

The roots of Galloway United Methodist Church began before the civil war, when enslaved African American were encouraged by Elder Hiram Reed, a local white minister, to begin their own church. It is said that slaves on the Dulany Plantation, land where Galloway church now stands, would meet and worship in secret among the grove of trees on the hill. Prior to the end of the Civil War, meetings were held in the home of Harriet and George Brice, ex-slaves of plantation owners in the area. They met with other friends who were interested in having a church they could freely attend in the Falls Church community. Harriet, her husband, George, and a friend named Jacob Ross of Washington, DC discussed the possibilities of building a church and how they could raise the money to do so. Harriet and friend, Frances Jackson, held fundraisers and rallies to begin raising money. One of the fundraisers involved carrying baskets of berries to the open markets in Washington, DC to sell. George Brice and Jacob Ross chose a piece of land they thought would be perfect for the church. Since African



Americans still had difficulty purchasing land even when they had the money to do so, George enlisted the help of his employer, John S. Crocker, warden of the jail in Washington, DC and a retired Union colonel in the Civil War. He asked if he would take their money and purchase the land for them. Crocker agreed and the first payment of \$75 of the \$175.00 selling price was made. On July 1, 1867, the final payment of \$100 was made to Mr. Crocker and the land was deeded over to the first Trustees of the church, appointed by Jacob Ross and Harriet Brice. The names of these men were Robert Gunnell, George Rumbles and Sandy Parker. Rev. Edgar Murphy was appointed first pastor. The group was given an old loading platform from the West Falls Church train station and a log structure was built. It was not only used for church meetings but also as a school for the African American children of the community. Miss Sue Riddle, a

white lady from up North, came to teach reading and writing as well as Sunday school classes to the African Americans in the community. This was the first organized Sunday school program to serve African Americans in Falls Church. Under Miss Riddle's supervision, Miss Margaret Peyton, daughter of Isaac "Uncle Ike" Peyton, taught the Catechism Class and Miss Amanda Brice, daughter of George and Harriet, taught the Bible Class. The First Methodist Episcopal Church (colored) was finally a reality. It joined the Falls Church Circuit through the action of the Washington Conference which was comprised of churches in Falls Church/Fairfax (First Methodist Episcopal Church (colored), McLean (Pleasant Grove), and Langley Hall's Hill, (Calloway) and a small church in Hunter's Mill that lasted only a year. At the time this church was established the circuit officers were Samuel Sharper, Sandy Parker, Robert Gunnell, George Rumbles, Oscar Washington and Thornton Wilson. Rev. Murphy was followed by Rev. Robert

Wheeler in 1868, Rev. Charles W. Walker in 1869, Rev. George R. Walker in 1870 and Rev. Noble Watkins in 1871.

Around 1871 it became apparent that a more suitable house of worship was necessary. Harriet Brice went to her former slave master, William Y. Dulin (owner of the Dulin plantation and after whom Dulin United Methodist Church of Falls Church is named) and asked if he would donate the timber needed to build the new structure. Dulin, who had also donated the land on which Dulin Church was built, agreed. The lumber came from a tract of land Dulin owned near what became Camp Alger in 1898. The lumber was hewn by members of the church including Rev. Noble Watkins, the church pastor and a carpenter by trade, Isaac "Uncle Ike" Peyton, James Turner, Thomas Green, Jacob Jackson and David Johnson. Green was a local preacher at the time. The new edifice was named Watkins Chapel after the current minister. The old log structure located on the back of the church lot continued to be used for education and entertainment for a few years after. Miss Margaret Peyton, one of the Sunday school teachers, was the first to be married in Watkins Chapel.

In 1887, the town of Falls Church annexed the section of the town that held most of its "colored" citizens to Fairfax County. The Caucasian residents of "the village", many of whom had families who had lived in the area for generations and whose cultural values were like those of the traditional Southern lifestyle, preferred segregation in both community and schools. The annexation consisted of the area south of Lee Highway and was called the "colored settlement".



This left the town of Falls Church predominantly Caucasian. African American children had to go to school in Fairfax County since there were no schools for them in their community and Falls Church paid their tuition to do so.

Watkins Chapel continued to grow as a place of worship for the African American Methodists of this community. In 1901 it was determined that there was a need for a larger building. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1901 another name change took place and Galloway Chapel and parsonage were built, named after the minister at the time, Rev. John Galloway. During Rev. Galloway's pastorate the Circuit separated and consisted of only Galloway (Falls Church) and Pleasant Grove (McLean). By 1918 the church basement was completed. In 1919 Rev. C. Brady came to the Chapel. He was followed by Rev. John A. Reid in 1920 at which time the parsonage underwent its first renovation. It has since been renovated several times but continues to be used as such to this day.

Sometime around 1920 the church name was changed to Galloway Methodist Episcopal Church to reflect changes in the Methodist Circuit.