

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALDERSGATE METHODIST CHURCH
ATLANTA-EAST DISTRICT
NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE

Dreams, ideals, wills, spiritual desires, vision, and practical labor--Put them together and you have the beginning of ALDERSGATE METHODIST CHURCH. For two or three years Dr. Nat G. Long had within his mind the idea of a Methodist Church in South East Atlanta, near the Federal Prison. This idea began to grow. He talked to people of that area. They, too, had the same desire. Finally an opportunity came. Dr. Long purchased a lot on Custer Avenue through the District Board of Missions and Church Extension.

This was the initial step. Much more was necessary. Dr. Long contacted Glenn Memorial Methodist Church. Having a keen interest in the advancement of the Kingdom of God, Mr. Candler Budd and his fine congregation volunteered their assistance. In the fall of 1955, two young men, Eldon R. Smith, Jr. and Maxie D. Dunnam, from the Candler School of Theology, began the initial work for the new church.

The District Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Atlanta East District and Glenn Memorial had united in the support of an endeavor that was destined to prove effective in the Kingdom's work.

On October 1, 1955, the survey was begun. Throughout the month of October, Mr. Smith and Mr. Dunnam walked from door to door in the Custer Avenue community taking a friendly community religious survey. This seemingly gruel work paid off in great dividends. The first public service was held on November 6 in the Thomas Jefferson Guice School auditorium with 61 people attending.

This great beginning was to set the pace for the whole endeavor.

The spirit of the people was heartwarming; the enthusiasm was contagious; the friendliness was irresistible. The Spirit of Christ seemed to be displayed in every endeavor. Those who came to visit usually returned.

Different phases of the work were begun in rapid succession. On November 9, the first Prayer Meetings were held in the home of Mr. Harold Ricks and Mr. Lloyd Sparrow. These cottage groups were received heartily because the people felt a need for prayer.

January 1, 1956, marked the beginning of the Church School. This was an enriching experience. Sixty-six people attended the different classes. This was to prove the most welcomed program of the church and the most effective means of bringing people into the Kingdom.

No church is ever complete in its program unless there is an opportunity for personal fellowship. The people felt this and on January 4, forty people gathered in the school cafeteria for a family night supper which was to become a monthly affair. This seemed to draw the people closer together, making the church "one big happy family."

Great plans were being made. People were becoming anxious. Sunday, January 15, was the big day. This was to be the organizational meeting. It was one of the most heartlifting services ever experienced. Eighty-four people were present in the Church School that day. (The largest number thus far.) One hundred-six people came to the worship service to hear Dr. Long preach and to be present with Mr. Smith and Mr. Dunnam for the organizational meeting. At the close of the worship service 51 people united with the church by transfer of membership; seven came on profession of faith; eleven were placed on the preparatory roll. The total: 58 regular members; 11 on the preparatory list.

Officers were elected the same day.

STEWARDS:

Mr. G.H. Morris, Jr.
Mr. Harold Ricks
Mr. Lloyd F. Sparrow
Mr. James Gainey
Mr. William McCullough
Mrs. A.H. McIntyre (Communion Steward)

TRUSTEES: Mr. M.O. Crane, Mr. C.C. Cooper, Mr. Philip Hatton

CHURCH SCHOOL SUPT.: Mr. G.H. Morris, Jr.

TREASURERS: Mr. and Mrs. L.B. Akin

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Mrs. C.C. Cooper

Two other dates are significant. On January 22, a Methodist Youth Fellowship was begun; on February 5, the first evening service was held. Over 20 young people attended this initial youth meeting and 69 people worshiped in the first evening service.

Accomplishments too numerable to mention have been made. The entire endeavor has been heartwarming. This fact stimulated the naming of the church. In February a series of ballots were taken to give the church an official name. The name, Aldersgate Methodist Church, was the result of that balloting. This is very significant. As John Wesley had his heartwarming experience on Aldersgate Street, so many people have felt their hearts "strangely warmed" at Aldersgate in Atlanta. Likewise it will be that many more will experience the same.

At the present time 85 people are listed on the regular roll of the church. Over a hundred gather each Sunday morning for Church School and worship. Many return for an enriching time together in the evening service.

This has been the exciting beginning of a meaningful experience for all concerned. Banded together in this endeavor is a group of people who join an "endless line of splendor" that has marched from Al-

dersgate in London and are now treading the "Path of the Kingdom" from
Aldersgate in Atlanta.