superintendent and five teachers. Another school was at West Prong School House with about twenty-five names on the roll, but not more than fifteen had been in regular attendance. The minister stated that the whooping cough had been a great hindrance to attendance at West Prong Sunday School. He said that the school had a superintendent and four teachers and that there was a family school at J. T. Stevens' house with seven children well supplied with our literature. Bro. Nolan reported that he had visited "pretty generally on the work," had read the scripture in the families, and had prayers and catechized the children the best he could.

The third quarterly conference was held at Polander Springs on June 2a, 1884. Polander Springs is located about six miles from Medina on the North Prong near the mouth of Rocky Creek. These springs were named Polander because some Polish people from Bandera camped there while cutting cypress for shingles.

In The History of Bandera County Schools for over a Century" it is stated that the first school on the North Prong of the Medina River was at Polander Springs and that before there was a building, school and church were both held under a cedar brush arbor near the springs. The school, for which the people in the community petitioned the commissioners court on September 1, 1881, was usually called Pecan Valley School, but sometimes it was called Polander Springs School. In 1901, a new schoolhouse was built nearby, at the mouth of Rocky Creek. The name was changed to Rocky Creek School, but the church was always referred to as Polander Springs Church.

On June 28, 1884, Rev. Nolan reported that a church had been organized at Laxson Creek with eight members. He stated there were three Sunday Schools in prosperous condition and increasing in interest. They were Bandera, West Prong, and the family school in J. T. Stevens' home which was doing much good. By the end of the year, it was reported that there were four Sunday Schools, as one had been organized at Polander Springs. W. L. Mayfield was listed as Sunday School superintendent at West Prong. Records show that he continued to serve as superintendent through 1886. Also, they show that he was recording secretary many times at quarterly conference meetings.

Following church services at which he preached on August 22, 1885, the presiding elder, H. S. Thrall, conducted the fourth quarterly conference at West Prong. The pastor, A. G. Nolan, was not present. It was reported that he had been absent since March because of an affliction of sore eyes. J. P. Akin, one of the charter members, was listed in the minutes as being a local preacher. The quarterly conference records of February 20, 1886 reveal that there was a new minister on the charge. He was Rev. James Hammond, who had recently come from England. He was a very capable, energetic young man, who had added a number of new appointments to the Bandera Charge. The records show that \$340.00 was set as the pastor's salary for the year. Bandera was to pay \$125.00, West Prong \$100.00, Polander Springs \$30.00, Myrtle Creek \$10.00, San Geronimo \$20.00, Pipe Creek \$30.00, and Laxson Creek \$25.00.

At this meeting, O. W. McBryde, W. B. Baker, and J. L. Renshaw were elected a building committee for the West Prong Society.



JAMES HAMMOND
Pastor when church was moved to Medina in 1889

Rev. Hammond reported that the Sunday Schools at Bandera, West Prong, and in the Stevens', home were in good condition and well supplied with Methodist literature. In reporting on the churches, he said that they were in good condition considering the absence of the former pastor for so long a time. He said Sunday School and prayer meetings had been faithfully sustained by a noble few. School and prayer meetings had been faithfully sustained by a noble few.

At the second quarterly conference at Polander Springs, Bro. Hammond reported that the Bandera Sunday School was in a flourishing condition with an attendance of about sixty. The West Prong Sunday School was doing well with about forty in attendance. At Laxson Creek, Bro. J. T. "Jack" Stevens was conducting a small Sunday School in his home. A union Sunday School was being conducted at Polander Springs. Protracted meetings had been held at Polander Springs and Pipe Creek with between twenty and thirty having been converted. Four others had been received into the church by letter. These included Frank M. Buckelew and wife.

Later in his report, Bro. Hammond stated: The church conference at Polander Springs held July 11, 1886 recommended Bro. Frank M. Buckelew as a proper person for license to exhort." At still a later date, he was licensed to be a local preacher, and for many years he assisted in the ministry in the Medina vicinity.

Probably, Frank Buckelew's early boyhood experience of being a captive of Indians for eleven months and finally being able to escape had a great influence on his decision to preach. In 1866, when he was about fourteen years old, he was captured by Indians in Sabinal Canyon and was taken to where they were camped on the Pecos River. He was often put to test by the Indians, but, proving that he was not a coward, he was allowed to live.

Later, he related, in his book about his captivity, that the Indian boys took special delight in making life miserable for him until one day he suddenly retaliated by giving one of them a severe beating. He said that he was badly scared afterwards, thinking now for certain that the Indians would kill him. On the contrary they applauded the act and crowding around him they patted him on the back and cried "Bravo, Bravo!", assuring him that someday he would be heap big chief. During his stay with the Indians he learned to make arrows and bows and how to use them. He often made trips into Mexico with the Indians. It was on one of these trips that he was seen by a Mexican boy who told Mr. Hudson, a white man, about seeing the white boy with the Indians. With the help of the Mexican boy, Mr. Hudson arranged for his escape. He was returned to Bandera to live with an older sister, as his parents were dead.

At Bandera, Frank Buckelew came under the influence of A. J. Potter, who was serving the Bandera charge at that time. In later years, after moving to the Medina vicinity, there was James Hammond, the local minister and Homer S. Thrall, the presiding elder, to provide guidance. With such great Christian leadership, he made the decision to preach.

Records of the first quarterly conference on February 19, 1887 at West Prong reveal that the church was now in the San Angelo District of the West Texas Conference, and that A. J. Potter was the presiding elder. At this meeting, J. S. Akin, another of the charter members, was licensed to preach. O. W. McBryde was serving as Sunday School superintendent.

Bro. J. S. Akin presented to the conference in behalf of the trustees an obligation for a deed to two lots in Medina City for church purposes. The minutes were signed by A. J. Potter, presiding elder and B. F. Langford, recording steward.

The preacher in 1887 was S. A. Dickinson. He reported that there were only two Sunday Schools on the charge, one at Bandera and one at West Prong, both in a prosperous and growing condition. J. L. Renshaw served as Sunday School superintendent at West Prong from 1887-1889. The preacher stated, "The spiritual state of the church is rather low. The attendance at public worship is small especially on Saturdays. At Honey Creek we organized a society."

J.B. Rankin was licensed as an exhorter at this conference. He, with the local preachers, J. P. Akin, J. S. Akin, and F. M. Buckelew, made four men in the West Prong Church preaching and helping spread the gospel in the Medina vicinity. Someone had really arranged the tinder and fanned the spark!

At the third quarterly conference on August 11, 1888 at West Prong School House the minutes state: "The following building committee was appointed for West Prong Society: O. W. McBryde, J. S. Akin, S. J. Thorn, J. T. Stevens, and W. B. Baker."

The minister, J. B. Borden, reported: "The spiritual condition of the church is healthy. There is a good deal of family religion. At least one half of the membership worship God around the family altar."

On October 19, 1888, quarterly conference was held, following religious services conducted by Andrew Jackson Potter. The minutes state: "The following brethren were elected trustees for West Prong and Laxson Creek societies: J. T. Stevens, O. W. McBryde, S. J. Thorn, F. M. Wilson, and Robert Harrell. Permission was then granted the aforesaid trustee to build a church at Medina City."

It seemed to take a long time to make a decision about building a church. At first the plans were to build at West Prong. Later there were thoughts about building at Medina, and finally the decision was made to build at Medina. We are told that J. T. Stevens was very influential in getting the church moved.

Apparently, Mr. Stevens was very helpful in organizing churches. He had been a charter member at Bandera, West Prong, Laxson Creek, and now he was helping get a church at Medina.

It is interesting to note that in 1886 Homer S. Thrall was the presiding elder, and James Hammond was the preacher in charge at the beginning of the planning to build a church. Then, at the conclusion of the planning in 1889, Andrew Potter was the presiding elder and James Hammond, after being gone for two years, had returned as preacher. All three of these men had such an important part in the early life of the church. On January 19, 1889 at the first quarterly conference at West Prong, we find there is a new presiding elder, Buckner Harris.

At this meeting, W. T. Chaney, F. M. Buckelew, J. T. Stevens, and B. F. Langford were appointed a committee for building a parsonage at Bandera. Rev. Hammond reported, The Sunday School at West Prong has been somewhat disorganized for want of proper accommodations. We hope when our new church is built at Medina, that we shall be able to do our duty better in this particular. The church, generally speaking, is in good condition and prayer meetings are being held with some regularity. Aggressive effort is being put forth. Laxson Creek, Medina, and West Prong unite in preparing to build a church at Medina City. This will be a great advantage to the work." Plans for building the church were progressing.

Following church services on the night of January 22, 1889, the third day after the quarterly conference, Rev. James Hammond was married to Emma Stevens, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Stevens. The wedding was performed at the West Prong Church by the presiding elder, Rev. B. Harris. Following the wedding, the Hammonds went to the nearby home of Mr. and Mrs. O. W. McBryde, where they spent the night.

At the second quarterly conference at Bandera on April 20, 1889, Rev. Hammond again spoke of the building of a new church. He reported that the West Prong Sunday School was doing well but that there was room for improvement. He said, "No doubt when the new church is erected, this Sunday School will be as large and useful as it ought to be.... The spiritual condition of the church is very good. Good interest is shown in the prayer meetings and the attendance at preaching is encouraging. Many of our members are growing in grace. A spirit of unity and brotherly love in general appears to be increasing....

The church building at Medina City is not yet begun, but it is hoped that final arrangements for securing the lot will soon be made." The report was signed, James Hammond, Preacher in charge.

On July 27, 1889 at the third quarterly conference at West Prong, Rev. Hammond made the following report: "At West Prong the Sunday School is still small, but the officers and teachers are in earnest. No doubt when the school is held at Medina in our own house it will develop into a large and more useful institution. The spiritual condition of the church is excellent and some of our members are as faithful as can be found anywhere. A camp meeting was held at Bandera for eleven days but was so constantly interrupted by the rains that little apparent good was seen resulting therefrom. We are looking forward to a good time at our Medina City meeting next month, and arrangements are being made to hold meetings at several destitute points."

In the spring of 1889, the Harvey Stanard family moved from Laxson Creek to Medina. They bought the place once owned by Mr. Carmichael, where in 1878 the first house in Medina was built. Originally, this place was part of 1,069 acres of Bounty Land which was granted on November 5, 1836 to Antonio Curvier by the President of the Republic of Texas, Mirabrou B. Lamar.

The land was described as situated on the northeast side of the Medina River about fifty miles northwest of San Antonio in the county of Bexar. In May, 1841, the land was surveyed by John James, Deputy Surveyor of Bexar County, the well-known surveyor who laid out so many frontier towns. John James bought the block, plus some surrounding land, making a total of 2,349 acres for five cents per acre. During the Civil War, on February 27, 1863, James sold the 2,349 acres to Confederate General John B. Hood for \$6,000. Then, on February 2, 1871, John B. Hood and wife, Anna, sold 1,069 acres of Survey No. 71 to William R. Fleming; who sold the place to Mr. H. H. Carmichael in 1876. On October 28, 1878, Charles T. Parker bought the land, but sold it to B.F. Bellows on July 22, 1879. Mr. Bellows was breaking up the place and selling off lots and smaller places by August 8, 1882. The place that Mr. Stanard bought was from this block of land, which was quite historic in the town of Medina.

When Mr. Stanard bought the property, the West Prong Church was making plans to build in Medina; so, Mr. Stanard gave a lot to the church on which to construct the building. It was given through his nephew, Ed Rambie, who signed the deeds, because he held the deed of trust to the property. Mr. Rambie was reared by the Stanards after his mother's death. Once again, the Stanards were contributing to the establishment and advancement of the church. Unfortunately, Mr. and Mrs. Stanard both died of pneumonia on January 6, 1901, within four hours of each other. During the years that

followed, their children continued to attend Sunday School and church, walking across the pasture about three hundred yards. At the present time, one granddaughter attends regularly and is active in the work of the church, while another, due to health is an inactive member.



During the summer of 1889, the new church building was constructed at Medina on the lot that Mr. Stanard gave. The lot was near the river, but on high ground, fortunately. In fact, the building is on one of the highest spots in the town. The devastating floods of 1900, 1919, and 1978 that did so much damage in other parts of town, did not reach the building. Except for some remodeling and stuccoing, the building today is the same one that was built in 1889. At that time, the building was wooden. It had two front doors and a belfry on the left side, but no bell. Mr. B. F. Bellows desired to give a bell to the church, but for some reason was unable to do so. However, he succeeded in getting a bell donated by his friend, Mr. M. L. Allen, who had a steel factory in Massachusetts.

When the bell arrived, it was found to be a big nice one, with some engraving on it. On the back it was stated that the bell had been cast in Troy, New York, in 1889. On the front were the following words:

Presented to Methodist Church South Medina, Texas by M. L. Allen of Massachusetts

"Let him that heareth say, Come" Revelations 22:17

The church members were very proud of the bell. The official board had the secretary, Mr. W. L. Mayfield, write a letter to Mr. Allen expressing their gratitude for his gift.

During the many years since 1889, on each Sabbath morning the bell has been ringing out its message, "Come". On a still day, the chimes can be heard at a distance of three or four miles away.

Sunday School and church were moved into the new building at Medina in August 1889.

The first time that a quarterly conference was held in the new church was on December 7, 1889. The pastor's salary was set at \$260.00 for Medina and \$260.00 for Bandera. There were two Sunday Schools, Bandera, and Medina.

It was reported that a new parsonage had been built at Bandera for the circuit during the past six months, and that \$350.00 was raised to pay on the lot and parsonage. A note was made to pay the balance in two years with 1% interest.

When the fourth quarterly conference met at Bandera on October 8, 1889, it was reported that the West Prong Sunday School had been moved to Medina. During the quarter, Bandera had paid \$51.50, Medina \$87.90, and Laxson Creek \$6.50, making a total of \$145.90. The next quarterly conference was to be held at Medina. During the quarter \$23.67 was raised for Sunday School supplies and \$732.70 for building, repairing, and furnishing the church. Rev. Hammond reported: "Medina City—The Sunday School has moved from West Prong School House into our new church at Medina. The result has been an immediate increase in membership and a gratifying revival of Sunday School effort. This school will now compare with any on the work with reference to prompt attendance and general good order. The self-denial of the members in seeking a larger field of usefulness will yield valuable results to the school. A library has been purchased from our Publishing House."

In reporting on the church, he said: "The spiritual condition of the church, in general, is very satisfactory. A new church building at Medina has been built during the past year, and the brethren have faithfully labored in this glorious life. A good revival was held in our new church with good and we trust, lasting results."

From 1894-1898, the Bandera Charge was in the Llano District of the West Texas Conference. On October 19, 1895, the pastor, Rev. I. S. Napier, reported that the general state of the church was in excellent condition at Medina City. He said, "We have had a gracious revival of religion at Medina City. Forty-six have joined the church this quarter, to wit; all by ritual, and Claburn Baker, Eliza J. Baker, and Charlie M. Baker by certificate."

Mary O. Weed
Marvin W. Akin
Ambrose M. Akin
Ethel L. Renshaw
Alma L. Akin
Silas S. Wetherby
Marvin P. Akin
Julia A. Bauerlein
Roxie G. Moody
Minnie J. Baker
Edward N. Smith
Henry F. Baker
Levis Weed
James H. Smith

Benjamin A. Weed
Ethan E. Smith
Irene Wyatt
John F. Cook
Leonard Humphries
John M. Humphries
Thomas A. Baker

Alta Freeman James
W. Walker
George F. Smith
Melvina E. Walker
William D. Smith
Sarah A. Walker
Ferdinand B.
Means
Ida C. Walker
Callie Carpenter
John M. Norris
Leola B. Mayfield
Marvin Renshaw
Mary D. Hinds
Robert L. Mayfield
Francis M. Smith
Ida L. Means
James A. Powel
Julia R. Smith
George W. Lowrance
Mary M. Renshaw
Judia Mayfield
Charles W. Young

Rev. Napier continued his report by saying, "We intend to organize an Epworth League at Medina City immediately. We have the names of thirty-three persons for organization of a League—The Medina Sunday School has seemed to grow in interest all year."

On January 11, 1896, Rev. A. W. Wilson reported there was an Epworth League at Medina City with about forty members, and on December 14, 1896, he reported, "We have organized a Woman's Missionary Society at Medina City which starts off well."

J.D. Worrell was the preacher from 1896 to 1898. O. W. McBryde was elected Sunday School superintendent on December 15, 1896 and he continued to serve until February 19, 1898, when William Akin was elected to fill his place. Mr. Akin was superintendent for about fifteen years.

In 1898, there was no Epworth League, and Sunday School attendance was very low due to a serious epidemic of measles. At the fourth quarterly conference, 1899, the minister, M. K. Fred, reported that Sunday School attendance had increased since the middle of May from about seventeen to about forty-five. By 1900, the report was that the Sunday School was doing good work.

During the 1900-1901 year, a Sunday School was organized at Tarpley, but the Laxson Creek Sunday School was abandoned on account of the superintendent moving away.

At the quarterly conference at Bandera on February 1, 1902, a building committee for a Tarpley church was appointed.

In 1902-1903, W. F. Gibbons was the preacher. R. B. Hartfield was listed as a local preacher. Sunday School was in excellent condition with an average attendance of fifty.

From 1903 through 1906, B. L. Glazner was the minister. O. W. McBryde and J. T. Akin were delegates to district conference.

R. B. Wilkes, the pastor in 1906-1907, stated that the spiritual state of the church was very good, but he said there had been some trouble in getting Sunday School teachers that year. However, the Sunday School was reported to be in good condition. It was stated that the older people at Medina were being benefitted very much by a Bible class being taught by Prof. C. O. Britt. Also, there was a Senior League at Medina doing very good work with Prof. Britt as president. The next year, J. T. Akin was listed as president of the Epworth League. For that year, 1907-1908, M. P. Morton was the preacher. R. E. Buckner, Dr. J. O. Butler, and Ed Dial were appointed a committee to build a church at Tarpley.

For the year 1908-1909, S. J. Drake was appointed the pastor of the Bandera-Medina Charge. Church congregations were reported to be very good. There was a Senior League, and a Junior League was organized. Also, a Missionary Society was organized, J. D. Scott was presiding elder.

On May 1, 1910, S. J. Drake was removed by District Conference and V. V. Boone was appointed to finish the year. The work of the church was well organized and in good condition. The Bandera Church was to be enlarged and a contract was let for \$1,800.00. It was reported that the Medina Church needed repairs. During the year the Lewis Caton family moved to Medina and bought property across the road east of the church. This family did much to help support the church in coming years.

In 1910-1911, the Medina Church was no longer in the Bandera Charge. It became the Medina Charge, with J. S. Howell as the resident preacher. In the preceding years, the preacher for the Bandera-Medina Charge had resided in the parsonage at Bandera. Now, a parsonage was needed at Medina; so on January 7, 1911, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Caton deeded a lot fifty feet by two hundred and thirty feet, which lay adjacent to the J. A. Newcomer property, to the church for a parsonage. The building was completed during the year. The first preacher to occupy the new parsonage was Rev. George L. Ryan and family. Bro. Ryan served the church from 1911 to 1913.

In 1912, the church was in need of a new roof; so L. Caton and L. D. Shuptrine were appointed a committee to get a new roof on the building. The L. D. Shuptrine family moved to Medina in the winter of 1911 and bought a place across the river from the church. Two sons-in-law, J. H. Whitmore and J. C. Gallant also bought places near Medina. The entire group of ten transferred their church memberships to Medina in March 1912. Some descendants of this family are still active members of the church.

The church remained the Medina Charge through 191C." Preachers during these years, following Bro. Ryan, were A.C. Gentle.1913-1914; J. C. Winkle,1914-1915; R. A. Waltrip, 1915-1916; and J. W. Childers served during World War 1 from 1916-1919. Sunday School superintendents during these years were J. T. Akin, and J. C. Gallant.

Following World War 1, in 1918-1919, Bandera and Medina became one charge again with J. W. Childers as Pastor. J. C. Gallant was Sunday School superintendent at Medina and remained so until 1923. There were eighty-three enrolled in Sunday School with an average attendance of fifty-two. The Sunday School was reported to be doing well considering the bad weather and so much sickness.

Both church and Sunday School attendance was hindered by the 1919 flood. The river stayed high for a long time, It was almost a week before men could swim their horses across, and it was about three or four weeks before wagons, hacks, and buggies were able to cross.

In 1919-1920, the Charge was Medina-Tarpley with J. D. May as minister. His salary was to be \$625.00 with Medina paying \$500.00 and Tarpley, \$125.00. During the year, the Aid Society was organized into a Missionary Society with nine members. Again, Sunday School and church attendance was hindered by bad weather and influenza.

For the Medina-Tarpley Charge, in 1920-1921, E. J. Sloan, Jr. was the preacher, but he was released in June 1921 and J. M. Dunn was appointed to finish the year. The general state of the church was in good condition. There was a Missionary Society with eleven members that met twice a month with Mrs. E. Hammond as president. The Missionary Society spent \$114.00 on the parsonage that year. Eighty-nine were enrolled in Sunday School with an average attendance of forty-one.



REV. J. T. CANAFAX
MINISTER 1921 - 1923



MRS. J. T. CANAFAX

In 1921-1922, the Medina-Tarpley Charge was no longer in the San Antonio District. It was now in the Kerrville District with A. E. Rector as presiding elder and J. T. Canafax as preacher. J. T. Canafax remained on the Charge for three years during which time he married Bessie Hammond, daughter of Emma Hammond and the late Rev. James Hammond.

In December 1922, the Woman's Missionary Society bought a piano for the church. Before then, a reed organ had been used. The piano cost \$300.00. The women collected money to make a down payment. They sold eggs, chickens, turkeys, and all kinds of things to raise enough money for the down payment.

Bro. Canafax stated that the church was fairly active, but that he was especially proud of the Sunday School and the work it was doing. He said the Woman's Missionary Society was to be commended for all the good work it was doing.



**YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS AND TEACHER, MAMIE CATON,
IN THE EARLY 1920's**

That year the church was valued at \$1,500.00. it was insured for \$1,000.00 and the parsonage for \$1,050.00.

In 1922-1923, Bro. Canafax reported that the Sunday School was in excellent condition, but that more room was needed for classes. There were 127 enrolled in Sunday School with an average attendance of seventy-two. The adult class raised money to paint the church, and the women made another payment on the piano.

During the 1920's, the Methodist and Baptist people cooperated in planning their church services so that there would be preaching at one of the churches each Sunday. At that time both churches were half-time, with services every other Sunday. The preachers arranged their schedules so that they were out of town on alternate Sundays.

Each church had its own Sunday School regularly each week but had worship services with the other church when its minister was out of town.

J.C. Evans was the preacher in 1923-1924, for the Medina-Tarpley Charge. There were ninety enrolled in Sunday School with nine teachers and officers. Walter Rees served as superintendent of the Sunday School from 1923 to 1925. The Epworth League was reported to be doing excellent work. The League bought and paid for forty-seven copies of the Cokesbury Hymnal for church use. The Woman's Missionary Society raised some money and made another payment on the piano.

In May 1924, F. E. Whisenhunt, J. H. Whitmore, and Walter Rees were appointed a committee to work with the board of trustees in making a decision about the parsonage property. They were to use their judgement and discretion in deciding whether to sell the parsonage property and erect a new parsonage near the church, or to move the old parsonage building to the church property, or whether to repair the parsonage at its present site. The committee decided to repair the parsonage and leave it where it was.

From 1924-1927, M. P. Burton was pastor of the Medina-Tarpley Charge. While he was minister, a car that had been presented to the charge was given to him. The Epworth League at this time was in excellent condition with twelve to twenty present each Sunday. The League raised money to buy two new windows for the church. The Woman's Missionary Society raised fifty-four dollars to make another payment on the piano. During the months that followed, the women continued their money-making projects. They made their final payment on the piano in the summer of

Then, they started working again to raise funds to do some work on the church.

Attendance at Sunday School and church during these years was good. D. O. Tallman was superintendent of the Sunday School from 1926 to 1928. The next year Prof. E. M. Bowman served as superintendent.

B.J. Gossett was minister of the Medina-Tarpley Charge during the 1927-1928 year. The following year he was minister of the Medina church only. During this time the Woman's Missionary Society bought a new mattress for the parsonage and paid to have some work done on the church.

J. D. Scott was minister of the Medina Charge in 1929-1930. On December 5, 1929, the Woman's Missionary Society sent a quilt that they had made to the Orphan's Home.

In 1930-1931 Medina was in the Bandera Charge again with G. T. Hester as pastor. J. C. Gallant was appointed Sunday School superintendent again. He continued to be superintendent for about twelve years.

In 1930 the Woman's Missionary Society bought new pews for the church. A project of making their own was undertaken. Some ends that had been cut for pews at another church, but not used, were bought and lumber was purchased for the backs and seats at a total cost of \$200.34. J. H. Whitmore was paid \$54.00 to make the benches, and Percy Pue was paid \$10.00 to varnish them. The cost of the varnish was \$12.65. That made a total cost of \$276.95. These pews are still being used in the church today.

That same year the W.M.S. sub-district meet was to be in Medina. The ladies needed some extra tables for the noon meal: so they bought some material for \$5.95 and had tables made. In the early spring of 1931, the Woman's Missionary Society bought lumber for the building of an outhouse near the church.

During depression years, the cost of these improvements was great. However, the Woman's Missionary Society got busy with their various projects and raised the money. The cooperation between all was wonderful. During the years, throughout the history of the church, many of the projects that the women had could not have been carried out without the help of the men. They were always there, supporting the women and donating their labor. So many of the improvements would have been impossible without this free labor. Also, during the years, it is found that the youth and children helped in many ways.

To help raise money in 1932, the W. M. S. had a bazaar and sold plate lunches on election day. They served a plate lunch for twenty-five cents. The Methodist ladies continued this project of serving lunch on election day for several years.

In the 1930's, attendance at both Sunday School and church was very good. In his report in 1933, the minister, Rev. W. Vasco Teer wrote, "At Medina, the young people's Sunday School class is one of the finest I have ever known. It is well organized and functioning in all of its departments." This class, taught by Mrs. Carl Bush, who was a good scholar of the Bible, had twenty-four enrolled with a high percentage of attendance every Sunday. At that time, all classes were meeting in the church, occupying different corners and sections of the building. Badly in need of extra space for classes, the Medina Methodist Church asked for permission to move the Medina Methodist Parsonage from its location to the church lot where it could be used for Sunday School rooms when not in use as a parsonage. The committee members elected to move and arrange the building on the church lot were E. H. Sewell, J. C. Gallant, The idea of moving the parsonage had originated in the Woman's Missionary Society. On February 23, 1933 a committee composed of Mrs. E. H. Sewell, Mrs. Carl Bush, and Miss Beulah Smith was appointed to contact the trustees about selling the parsonage to help raise money for building a Sunday School room or moving the parsonage near the church.

During the years there were discussions about the wise thing to do. Those were depression years, and there was very little money available. However, the women continued to investigate the possibility of getting extra space for Sunday School classes. On January 25, 1934, two trustees, E. H. Sewell and Walter Rees, and a carpenter, Brook Banta, met with the women to discuss moving the parsonage. The vote was unanimous to tear down the old parsonage and rebuild near the church.

The trustees hired Mr. Brook Banta to oversee the job. The rest of the labor during the construction was volunteer. The old building was torn down and the lumber was used to erect the new building on the lot by the church. On January 28, 1934, the quarterly conference authorized the trustees to sell the parsonage property and turn the money over to the building committee to be applied on the new parsonage.

The women got busy with a number of projects to help with the building expenses. Among their projects was a hen sale which brought in \$16.85, and a merchant sale and dinner with a profit of \$87.12.

When the parsonage was completed, the youth classes were moved into the building. This relieved some of the crowded conditions in the church.

For several years, the parsonage building had one partition down the center, dividing it into two long Sunday School rooms. Later, when a resident minister was appointed and the building was again needed as a parsonage, it was remodeled and made into living quarters. After the minister moved into the parsonage, the youth Sunday School class continued to meet in the living room for a number of years.

W. Vasco Teer remained the minister of the Bandera-Medina Charge for three years. During this time his wife died, and the people shared in the sadness of his loss.

On June 7, 1934, the W. M. S. appointed Beulah Smith, Mrs. Fred Whisenhunt, and Mrs. E. H. Sewell as a committee to raise money to make a payment on the parsonage debt.

In 1934-1935, E. W. Dechert became minister of the Bandera-Medina Charge and served for two years. He was followed by O. E. Moreland, who served during the 1936-1937 year. During this year, the W. M. S. decided to meet all day once a month instead of meeting twice a month as they had been doing.

From 1937 to 1940, H. Ellis Thomas was minister of the Center Point-Medina Charge. One cold wintry Sunday morning while he was preaching, in 1938, some people became chilled during the service. There was a big wood burning stove which stood in the center aisle near the front of the church, but it did not heat the entire building sufficiently. A lot of cold air entered through cracks and crevices. After sitting with cold feet all during the service, one member, Mrs. E. H. Sewell who was president of the Woman's Missionary Society, decided that something needed to be done about the situation. The following Monday morning she began to contact members to see if enough money could be raised to remodel the church. She continued working until all members had been contacted. She found, with all the help in labor that members were willing to give, that a sufficient

amount of money could be raised for the project. Plans were made and by early spring, the remodeling was under way. The official board appointed Mr. D. O. Tallman to be in charge of the work.



MEDINA CHURCH AFTER REMODELING IN 1938

The decision was made to stucco the building. Also, it was decided to place the belfry in the center and have only one front door instead of two. As additional Sunday School space was needed, rooms were built on either side of the rostrum. The men spent many hours completely remodeling the church. Women and children helped by pulling nails out of boards that were to be used again and by doing other odd jobs. Also, the women

took turns preparing lunch and bringing it for the workers each day. The minister, H. Ellis Thomas, a very capable leader, did his share of the remodeling.

By June, the church was completed and ready for dedication. A committee composed of Mrs. Fred Whisenhunt, Mrs. Walter Rees, and Miss Beulah Smith was appointed to send invitations to former pastors and others. On June 19, 1938, the dedication service was held. The building was dedicated to the work of God, and it has been used for that purpose since.

After the church was remodeled, Mrs. B. P. Collins had a tree planted in front of the building on the left. Later, another tree was planted on the right side. In the fall of 1938, the Woman's Missionary Society bought a new stove for the church and started making payments on it.

Following the unification of the three major branches of Methodism in 1939, the Woman's Missionary Society became the Woman's Society of Christian Service. On September 20, 1940, the pastor, H. Ellis Thomas made a formal statement dissolving the old organizations and creating and organizing the new United Methodist Church and the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Mrs. A. N. Sewell, the local president of the Woman's Missionary Society at that time, became the president of the new organization, the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

Vernon Williams, Wallace LeStourgeon, and James A. Gallant served as Sunday School superintendents during the 1940's. Interest and attendance at Sunday School was very good during those years, especially during the latter part of the decade when the attendance ranged from eighty to one hundred each Sunday.

From 1940 to 1942, B. E. Breihan served the Medina-Legion Charge. In April, 1942, the Woman's Society of Christian Service bought fifty new songbooks, including two with hard backs.

In 1942-1943, E. F. Kluck served the Bandera-Medina Charge. He was followed by Ralph W. Seiler, who served very efficiently through 1942-1944.

In 1945-1946 the charge was Medina-Hunt with Clement E. Lewis serving from November 1945 until April 1946. Murphy Duncan served from June 8, 1946 until August 11, 1946. George Hardy, Chaplain of the Veterans Administration Hospital at Kerrville, finished the year.

In 1946-1947, Medina again had a resident minister, Russel Heaner. In 1946, plans were being made for constructing a building which could be used for Sunday School and

church functions, for youth activities and for community affairs. Church members made donations and public subscriptions were taken from people in the community. Rev. Heaner was very active in contacting people to help with the project. The money was raised, and the youth center building was erected. Since that time, it has been very useful both to the church and the community. The Rotary Club and the Volunteer Fire Department use the building regularly.

After the youth center was built, Mrs. Isabel Anderson, an associate member and friend of the church, sent her gardener, Swen Nilson, to plant shrubs and trees in the church yard. Most of the shrubs and trees found in the yard today are those put out at that time.

Beginning with the 1947-1948-year, Rev. John Campbell became the resident pastor. He served the Medina Church for three years. Mrs. Campbell was active in youth work, organizing and directing youth groups. She sponsored banquets and other social events for the youth.

In May 1950, Philip Riley became minister at Medina and served the church for three years. In 1951' the W. S. C. S. bought an unfinished communion table for \$15.00 and finished it themselves. That same year the official board had the street paved in front of the church.

In 1952, Vernon Williams was again appointed superintendent of the Sunday School. He has continued to be the superintendent since that date. In 1952-1953, attendance at both Sunday School and church was good. More space was needed for classes. Plans were discussed for building an annex to the church for Sunday School rooms, but a severe drought caused the building plans to be dropped.

That year, in addition to the Woman's Society of Christian Service, a Circle was organized with both doing good work. An excellent Vacation Bible School was held that summer with Mrs. Fred McKissick as director and with fourteen workers and forty-seven children enrolled. The M. Y. F. was reorganized with Richard Carr as president.

In October of 1952, Mrs. Velma Elliot gave material for an altar cover, and Mrs. Meda Bauerlein made the cover in memory of Mrs. B. P. Collins.

In 1953-1954, Charles Runk was appointed minister of the Medina Church. Soon after he arrived, the parsonage was completely redecorated, making it comfortable and attractive. New windows were placed in the church and the window frames were painted. The pastor's study was redecorated, and a piano was purchased for the Youth Center. The

young people were very active in Sunday School, church, and M. Y. F. They had a large class and had to meet in the living room of the parsonage. The junior class had to meet in the kitchen of the Youth Center.



REV. AND MRS. ELMER MORGAN

During the 1954-1955 year, Charles Runk was married to a local girl, Onita Fee. The church school was in excellent condition with one hundred enrolled. In the summer, there were never below seventy in attendance. As more classrooms were needed so badly, the porch of the Youth Center was enclosed to provide four more classrooms. Vacation Church School was excellent again that year with fifty-four enrolled.

In September 1954, Charles Runk was placed in a new appointment and Rev. E. A. Morgan was appointed to take his place as resident minister at Medina. Rev. Morgan remained the minister for the next nine years, until he retired in June, 1963.

The church floors were refinished in 1955. In 1957 candle holders for the communion table were given by Mrs. W. B. Dukes in memory of her husband. From 1960 to 1963 there was an active M. Y. F. group sponsored by Mrs. Morgan. Enrollment in Sunday School dropped to sixty-five with an average attendance of forty. One reason for the decrease was the economy of the country. Younger couples with children could no longer make a living on the farms and ranches in the vicinity. They were having to move to the cities to find employment. At the same time, older people and retired people were buying the farms and ranches. Many of these did not live in Medina permanently. They wanted the places in the beautiful hill country for recreational purposes on weekends and during vacations.

In 1963-1964 the Medina and North Medina Lake churches were in the same charge with David Parsons, Jr. as minister. On February 9, 1964, the Medina Lake Church asked that the name be changed to Lakehills United Methodist Church. This change was granted.

Don Lilljedahl was the pastor for the Medina-Lakehills Charge during the 1964-1965 year and during the first half of the following year. At that time, he was transferred to a new position. John Provance of Lakehills preached for several weeks until Jack W. Franklin, Chaplain at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Kerrville, was appointed to complete the year.

In October 1965, the W. S. C. S. bought new Methodist Hymnals for the church. Most of the books were given as memorials. On March 27, 1966, a spiral back song book for the piano was given to the church by Mrs. Florence Jenness in memory of her husband.

In 1966, a central heating and cooling system was installed in the church. A nice sum of money was left to the church by Mr. Ratcliff, the father of Mrs. E. I. Bailey. This was applied to the cost of the air conditioning unit. The remainder of the money came from donations of church members.

The M. Y. F. was quite active at this time. In September 1966, four of the youth who were in a civics class chose as their project the varnishing of the chairs in the Youth Center, provided the W. S. C. S. furnished the varnish. Of course, the women were very happy to do so.

In October 1966, Mrs. W. O. Hatfield, Jr. refinished the old pulpit so that it could be used in the vestibule of the church as a place to put the memorial book which the W. S. C. S. had bought. The old pulpit had been replaced by a new one that had been given to the church by Mr. and Mrs. C. O. Nesting in memory of Mrs. Nesting's parents, Mr., and

Mrs. Harvey Stanard. The pulpit, which is still being used today, was made and finished by Charles Applegate of Bandera.

Another memorial gift to the church was a lighted cross to hang above the pulpit. It was given by Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Akin in memory of their parents. Earlier a large picture, "Saliman's Head of Christ", was given to the church by Mrs. L. L. Smith in memory of Mrs. Mollie Harrell.

B.L. Mattingly was appointed pastor of the Medina-Lakehills Charge in 1966. He remained the minister for the next six years.

During the 1967-1968 year, a new roof was put on the Youth Center and some repairs were made on the church. A communion service for use in homes was given to the church by Mrs. Florence Jenness. Mr. and Mrs. E. I. Bailey gave a new red-carpet runner for the church. This was given in honor of Rev. and Mrs. Elmer Morgan.

There was a building improvement program during the 1969-1970 year. The sanctuary was paneled, and other necessary repairs were made. Also, two rooms, the hall, and the bathroom of the parsonage were remodeled and paneled. The Woman's Society of Christian Service bought material to remodel and enlarge the kitchen in the Youth Center. Murry LeStourneon donated his labor in doing the work. A partition was removed, and a room that was once a small Sunday School room was added to the kitchen to provide more space. Additional cabinets were built, and a new linoleum floor was laid.

In 1970-1971, there were more improvements of the church property. With the leadership and able assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Dean Isaacs, who had returned to make their home at Medina, the Youth Center was remodeled. The stage was torn out, a wall was built and the space was put into Sunday School rooms. Murry LeStourgeon helped pour the concrete floor.

The next project was to refinish the church pews. This, also, was under the leadership of the Isaacs. A number of people, including the youth, helped with this work.

The United Methodist Women, as the woman's organization was now called, bought cushions for the church pews in 1971. Most of the cushions were given by members of the U. M. W. in memory of loved ones.

For the 1971-1972-year, Lewis B. White was appointed the minister of the Bandera Medina Charge. He remained the minister for three years.

During the 1971-1972 year, the improvements in the Youth Center were completed. A new ceiling was put up and two new window air conditioners were installed. Another room in the parsonage was paneled and all windows were glazed and painted. Also, the outside woodwork was painted. A concrete porch and step were constructed at the parsonage.

During the same year, an organ was purchased for the church. It was dedicated on April 16, 1972. Funds for the organ were received from the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Akin. Mrs. Dean Isaacs was organist. She has served in that capacity since, while Dean Isaacs has served as song leader.

During a bad hailstorm in 1974, a number of windows in the church were broken. The U. M. W. appointed a committee composed of Thelma Gallant, Mrs. E. I. Bailey, Mrs. George Williams, and Kathryn McBryde to investigate the possibility of replacing the windows with stained glass windows. The committee made a number of trips to the Black Glass Company in San Antonio and brought back samples of both stained glass and faceted glass to show church members. The decision was made to use the faceted glass, not only because of its beauty, but because it was more hail proof. There was concern as to whether the money could be raised for such a major project, but in a very short time all windows were given as memorials to loved ones. In addition to the windows, the front doors of the church and the four interior doors were also given as memorial gifts. The list of the donors will not be made here as the names can be found on bronze plaques on the windowsills and on the walls near the doors.

After the windows were installed, a dedication service was held on September 29, 1974 with Bishop O. Eugene Slater and District Superintendent Milton Dare taking part. Rev. Lewis B. White was minister at the time.

As a result of the generous giving of so many, the building became a beautiful little church. However, something seemed to be missing. One Sunday morning the Sunday School Superintendent, Vernon Williams, made the remark that the thing that was missing was a steeple. At the next official board meeting, a motion was made to buy a steeple from the general fund. All were in favor of this. The steeple was bought and placed on the church. Now, the church building seemed complete, with its steeple pointing toward heaven.

In 1975-1976, J. Wesley Jones was appointed to the Bandera-Medina Charge. The following year, 1976-1977, C. Herman Murph was appointed to serve the Medina Charge. He is still the minister during this centennial

In 1950, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church each deeded the other one-half of lots number seventeen and nineteen of the Reed Addition. Each church owned a long, narrow lot running all the way across from one church to the other. This was not very convenient for parking or for other church use; so, a committee was appointed to see what arrangement could be made. Two from the Baptist Church, F. A. Masters and J. B. MacNaughton, and two from the Methodist Church, J. C. Gallant and W. G. Ankele, were appointed to work out an agreement between the two churches. An agreement was made to convey the northwest half of lots numbered seventeen and nineteen to the Baptists and the Southeast half of each of these lots to the Methodists. This transaction was affected through mutual deeds by the trustees of the Medina Methodist Church and the deacons of the Medina Baptist Church on March 23, 1950. These deeds were duly recorded in the Deed Record of the County Clerk's Office of Bandera County on April 5, 1950. Those signing the deeds were Methodist Church trustees W. G. Ankele, Clarence Bauerlein, and W. C. Bush, and Baptist Church deacons H. L. Porter, C. C. Allen, R. D. Garrison, and J. R. Justice.

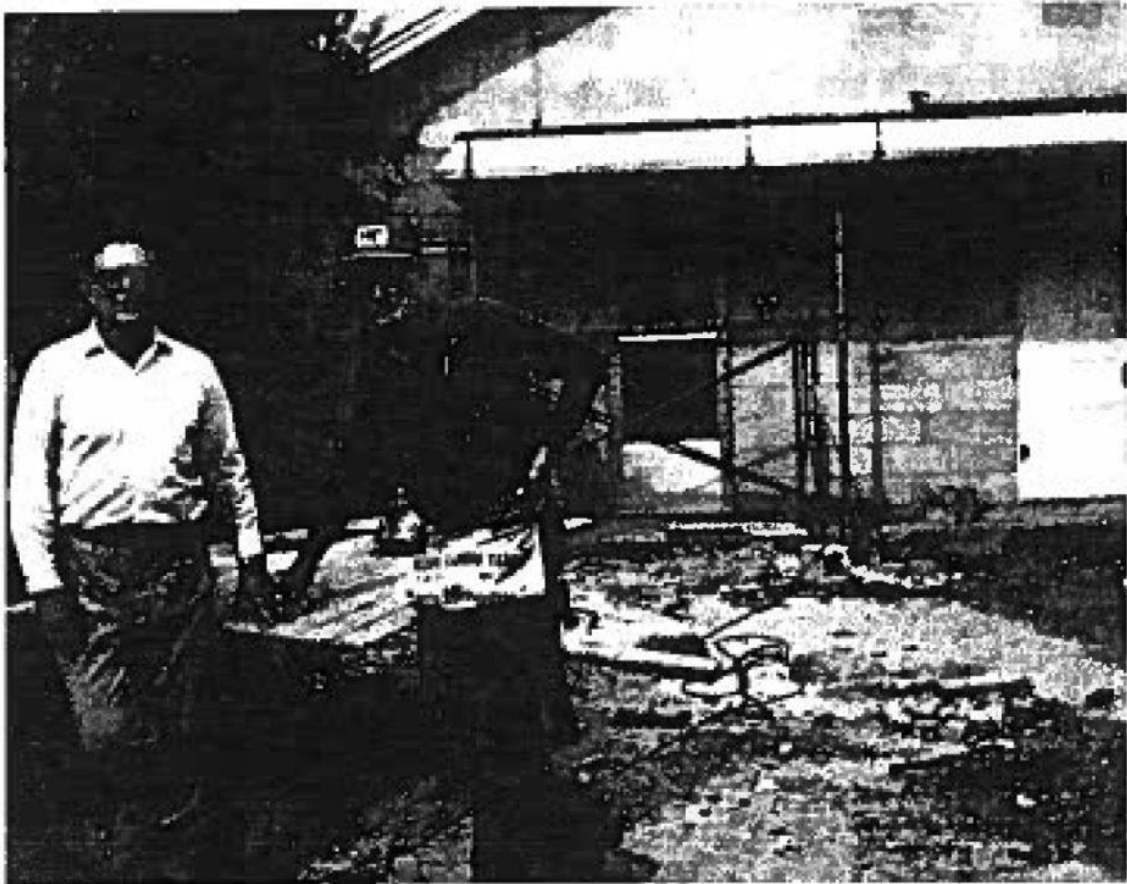
From 1958 to 1970, Rev. Allen Schoff, a retired minister living in the community, assisted greatly with church work. He preached when the minister was out of town. Also, he helped with the communion service, and taught a men's Bible Class. Likewise, Mrs. Schoff was very active in church work, serving as assistant pianist, teaching a Sunday School class, and working in the women's organization.

In 1978, the U. M. W. bought carpet for the Youth Center. Also, they bought 120 new chairs. Most of the old wooden chairs were sold and the money was applied on the new ones. The tables in the Youth Center were given a few years earlier by Mrs. Luciel Muehl. Also, she gave a sixty-four-piece set of stainless flatware to be used for church dinners and Rotary Club meals.

During the past thirty years, most of the funds raised by the United Methodist Women were from the annual bazaar held each year on the first Saturday in December. Through the cooperation of all the church women, the bazaar has always been very successful. During the past several years, additional funds were raised by selling greeting cards and gift items throughout the year. The women used the money for improvement of church property and for church sponsored activities.

On February 25, 1959, the W. S. C. S. voted to start a "Love Offering", which was to be used for sending flowers to the sick and for other acts of love. Since that time, the women have continued their "Love Offering" fund, through which they can express their love and concern for others.

About 1976, a metal canopy was put up at the front entrance of the church. Also, handrails, given by Mrs. Ira Bell, were placed by the steps at the front entrance. Two years later a metal canopy was placed at the rear entrance.



**HENRY LEWIS AND G. T. WILLIAMS, JR.
Working at latest church improvement project**

The most recent improvement was made a few weeks ago when the men's restroom in the Youth Center was remodeled. Also, some work was done on the ladies' restroom and a small porch was built on the south side of the building. As in the past, the labor was donated by G. T. Williams, Jr., Henry Lewis, Hough LeStourgeon, Ward McCollough and others.



**METHODIST CHURCH
IN CENTENNIAL YEAR
1981**

This brings the history of the church up to the time of the Centennial Celebration on April 26, 1981. The entire membership has cooperated and worked hard for a successful celebration.

Now while looking to the future, we come to the close of this church century '...with profound gratitude to the God who gave us the heritage which is ours, and who challenges us with the tremendous opportunity of this day in which we live." May the Medina Community Church meet this challenge and continue to carry the glowing ember in years to come.

By: Thelma Gallant