

St. Matthew's

Salisbury

St. Matthew's Church is located in Rowan County, ten miles east from Salisbury on the Bringle Ferry Road. This church was organized on Sunday April 15, 1838, by Rev. Benjamin Arey, who at that time was pastor of several churches in Davidson County. Rev. Arey visited this community and held a communion service, when thirty-three communed, on March 1, 1838. Then, on March 3rd, he confirmed a class of twenty-five. Meanwhile, twenty young people from the community attended catechetical instruction for two weeks at Organ Church by Rev. Henry Graeber, pastor of Organ congregation and were afterwards confirmed members at St Matthew's Church.

We do not have a charter membership list; however, it is most likely that the congregation was at first made up of those listed at the communion service on March 1 and the class confirmed on March 3, together with the group that was catechized by Pastor Graeber. The first baptismal record is for Michael Bame, son of Samuel and Anna Bame which was administered in a barn on April 16, 1838, by Rev. Mr. Arey.

For several years before a church was built, the congregation worshipped at different places—sometimes in Abram Hill's barn, half a mile east of where the church now is; at other times under a walnut tree in Mr. Hill's yard, and at other times at Rufty's mill near where the bridge now is on Second Creek. Finally, on February 21, 1845, John and Anna Wilhelm sold to the church three acres of land for \$10.00 for church purposes; hence, the church was for many years called Wilhelm's Church.

The first house of worship built on this lot was a frame structure with a gallery on three sides and a high pulpit in the north end. It stood across the road in what is now a part of the graveyard. This church was dedicated on July 27, 1845, by Rev. J. D. Scheck, Rev. S. Rothrock, DD, and Rev. Benjamin Arey. Rev. Joseph A. Linn, then pastor of this church, was ordained at the same service. St. Matthew's was then in a parish with St. Paul's and Luther's Church.

On April 12, 1882, the cornerstone was laid by Rev. Samuel Rothrock and their pastor, Rev. H. T. Strohecker. This is a frame structure, originally 40 x 60 feet, but in 1924 transepts were added while Rev. Clark was pastor. A tower was built in 1910, Rev. W. C. Buck being pastor.

Two Sunday school wings were constructed in 1951, under Rev. D. F. Johnson's leadership, and the interior of the church refinished. Their first parsonage was built in 1889, about a mile west of the church. The new one was built in 1934 near the church. This was the home church of Rev. J. L. Morgan, first fulltime President of the NC Synod, of Rev. P. J. Bame, Rev. John L. Morgan, Rev. J. D. Stoner, Rev. W. G. Boggs, Rev. Bill Hoffner, Rev. J. Marion Boggs, and Rev. Bill Ketchie.

This congregation has been connected with different churches in parish relationships, but was with St. Peter's church longer than with any other one. Then in 1947, each of these churches mutually agreed to call and support a full time pastor. Rev. D. F. Johnson was then called as full time pastor of St. Matthew's.

Pastors

1838-1841 Benjamin Arey

1841-1843	J.D. Scheck
1844-1864	Joseph A. Linn, Sr.
1864	William Artz
1864-1865	Whitson Kimball
1866	L.C. Groseclose
1867	Samuel Rothrock
1868	Whitson Kimball
1869-1875	R.L. Brown
1875-1877	W. H. Cone
1877-1880	J. A. Linn, Jr.
1881-1885	T. H. Strohecker
1886-1892	H. A. Trexler
1893-1896	W.P. Huddle
1897-1898	W. B. Oney
1899-1902	E.W. Leslie
1903-1905	F.M. Harr
1905-1907	C. Diefendorf
1908-1909	C.K. Helland
1910-1913	W.C. Buck
1914-1920	H. A. Trexler
1920-1923	G.H. Cooper
1923-1928	B.M. Clark
1928-1932	A.K. Hewitt
1932-1938	F.P. Cauble
1938-1947	Olin Swicegood
1947-1952	D.F. Johnson
1952-1953	R.F. Ludwig
1953-1958	K.Y. Huddle
1958	Samuel Goins
1961-1964	Lonnie Karricker
1965-1966	Horace J. Lindler
1968-1981	Walter C. Davis
1983-1986	Ronald J. Shipman
1987-1994	David Ridenhour
1995-2002	William Jeffcoat
2003-	Gary S Coble