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**Harmony United Methodist Church**, 143 County Road 229, Iuka, Mississippi 38852  
Directions: Off of Harmony Road, west of Iuka, Mississippi

Although it is not known when the Harmony United Methodist Church was established, it was most probably founded about 1860. Authentic sources reveal the fact that a small log cabin served the rural congregation during Civil War years. On November 18, 1872, Wesley B. Smith deeded 1½ acres of land to the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Around 1885, the growing congregation voted to build a new church of native lumber. Afterwards, another log building, somewhat larger than the first log cabin, was erected, and it also served as a school house. It stood a few yards southeast of the present church site, surrounded by large oak trees.

Several citizens contributed their choicest pine and poplar trees for the newer building. A dedicated member, Mr. Frank Davis, was appointed as head carpenter. Work was donated by local men, and when the building was completed, the women were asked to each give a “fat hen” from her flock to pay for the paint of the building. The very talented Mr. Frank Davis was the song leader for the congregation. One living member of the choir today remembers that “Take the Name of Jesus With You” was his favorite hymn.

Those were days of great revivals. At each annual summer revival, whole families came in wagons, bringing baskets of home produced and home-cooked food. At noontime, the food was spread at outside under the deep shade of large trees surrounding the new church which was glistening with a coat of white paint. After lunch, the meeting resumed with song, prayer, and praise, and another sermon, which eliminated the need for services again at night. Many souls were saved, and the church revived and built up in holy faith as a result of sincere efforts and sacrifice.

Among pastors serving the church was a local boy, Rev. Luke McKeown. His birthplace, one mile north of the Harmony Church near Harwell Mountain, is one of the community’s old landmarks. He and a friend, Thomas J. Davis, climbed trees on the top of Harwell Mountain and watched the construction of the Southern Railroad west of Iuka. Another citizen of the community, John F. Dean, recalled climbing on top of the old log church building as he listened to the cannon roar and watched for smoke of the Battle of Shiloh.

Excerpts from early church records include the following interesting information. Those are the marriages of Robert (Bob) Dean and Cordie Dean, December 26, 1900; Joe Dean to Florence Dean on October 23, 1904, and Mable Dean's infant baptism on August 18, 1904, by the Rev. J. D. Boggs.

Everyone that remembers Bob Dean thinks of him as a kind host, extending a warm welcome to church visitors. People from far and near remember him inviting them to his home for Sunday dinner, and entertaining young people with Sunday night singing when they would stand around the organ and hold kerosene lamps in their hands and sing for hours.

In 1923, a young man, N. N. Maxey, came to serve as pastor and claimed an Iuka girl as his bride. Her name was Miss Freda Bonds. Another outstanding incident in the history of the church was the beautiful double wedding of two church girls, Hilda and Bernice Barnes, to Rev. Jimmy Grisham (then her pastor) and Rev. James Perry of Rienzi, Mississippi.

Jennie Ray Cresap Morris and June Morris Burnett were very important to the church. Jennie Ray's mother, Mary Cresap, received a letter from Rev. E. M. Sharpe. The following excerpt from the letter by Rev. Sharpe, a former pastor who was appointed in November 1931, provides some interesting information.

"I had just come out of Duke University with a theological degree. I was not married, but six months later, I wanted to marry Alma Joyce Blissit. The charge owed me a lot of quarterage, and I was broke. I called the stewards together and asked them to try to raise enough money for me to get married on. This was in the spring of 1932. They scratched their heads considerably, for the depression was on full blast, and you may recall that nobody had any money. Finally, Mr. Bob Dean said he'd go to the bank with me and go on my note to borrow what I needed against the next quarterly conference. Mr. Charlie Cresap spoke up and seconded the motion, and that's what we did. I will never forget all you good folks who helped us get started off.

During the summer revival, about 20 people wanted to be baptized. Another minister and I had a joint worship services. I lined up my candidates, and he lined his up. He would baptize one, and then I would baptize one. We alternated like that until I ran out of candidates, and he had about 12 more. I proposed I'd continue as we had been doing and take one of his every other time. He had to put it to a vote, since his church had to vote on everything. They all agreed, and so we continued—me baptizing every other one and he every other one until we finished. It reminded me of a story about two kids stealing hickory nuts at night. Later, they sat down at the cemetery gate to divide them. They'd say, "I'll take this and you take that, etc." A black passing by heard them and got scared and ran away, telling the story that the devil and God were at the cemetery gate dividing up the dead.

The eight churches paid me \$500 in cash a year, plus a lot of produce they wanted me to count on my salary."

Fifty members were active in Sunday School during the first quarter of 1945. The following is a list of expenses the Sunday School paid.

Cost of literature for first quarter	\$ 3.54
Sent to Orphans' Home	12.00
Light bill, December 1944	1.00
Light bill, January 1945	1.35
Light bill, February 1945	1.35

The building used now for worship was erected in 1947 under the leadership of Rev. J. H. Holder. Doan Davis, nephew of Frank Davis who supervised the building of the older church, served as carpenter for this construction. The church was dedicated in October 1948 by Bishop Marvin Franklin. Sunday School rooms and bathrooms were added to the south side of the church in 1975, under the leadership of Rev. Don Bishop and Elam Bishop. A fellowship hall and kitchen was added in 1981. Clay Whitfield erected the useful and attractive cabinets. Dedication services were held in April 1982 for the fellowship hall and the new stain glass windows under the direction of Rev. Paul Linton, pastor. In November 1982, the church purchased from Edward Bennich the former John Dean house with five acres of land for a future parsonage; Hurchel Robertson was chairman of the Finance Committee.

The church's Annual Homecoming Day is held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in May each year. The families of present members, former members, and descendants of former members gather for the morning children's Day Program. One is never too young nor too old to be on the program. In 1972, Corey Barnes, son of Myra and Jerry Barnes, and Bryanda, daughter of Tammy Adams and Bryan Taylor, were on the program although they were less than two years old. Everyone looked forward to hearing Reeder Smith sing "The Homecoming Week" as well, although it has been about 60 years since he taught his first singing school at the church.

Among the different events that took place at the church was the beautiful double wedding of two sisters, Hilda and Bernice Barnes to Rev. Jimmy Grisham (then Hilda's pastor); and Rev. James Perry of Rienzi, respectively. Others that have married at the church are:

Mary Nell Dean	Harold Davis
Virginia (Jennie) Grisham	Dean Pearce
Martha Lane Dean	Robert Lane
Linda Daniel	Jerald Wallace
Janice Davis	Sammie Harwell
Glenda Dean	Gene Johnson
Charlotte Whitfield	Jimmy Vine
Myra Robertson	Jerry Barnes
Yvonne Middleton	Kenny Stephens
Sandra Jackson	Steve Morris

Golden anniversaries were celebrated by Mr. and Mrs. Finch Davis and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Alfred Bonds. Church School Superintendents were John F. Dean, Marion P. Bishop, Marshall B. Daniel, L. N. Dean, Alfred Bonds, Bob Hodges, and Elam Davis.

One of the most loyal and devoted members of the Harmony Church was Marion P. Bishop who served almost 30 years as the Sunday School Superintendent. His home was two or three miles away from the church and he walked that distance when he could no longer drive a car, even though his steps were growing feeble. The family tradition was still carried on by his daughter,

Lola Maud Stanford, and granddaughter, Lula Stanford Coker. Charles M. Adams, his grandson, was also a very loyal and outstanding member. His wife, Evelyn Adams, taught the Senior High Church School Class for several years.

James (Jim) Daniel was the only member to go into the ministry from the Harmony Church, and he also formed the Singing Harmoniers including Kathy, Amy, David and Susan Daniel, and Janet and John Massengille.

Pastors who have ministered to the church are below:

—1894	J. B. Cutchen	1938—1940	A. C. Bishop
1895—1898	Joe Johnson	1940—1941	Nash Hammill
1898—1900	L. A. McKeown	1941—1944	Joe Caruthers
1900—1904	J. D. Boggs	1944—1945	R. B. Burks
1904—1905	M. A. Burns	1945—1952	J. H. Holder
1905—1906	W. W. Edge	1952—1955	Garland Knott
1906—1907	A. L. Davenport	1955—1958	Sale Lily
1907—1911	J. R. James	1958—1959	Joe Carpenter
1911—1915	W. T. Bazzel	1959—1962	Jimmy Grisham
1915—1917	W. J. White	1962—1966	Charlie Benjamin
1917—1918	J. R. Murff		death; transferred to
1918—1922	W. T. Phillips		Burnsville Charge
1922—1923	C. M. Ray	1967—1969	Don Sparks
1923—1924	N. Maxey	1969—1972	W. E. Ludlam
1924—1929	E. P. Craddock	1972—1976	Donald bishop
1929—1931	J. C. Nelson	1976—1977	Paul Daniel
1931—1932	E. M. Sharpe	1977—1980	Earl Cooper
1932—1935	J. W. Holliday	1980—1982	Paul Linton
1935—1938	L. P. Jumper	1982—	Bobby Tickell

The register of the church only dates back to 1900, but from talking with older citizens of our community, many facts contributing to the history of the church can be found.

*Source: Hayes, Sara. "Harmony United Methodist Church." In: Down Memory Lane: A History of Iuka, Mississippi, 1915-1983: Vol. II.*