

**Blackwater Methodist Church**  
**Blackwater United Methodist Church**  
*Blackwater, Missouri 65233*

*Tim Prowse, Pastor*  
*9:30 a.m. Sunday School*  
*10:20 a.m. Morning Worship*

<b>Township:</b>	T-49-N	<b>Organized:</b>	November 1890
<b>Range:</b>	R-19-W	<b>Disbanded:</b>	No
<b>Section:</b>	34	<b>Active:</b>	Yes
<b>Latitude:</b>	38.980242	<b>Longitude:</b>	-92.993673
<b>Map:</b>	<a href="#">Click Here</a>	<b>Updated:</b>	October 6, 2004

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

**Area:** Blackwater, Missouri

**Records:** The location of the church records are unknown at this time.

**History:**



From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F. Chesnutt

**Churches Have Long Played Important Part in Blackwater**  
**From "Memorabilia of Cooper County", 1990**

The first religious services held in Blackwater were conducted in a hall on the second floor of a frame building adjoining the old hotel. This building burned and was replaced by a brick building now serving as a hotel and Hurst pharmacy.

These services were held approximately a year before the Christian church was built and were union services. There was no regular pastor but ministers of the various denominations who were near came and preached at various times.

**Methodist Church**

Rev. T.B. Harris was sent by the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church as pastor at Blackwater in the fall of 1890. The Methodist Church was under construction upon his arrival and the Christian denomination offered their church. Services were held there for several weeks after which the Methodist church was completed. The Rev. Harris, on his first charge, preached the first sermon in the new church.

Among the first pastors were Rev. L. Anderson, sent in 1891 and '92; R.B. Ross in '93; Lester F. Clerk, '94; James C. Diggs in '95. Thirty-three pastors have served here during the history of the church. The longest to serve was the Rev. N. M. Dowdy, who came in 1924 and served for five consecutive years. The first pastor, the Rev. Harris, was sent back in 1929 and 1930.

The names of the charter members were not available but from some records we find the minutes of a church conference held May 1, 1892 over which L. Anderson presided and B.D. / Evans acted as secretary. During this meeting it was decided to organize a prayer meeting. The following members were present: Charles M. Baldwin, Mary J. Baldwin, Cora Boles, Maymie Clark, Mattie E. Irvine, Lula B. Irvine, Een D. Irvine, Sophia Kella, George A. Meredith, Mary L. Meredith, Stella Meredith, Lutie Walker, James Gillespie, Nannie Gillespie, Mary Gillespie and Narcissus Gillespie.

The first marriages recorded are those of J.R. Clark and Ella Wall; Lester Clark and Pints Barnes, Brown and Maymie Clark.

The first church building was remodeled and made modern during the twenties. It was struck by lightning in 1934 but replaced by a modern building in 1935.

The Rev. Robert McMillan, student at Central College, is the present pastor. The old church bell was given by the late James A. Marshall, a trustee, and was replaced in the belfry of the new building, though it is not used, because of the damage it received when the church burned. The lot on which the church stands was donated by Scott and Cooney.

Lula B. Irvine, now Mrs. J.H. Rucker and Narcissus Gillespie, now Mrs. E.W. Kella, members present at that Church Conference ;a 1892, are active members of the church today.

by Miss Clara B. Harvey

**Blackwater Methodist Church  
From "Memorabilia of Cooper County", 1990**

The Methodist Church was built in 1891, on land donated by Scott and Cooney. The first pastor was the Rev. T.B. Harris. The first building was struck by lightning in August 1934 and burned. The following year, the present structure was built on the same site. Through the years the Blackwater Church has been a circuit or part of a parish with various other area Methodist churches, the old church at Ridge Prairie, the Arrow Rock church, the Nelson Methodist Church and since 1963, with the Smith Chapel Church.

The Ladies organization of the Blackwater Methodist church is the oldest organization of any kind in the town. It was first called The Ladies Aid, later it was known as The Women's Society of Christian Service, and is now known as The United Methodist Women. There are few active members but worship services are still held twice each month.

by Mary C. Davis

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**Blackwater Methodist Church  
From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F. Chesnutt, 1993**

Salt springs in the Blackwater area (salt deposits usually meant good hunting) attracted settlers from early history. William Christy and John G. Heath were making salt in 1808, making this

township one of the first settled in Cooper county. In 1829 William Becknell, who is known as the founder of the Santa Fe Trail, located near a salt works and was engaged in making salt. The population grew.

By 1832, the Salt Fork Cumberland Presbyterian Church had been established by Rev. Buie; it moved near Blackwater in 1942.

The Baptists located at Heath Creek in 1841 (the Heath Creek Baptist Church still exists).

The Methodists organized in 1840 and used the Salt Fork Church (then under the charge of William B. Wear, from the seminary at New Lebanon). Several other Methodist groups were active in the Lamine area.'

As the town of Blackwater developed after the Civil War interruptions, the Methodists who had been having home meetings decided to organize formally. J.B. Harris was assigned to the group in 1889.

A lot was donated by Messrs. Scott and Cooney. James Marshall donated a bell.

The pastor and congregation of the new Christian Church offered use of their building until the new Methodist Church was completed in November of 1890. At the close of the first year sixteen persons were received. The first three charter members recorded were: Nannie Gillespie, Willie Kella and Lula (Irving) Rucker.

A women's society with 10 members, and weekly prayer meetings began within the first year.

A parsonage was purchased in 1920 near the Church. In 1925 the church was remodeled with a basement added the following year. After a new roof was put on in July 1934, an August storm brought disaster. Lightning struck and the church burned to the ground. Even the faithful bell was cracked and could not be used again.

The catastrophe did not discourage the members or the pastor, O.E. Patton. His talent as plasterer helped the members through many days of rebuilding. Services were held at the Baptist Church until the Methodist Church was completed.

During the years the Blackwater Methodist Church was on several circuits; the first with Jones Chapel, which burned, later with Ridge Prairie, which disbanded. For a number of years Blackwater and Arrow Rock combined ministries, and later with Nelson. In 1963 the two united with Smith Chapel to form Salt Fork Parish.

At this time (1993) Smith Chapel and Blackwater are being served by Gary Dewitt. Sunday services are at 9:30 with Sunday School at 10:30.

The "Ladies Aid" is now called the "United Methodist Women" with meetings the third Thursday of the month. Officers are: President - Betty Schuster

Vice - Pres. - Mabel Gibson

Secretary - Emma Sprigg

Treasurer - Ella Widel

Rev. Josiah Godbey was a well-known Methodist missionary from Kentucky. He was active in the Salt Fork area after the Civil War. He and his wife, Sena Kelly had ten children, six of whom became Methodist ministers or teachers at Central College (in Fayette).

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