

Old Bethel

by Woodrow Taylor

*Written by one of the members who
has been attending since
childhood. (60 yrs.)*

It was many years before the Civil War
The folks in this neighborhood said what are we waiting for
It's indeed high time a church was founded
Where the word of God might be expounded

There was much to be done by this Christian band
Mr. Burr Glasscock and wife said they would give the land
To lend the Lord a helping hand
Then there were promised large donations
To be given by the entire congregation

Soon the noise of hammer and saw rang loud and clear
Then an occasional song filled the air
They worked along with real good will
Their dream of a house of God to fulfill

Mr. Hedges, great-grandfather, hewed the sills
He did an excellent job for they are lasting still
All labored hard at this noble task
The Lord answered each prayer for help that was asked

It was a great undertaking for this noble band
For money was very scarce I understand
Those Christian people let nothing block their way
Their dream of success would soon brighten their way

They thought of a gallery so the colored folks would have a place
That they might be able to hear the word of God and learn of his amazing grace

In due time this grand old church was complete
The neighborhood had a place of God where they all could meet
We lack just one thing, they did proclaim
This grand old church must have a name

Then all their heads began to nod
They they decided on Bethel, which means "House of God"
This became a meeting place for all both far and near
That's why she lasted so many years.

This old church has seen so many things take place
It would be hard to tell them all in such limited space
She proudly listened one morning in 1861
To the noise and thunder of the First Battle of Bull Run

An old churchman who was born a slave
To me he kindly this story gave
He was on his way to this church when he heard the cannon roar
The noise badly frightened him
He thought the world would soon be no more

So he hurried along as fast as he could
When he got here out in the yard the congregation stood
They were all puzzled as they stood in the hot July sun
The next day they learned of the battle we had won

So many things have happened in this house of God
To list them all would be such a huge job
Couples have come here to be married, to them you were not known
But they loved you because you look like the old church back home

Now to tell of some of the old timers who labored and worshipped here
Let's take a trip back into yesteryear

Some of their names have been forgotten as the years passed by
But they are all recorded in that great record book on high

There were the three old maid Glasscock sisters
They always looked so sweet as they came forth to worship always so trim and neat
Their names are all unknown to most of you
They were Molly, Louella and Sue

Then there were three brothers Mahlan -- Aquilla and Beauragard
They will all be long remembered for they all labored so hard

Then in later years old names were replaced by those of the new
The name of Mrs. Washburn Arrington, Sherwood Stannell, Ed Strother,
Silas Nelson, Fawkes and Schnapp, to name just a few
They all were so willing to lend a hand in helping you

Then still later on were added to the membership role
The names of Taylor, Fairbanks, Dean, Pearl, Oliver, Duvall
Mr. and Mrs. George Hedges answered God's call
I do hope no one has been forgotten; It's hard to remember them all

Old church, you have always loaned cheer to those who were distressed
In every way you have always done your best
When Muriel Humphrey School was incomplete
You opened your doors and offered a welcome seat
Then when the Boy Scouts needed a place to go
Once more old Bethel opened her doors

But all our meetings were not for church work
We had our moments of jest; sometimes a political meeting or a fiddling contest

The fiddling contests were most often won by our friend Harvey Puffenbarger
He said he always played a little louder and stronger

Now friends, this is all I can think of just now
I've done my best I do allow
So just keep on coming to church each Sabbath day
Trust in the Lord to guide your ways

Let's close this with a short prayer

Oh Lord be with all who have worshipped here and gone on before
Grant them rest on eternity's share
Bless all who are worshipping here still
Help us in building our new church if it be thy will

May there always be a place here
Like unto the days when old Bethel was founded
That the word of the Lord may be expounded