

## Bell Air Methodist Episcopal Church South Bell Air Methodist Church

**Township:** T-47-N  
**Range:** R-18-W  
**Section:** 24  
**Latitude:** 38.832783  
**Map:** [Click Here](#)

**Organized:** 1850  
**Disbanded:** 1965  
**Active:** No  
**Longitude:** -92.845014  
**Updated:** October 6, 2004

**Cemetery:** There is no cemetery associated with this church

**Area:** Take State Road 5 south from Boonville until you reach the town of Bell Air, Missouri. The church is at the intersection of 5 and the gravel road in Bell Air.

**Records:** Unknown at the present time

**History:**



Sketch From "Cooper County Church Sketches"

### Bell Air Methodist Episcopal Church, South From "History of Howard and Cooper Counties Missouri", 1883

Bell Air M. E. Church, South-The church organization was effected in 1850. Some of the original members were James Bell and wife, Thornton Bell and wife, and Jacob G. Shutler and wife. The present building was erected in 1870, and dedicated by Rev. D. K. McAnally, of St. Louis. Present membership about fifty. Rev. John Given is now preaching for the church.

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Bell Air Methodist Church  
From "History of Cooper County Missouri" by W. F. Johnson. 1919

The Bell Air Methodist Church, South, was organized in 1850. James Bell and wife, Thornton Bell and wife, and Jacob G. Shutter and wife, were among the oldest members. The building was erected in 1870, and was dedicated by D. K. McAnally.

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**Bell Air Methodist Church South**  
**From "Memorabilia of Cooper County", 1990**

From the "Yearbook of the Methodist Churches of the Bunceton Charge for 1934" by Rev. H. R. Wharton:

The Bell Air Methodist Church, south was organized in 1850. Mr. and Mrs. Thornton Bell, Mr. and Mrs. James Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Schutler, William and James Godwin, William N. Halley, and John C. tucker were among the charter members.

The land on which the church was built was purchased from H. Corum and his wife in 1868, for a consideration of \$175.00. Deed was written to Wm. Godwin, Jacob Schutler, Wm. N. Halley and John Tucker as trustees.

The first building was erected in 1870 and dedicated by D. K. McAnally of Saint Louis, Mo. The church has played the leading roll in developing the good citizenship of this community, as it has made Bell Air a meeting place of good fellowship which was the vision of those good citizens who have passed on. So it is, that the church stands out to be the greatest, noblest and most cherished factor in the name and pride of the community which it serves.

The Bell Air church, it workers, its purpose, have been an important factoring developing some of the best farmers and business and professional men that this country is known for.

The conference year has always ended in September, so the years of time served together with the names of those men who have enlisted in God's service are as follows: R.H. Schaeffer 1888-1889 Boone Keeton 1889-1890 J.D. Mood 1890-1893 R.G. Flummer 1893-1904 W.B. Cobb 1894-1898 T. D. Payne 1898-1899 J.W. Hill 1899-1900 J.E. Alexander 1900-1902 F.E. Gordon 1902-1904 J. F. Caskey 1904-1905 W.D. Kelley 1905-1906 R. S. Hunter 1906-1908 S. A. Renes 1908-1909 S.P. Cayton 1909-1911 H.P.Jones 1911-1912 T.A. Huffine 1912-1913 S.G. Keys 1913-1914 Robert Hawkins 1914-1914 A. B. Jackson 1915-1916 J.G. Haynes 1916-1918 J. Starkey 1918-1920 W.W. Garrett 1920-1922 W. H. Sudduth 1922-1925 G.B. Snapp 1925-1927 J.W. Snow 1927-1928 William Sampson 1928-1929 C.E. Nickerson 1929-1932 H.R. Wharton 1932.

In 1905, the first building was remodeled with the addition of an annex for a Sunday school room for the children - and, at that time, beautiful stained glass windows were installed with two very large memorial windows in honor of Mr. T. M. Nelson and family ancestors of Mrs. Nadine (Nelson) Leonard who were benefactors of the church.

The Bell Air Church was in charges with the Bunceton, Pilot Grove and Bethlehem churches at various times, and from 1913 to 1925 it was a station with a full time pastor in residence. In 1914, through the faithful and very generous support of the C. E. Leonard family and the leading families of the community, a new home for the pastors "the parsonage" was built on the south edge of the village, on Ravenswood land. When the Rev. S. G. Keys and family were appointed as pastor of the new station, they stayed around in the homes of some of the members, while the men of the church hurriedly converted the large old one-room school building into a residence, where they lived while the new parsonage was built. The Leonard family paid half of the pastor's salary and the other members and friends paid the remainder. The former members were always very generous in sharing their fruits and vegetables and produce with the minister's family. Quoting from a letter received from Rev. and Mrs. Wharton in 1979:

How very nice to receive your newsy letter about the Bell Air Community. My! The changes!! You know, we came in the fall of 1932; the depression was at its height. We had two little girls, one 2 1/2 years, the other 1 year and a third baby due in February, '33. The Bunceton Bank had closed and the bank at Speed was the one we and the church used. We really lived on love - lots of one another and the love our church showered on us, in sharing all they had. How we remember the delightful meals and gifts of food - meat at butchering times; vegetables and fruits in season; dressed chickens and turkeys that come from your mother and the other dear people of the church. We all felt so close in sharing all that we had. That was a wonderful community.

The Marshall District Conference of the Methodist Church was entertained at Bell Air in 1913. Notable guests of the conference were: Dr. W. R. Palmore; Dean Mumford of Missouri University, Columbia, J. Wesley Smith, Elder, P. A. Rader and Rev. A. H. Barnes of St. Louis, Mo. Those in attendance were delightfully entertained in the homes, counting it a blessing to partake of such gracious hospitality.

The Bell Air Chapter of the Epworth League was organized in 1912. The membership soon grew to forty-two, and this soon became one of the most active chapters in the district. Regular worship services were held each Sunday evening, monthly business meetings were held in the homes, delegates sent to the Marshall District Conference and to the Annual League Conference at Perth Springs, Mo. A great deal of the social life of the young people of "horse and buggy" age centered in this organization.

In 1911, the Woman's Missionary Society was organized and became a very dedicated group in supporting the work of the church and contributing generously to the work of the Missions of Methodism. It also was a very pleasant and positive influence in the lives of the families of the community - their activities included suppers and socials; and plays and picnics too.

Though there have been no regular services held at the Bell Air Church since about 1965, the church is still serving "a mission". In the early 1960's Mr. and Mrs. Charles Leonard in their consecration to the legacy of this church, had a spotlight placed high inside the church to illuminate the large memorial window facing the highway. The response to this "beacon of light" has been most rewarding. Many, who pass that way at night have sent messages about the beauty of the windows; some have responded with donations of money, especially Mr. Ralph Myers of Kansas City who passes by regularly enroute to his home a Lake Ozark, sends a generous gift at Christmas "to keep the lights burning." A few of the members of the congregation and friends of the church are maintaining the building and grounds, and hoping that it can remain there as a testament to our ancestors who established it and supported it through the past 138 years and that sometime in the future it can become active again

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**Bell Air Methodist Episcopal Church South**  
**From Cooper County Church Sketches by F. Chesnutt, 1993**

The Bell Air Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized in 1850. Mr. and Mrs. James Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Thornton Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Shutter, William and James Godwin, William N. Halley and John C. Tucker were among the charter members.

The land on which the first church was built was purchased from H. Corum, and wife, in 1868, for a consideration of \$75.00. Deed was written to William Godwin, Jacob Shutler, William N. Halley and John Tucker as trustees. The first building was erected in 1870 and dedicated by D.K. McAnally, of St. Louis, Missouri. This center of worship served the Bell Air community as its only church for years. In 1905, during Rev. J.F. Caskey's pastorate, the building was remodeled.

The Marshall district conference was entertained at Bell Air in 1913. The pastor in charge at that time was Rev. T.A. Huffine, and the presiding elder was Elder Rev. W.M. Rader. Notable guests of the conference were: Dr. W.R. Palmore, Dean Mumford of Missouri University, Columbia;

Wesley Smith, P.S. Rader and A.H. Barnes. Those in attendance were delightfully entertained in the homes, counting it a blessing to partake of such gracious hospitality.

The Bell Air Chapter of the Epworth League was organized in 1912, during the pastorate of Bro. Huffine, with fourteen charter members. The first officers were: President, George Chamberlin; First Vice-President, Lloyd Painter; Second Vice-President, Edna Eichelberger; Third Vice-President, Mrs. Ella Roberts; Fourth Vice-President, Kathleen Sly; Era Agent, Bernice Schlotzhauer; Organist, Grace Roe; Treasurer, Hall Eichelberger; Secretary, Corene Mitzel. The membership soon grew to forty-two, and this soon became one of the most active chapters in the district. They held worship services regularly each Sunday evening, and had ten subscribers to the Epworth Era. A great deal of the social life of the young people of that horse and buggy age centered in this organization. Monthly business meetings were held in homes of the members. Delegates were sent to Marshall district league conference each year.

In 1915, during the pastorate of Rev. R.M. Hawkins, the district league conference was entertained at Bell Air. On the first evening of the gathering a reception for the delegates was given at the C.P. Mitzel home. Those in charge of the conference were Guy E. Davis, of Boonville, and Miss Janet Ruthnea, of Jefferson City. The guest speaker was Rev. A.H. Barnes, of St. Louis.

The Bell Air League used ice cream suppers, oyster suppers and other plans of earning money in order that they might help in missionary enterprises such as "The African Special" and missions of Cuba. The piano, now in use at the church, is a gift from that organization.

The Bell Air Women's Missionary Society was organized April 30, 1911, at the church by the district secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Florence. Seven ladies joined the society: Mrs. C.P. Mitzel, Mrs. George Schlotzhauer, Mrs. R.S. Roe, Mrs. Ed Solomon, Mrs. Joe Woolery, Mrs. Margaret Fisher and Miss Inez Stephens. Mrs. Mitzel and Mrs. Schlotzhauer were elected president and treasurer, respectively. In 1919 the society carried its largest enrollment, at that time 45.

The conference year has always ended in September, so the years of time served together with the names of those men who have enlisted in God's service are as follows: 1888-1889 R.H. Schaeffer 1889-1890 Boone Keeton 1890-1893 J.D. Mood 1893-1904 R.G. Flummer 1894-1898 W.B. Cobb 1898-1899 T. D. Payne 1899-1900 J.W. Hill 1900-1902 J.E. Alexander 1902-1904 F.E. Gordon 1904-1905 J. F. Caskey 1905-1906 W.D. Kelley 1906-1908 R. S. Hunter 1908-1909 S. A. Renes 1909-1911 S.P. Cayton 1911-1912 H.P. Jones 1912-1913 T.A. Huffine 1913-1914 S.G. Keys 1914-1914 Robert Hawkins 1915-1916 A. B. Jackson 1916-1918 J.G. Haynes 1918-1920 J. Starkey 1920-1922 W.W. Garrett 1922-1925 W. H. Sudduth 1925-1927 G.B. Snapp 1927-1928 J.W. Snow 1928-1929 William Sampson 1929-1932 C.E. Nickerson 1932-(1934?) J.R. Wharton.

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