History of Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Founded September 9, 1962
The objective of ALDERSGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is — to be a studious and worshipping community — relevant to the modern age and true to the gospel of Jesus Christ — seeking to serve all people through creative involvement in service and the stewardship of life.
"In the beginning....."

It was a warm, bright day in early autumn. The rays of the sun, filtering through the stained-glass windows, traced the outlines of the ancient Prophets as they stood watch. The room was cool, quiet, unadorned. It was the sanctuary of the Walton Way Temple Congregation Children of Israel.

The date was September 9, 1962; the time was four o'clock in the afternoon. Ten families—twenty-six people—rose, faced the assembled ministers and invited guests, joined hands and hearts, and declared unto God, to themselves, and to the congregation that henceforth they would be the standard-bearers of a new Methodist Church to be organized in the Augusta District:

Mrs. A. J. Bruyere and four children
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Holdier
Mr. and Mrs. James M. Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Lester
Mr. and Mrs. R. E. McClure
Mr. and Mrs. Jack E. McGahee
Mr. and Mrs. Grover C. Maxwell, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Miller and two children
Mrs. William E. Pierce
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Scott and two children

The North Georgia Conference appointed the Reverend A. J. Bruyere pastor, and a temporary parsonage was established at No. 48 Pine Hill Apartments.

Until such time as a permanent name could be chosen, BRYNWOOD METHODIST CHURCH was used, and the first service was held on September 16, 1962, at 8:45 o'clock in the morning in the Walton Way Temple, the use of which had been generously offered by Rabbi Norman M. Goldberg.

To Methodists, a church without organization is simply no church at all, so the pastor quickly began to appoint the "official family": Stewards, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Scott and Mr. Miller; Trustees, Mr. Maxwell, Mr. McGahee and Mr. Lester; Church School Superintendent, Mr. Miller; Treasurer, Mr. Maxwell; Communion Steward, Mrs. Maxwell, and Commission Chairman: Mrs. Bruyere, Membership and Evangelism; Mr. Miller, Education;
Mrs. Miller, Missions; Mr. Maxwell, Stewardship and Finance.

The first Church and Quarterly Conferences were called on September 30th for the purpose of naming the Church and initiating the building program. Reverend Bruere presided at both meetings, with Mr. Lester acting as Conference Secretary. By majority vote, the following principal matters were resolved:

1. To name the Church ALLERSGATE, a word for which every Methodist throughout the world is thankful—the birthplace of Methodism.

2. To build a church building, and in so doing: (a) to employ an architect, (b) to use an "old Southern Williamsburg" type architecture, (c) to limit the debt to $50,000, and (d) to appoint the following building committee: Mrs. Miller, Mr. McGahee, Mr. Lester and Mr. Johnson, with Mr. Maxwell as chairman.

What an undertaking for so few!

Every member turned his attention and efforts toward the goal of a church building. Mr. Dort Payne, architect, of Augusta, Georgia, was selected to draw the plans, with special emphasis on the chapel and church school building to be constructed first.

The following appeared on the cover of the church bulletin on October 7th:

ALLERSGATE METHODIST CHURCH

Last Sunday night, Methodism's youngest child was named. Three weeks ago she was born into the family of Church and received an old family name of Methodist...but last Sunday she received her given name....ALLERSGATE.

We felt something akin to the same feeling that John Wesley must have felt...our heart was strangely warmed within us as we dedicated her back to God, from whence she came.

We hope that the entire membership will be happy with her name...and we want you to be proud of her. With your devotion and help she will grow into a great Church and will serve her Master well. Let our prayers and presence be hers as she grows and builds.

Your Pastor, A. J. Bruere
Being ever mindful of Methodism's emphasis on the youth of the church, the pastor and a handful of volunteers, teachers and counsellors promptly set about to establish the church school and Methodist Youth Fellowship. The first meeting of both was in the evening of October 7th, just four weeks from the inception of the Church. Miss Bonnie Bruyere was elected president of M.Y.F., and Mr. and Mrs. Donald R. Dearing who had joined the Church within the past month became counsellors.

So as not to neglect any part of the total church, the pastor appointed Mrs. Miller to organise the women of the congregation, and their monthly meetings began in her home in September. The name WOMEN OF ALLERSGATE was selected, and meetings continued thereafter in the various homes. What a far cry this was from the wonderful Women's Society of Christian Service which is such an influence for good and has more outposts of service and involvement in the needs of mankind than any other organisation of women in the world! However, it was a beginning.

In mid-October services were discontinued at the Walton Way Temple and were begun in the Forest Hills Elementary School on Walton Way. Reverend Bruyere appointed Mrs. Maxwell chairman of the "altar guild", and she and the committee she selected—which actually included the rest of the women of the Church—plunged into the task of transforming a classroom into a sanctuary. An altar and backdrop were improvised; a wooden cross contributed by the pastor and wooden candlesticks made by Mr. Miller were used. A piano was borrowed, and the committee provided flowers, when possible, and prepared the communion elements in borrowed trays.

The "sanctuary" was not very pretty and certainly not a comfortable one. There was no air-conditioning; the concrete floor and metal chairs were oftentimes too cold, or at other times the room was too hot. Luckily, one member, Mrs. Holdier, could play the piano, but in her occasional absence the congregation sang without accompaniment as in the early days of Methodism. It was a makeshift setting not particularly conducive to worship, but the members were convinced that God was there just as surely as if it were the grandest cathedral!

Quickly, Sunday after Sunday, new families came to join with the original ten. They came by transfer from churches great and small, elegant and simple, affluent and lowly. They came knowing that a church would have to be built and exceptional stewardship would be required of them, and yet they came.

On November 4th, the second Church Conference was called to consider the plans which the architect had drawn. A far cry from the "Old
Southern Williamsburg architecture which had been originally selected, the plans were a disappointment to some. However, the majority believed them to be satisfactory, and so they were approved. As projected:

Sanctuary, fellowship hall, kitchen, pastor's study and two restrooms to one side of hallway and four classrooms in a row on the other side. Exterior of brick, black asphalt tile roof, small steeple. Interior walls of cement blocks, vinyl tile floor. Entrance to sanctuary from rear through double doors leading from foyer.

Interior of chapel also of cement blocks painted cream. Cathedral ceiling of natural finish wood, windows lining either side of nave, hanging lights of Gothic design. Raised chancel divided, with pulpit on left of congregation, lectern on right. Furnishings of creamy white wood with walnut top finish. Communion rail between chancel and nave; nave to accommodate eight pews on either side of center aisle with seating capacity of about 140. Central altar; reredos of board-and-batten construction, with same treatment echoed at opposite end of chapel. Clergy seats on either side of altar; organ to left of pulpit, choir loft to extreme right opposite organ. (Gifts such as crimson carpet, brass cross and pair brass candlesticks for retable, pulpit Bible and Bible Markers for lectern, brass collection plates, and brass communion trays would take their places to complete the appointments of the chancel.)

With the church building to become a reality, various groups immediately undertook several money-making projects. The MEF collected and sold coat hangers and had a bake sale, from which enough money was earned to pay for "one square foot" of the new building: $12.00! The Juniors sold candy and gave to the Church a brass candlelighter. The Primary children collected empty bottles, and from the sale presented the church school with collection baskets. Women of the Church collected newspapers and magazines for resale, from which they realized a total of $16.51. They sold Christmas candy and profited by $57.60, and later sponsored a children's fashion show, the proceeds of which amounted to $244.15.

Many wonderful gifts to Aldersgate were to be received within the next few years. A careful record of these has been preserved and can be found in another section of this book.

On the afternoon of January 27, 1963, only twenty Sundays from the first one, Dr. Charles Cochran, Augusta District Superintendent, Reverend Bruere and Mr. Grover C. Maxwell, Jr., broke ground for the first
unit, to be built on Wheeler Road near Almond Road. Among the friends present were Mr. Julian Flake, Mr. Henry Edwards, president of the Board of Church Extension, Dr. James Segars, chairman of the Committee on Location, and other Methodist clergy.

What a happy, exciting occasion it was for the congregation, which had grown to thirty-six! This date was to mark the close of the Charter of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

A few days later a Church Conference was called to consider bids on the construction. The R. E. Watkins Construction Company was low bidder, with a base bid of $49,987.00, and was awarded the contract.

Up to this time, Aldersgate had been existing on a hand-to-mouth financial basis, a precarious arrangement in view of the indebtedness recently incurred, and so the Stewardship and Finance Commission proposed its first budget, to cover the period March 1963 through June 1964, of $12,000 -

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<td>(17%) Conference Claimants</td>
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"Christian Stewardship means we give back to God a portion of the Life He has freely given us. Our time, talent, and money are all involved in the Stewardship of life. This we believe as Methodist Christians." The
initial budget, which was pledged by the fifteen families of the Church, might serve as an example of dedication and stewardship to future generations of Aldersgate.

During the second week of May 1963, the Official Board met and voted to recommend to the District Superintendent that the Annual Conference assign a new pastor to Aldersgate. Reverend Bruyere was notified by Dr. Cochran of the recommendation and shortly thereafter was relieved of further responsibility as pastor, although of course he continued to receive wages until the end of the church year. The members can be ever grateful for Reverend Bruyere's untiring efforts in organizing the Church, working to increase the membership, helping in every fund-raising project, personally preparing and typing the Sunday bulletins each week, purchasing the first Hymnals himself, planning and working toward the construction of the new building, and for giving spiritual leadership to the best of his ability.

A retired minister, Reverend T. M. Sullivan, became temporary pastor until the Annual Conference in June. Dr. Cochran was guest preacher during this period, as was the Reverend Herbert A. Owen, Assistant Pastor of St. John's Methodist Church in Augusta.

On June 3, 1963, the final quarterly conference of the first church year was held with Dr. Cochran presiding. Inasmuch as no nominating committee had been previously appointed, it was necessary to nominate candidates from the floor for every office, commission and committee of the Church. Mr. James M. Johnson was elected Chairman of the first Official Board. As new members joined the Church, their names were added to the various commissions and committees so that each individual would have a personal responsibility in the growth and spiritual development of Aldersgate. This practice was to be continued through the years.

Members of Aldersgate can always be thankful to the first Board of Stewards for their planning, leadership and constant efforts in guiding the Church in the direction in which Christ would have it go.

In the not-quite-finished chapel, the first service was held on June 23, 1963, the forty-second Sunday after the first one, and it was a day of bursting pride, of rejoicing and thanksgiving. What a wonderful way to end the first church year!
At Annual Conference the Bishop assigned to Aldersgate a new minister, Arthur M. O'Neil, Jr., a native of Mississippi and the son and grandson of Methodist ministers. He attended Millsaps College and upon graduation received the Charles Betts Galloway Award which is presented each year to the outstanding ministerial student. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Emory University. His first appointment was to a rural circuit in Mississippi, which was selected as the "Rural Circuit of the Year" while he was there. His second appointment was to a church in Jackson, Mississippi, which was selected as the outstanding "Methodist Church of the Year" while he was there.

Both honors attest to his faith, industry and intense dedication to the service of God and the fulfillment of his mission as a Methodist minister.

He came to Aldersgate from a large Church in Atlanta and was warmly received at the first service which he conducted on June 30, 1963. A reception was held following the service to welcome the new minister, his wife Julia, and their three children.

The Parsonage Committee rented a little house at 611 Highland Avenue to serve as a temporary parsonage. Some essential items of furniture were purchased, and more would be added as the Church was able to finance them.

The new pastor and various members of the congregation set about instituting the many facets which combine to complete the image of a Methodist Church:

(a) Sunday evening Vespers to conclude the Sabbath worship.
(b) Family suppers, without which no Methodist Church can long endure!
(c) A choir of eight, under the direction of Mr. Dearing, wearing hand-me-down robes donated by Trinity-on-the-Hill Methodist Church and which they were to use for several years.
(d) Fellowship, study, worship and recreation programs for the youth, including a baseball team.
(e) Church-related activities for the very young—group games, arts, crafts, storytelling, singing.
(f) Courses for boys and girls desiring to join the Church or to learn more about the meaning of church membership.

(g) Creation of a Commission on Worship. The DISCIPLINE of The Methodist Church gave to the Local Church the option of having such a Commission. The new pastor desired the Commission for two reasons: first, as precedents and traditions are established at Aldersgate, the Worship Commission could maintain continuity through the years, which would be important as new pastors are assigned to the Church. Secondly, Reverend O'Neil wished that members of the Church become aware of the meaning of the public worship of God, not as spectators but as participants in the "most important single hour in the life of the Church." This Commission at Aldersgate, with Mrs. William E. Pierce as chairman, helped to create this awareness.

On Thursday afternoon, August 29, 1963, the first wedding was solemnised in Aldersgate. Dr. Gasper J. Trotti, Jr., and Mrs. Charlotte Heins were united in Marriage by Reverend O'Neil.

At the Quarterly Conference held on September 19, 1963, it was voted to purchase the property at 2907 Stratford Road, formerly owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Scott and family, on the following terms: $2,500.00 down for Mr. Scott's equity, and the assumption of a mortgage in the amount of $19,009.02, or a total purchase price of $21,509.02. The pastor and his family moved into the new parsonage on November 2nd, and on November 17th Open House and Consecration Service conducted by the District Superintendent, Reverend Harry Lee Smith, were held. Special music was provided by Mrs. Peter Knox III, and refreshments were served by the Parsonage Committee and other women of the Church. It was a lovely day in the early life of the Church.

On October 4, 1963, Laura June McGahee was born to Mr. and Mrs. Jack E. McGahee, charter members of the Church, and was baptized on November 24th. May God bless her always!

On the eve of Thanksgiving, November 27th, a special service was held. The pastor gave thanks for the Church throughout the world; the historian recanted the blessings and events which had transpired in the life of Aldersgate, then members in the congregation offered thanks for individual blessings which they had enjoyed during the past year. It was a warm, meaningful service which it was hoped would become a tradition at Aldersgate.

The first Christmas season in the new chapel was observed with simplicity but with much joy. The very young children acted out the
manger scene with makeshift costumes (was that a gummy sack wrapped about one of the Wise Men?) and much self-consciousness. How sweet! Surely Joseph himself was not more believable! The chancel choir, under the direction of Mr. Reeves Smith (who in later years with the encouragement of Reverend O'Neil entered the ministry and eventually became a Chaplain in the Armed Forces) gave a beautiful performance of a collection of Christmas music. A "White Christmas" candlelighting service was held, to which were brought gifts of food and clothing wrapped in white to be distributed among the less fortunate—a wonderful opportunity for sharing.

A Christmas day worship service was to come another year, but in every heart was a prayer of thanksgiving that "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

With the New Year of 1964 came many new events—not new to the Church throughout the world, but new to Aldersgate. They began on the evening of February 5th when Bishop John Owen Smith, of the North and South Georgia Conference, conducted a service of consecration of the new building. It was an event that would long remain in the hearts and minds of the congregation.

On Palm Sunday the first group of boys and girls who had finished the instruction and study course on church membership was received into the Church in a body. This is a joyful, hopeful, inspirational moment in any Church, not only to the parents concerned but to all members, since the future of the Church lies with the youth.

Aldersgate Week in May was observed with a series of stirring, inspirational and spiritually-rewarding messages brought by Dr. Charles Cochran, former Augusta District Superintendent.

Not content to remain in the fringe area of the mission field which is so important to The Methodist Church, the Women of Aldersgate, on June 1, 1964, joined the Women's Society of Christian Service, thereby pledging themselves to grow in understanding and spiritual power, to increase their knowledge of the needs in the world, and to share in the witness, service and outreach of the Church. Mrs. John R. Evans was elected president of the new Society.

A Methodist Men's organization has not flourished at Aldersgate.

In an effort to serve the people and the community better and to meet the changing needs of the congregation, Reverend O'Neil began in
the Spring to hold two Sunday morning worship services. It was a fore-
taste of things to come as Aldersgate grew in membership but not in seat-
ing capacity. Indeed, membership did grow, especially in the church school.

The first vacation church school, under the leadership of Mrs. Simon
Smith, church organist, was well organised and well attended.

The budget which had been projected for the next year contained two
exciting and far-reaching proposals:

(a) Aldersgate would enter the mission field by direct support of
a missionary, Dr. John Stroud, who was ministering to the Cherokee Indians
in North Carolina. The membership was quick to recognize the personal
satisfaction from sharing directly in the broadening of Christian horizons!

(b) Aldersgate would take the second step forward in its over-all
expansion program: the Education Annex would be built!

For some time space in the church school area had been critical.
One class was meeting in the entry hall, another in the kitchen. Family
suppers had been discontinued because the fellowship hall could no longer
accommodate the membership.

The church year ended on a note of enthusiasm and optimism.
Annual Conference came and went, with no change in the pastoral leadership of Aldersgate, for which the membership was thankful.
Reverend O'Neil's outstanding qualities as a minister and as pastor of this Church were recognized and much appreciated.

In the late Summer, Promotion Sunday in the church school was observed. In acknowledgment of the significant part that they play in the life of Aldersgate, each child and youth was recognized with a membership promotion certificate and a special gift book. The service was also in recognition of the men and women who were giving unselfishly of their time and talent in the important task of teaching in the church school.

November was a month of mission emphasis in The Methodist Church, and the Commission on Missions, with Mr. James J. Filbey as chairman, was fortunate in obtaining for Aldersgate a series of outstanding messages brought by Dr. Roy Delamotte concerning the individual responsibility of Christians in the progress of missions. The climax of the series was the appearance of Aldersgate's own missionary, Dr. Stroud, who spoke and showed slides of the Cherokee Indian Mission.

November was an important month for another reason: a Church Conference and Official Board meeting were called to consider the plans for the new building. Recognizing that a great deal of time, money, prayer and personal sacrifice in one way or another on the part of every member of the Church would be required in order to realize the far-reaching potential of Aldersgate for good in the community, but determined to make that realization, the members voiced their whole-hearted support of the Building Committee and the plans it submitted.

The die was cast! This step would culminate in a debt of more than $123,000, but with confidence in God's help and in each other, the membership never faltered.

Advent was greeted with a beautiful and meaningful booklet prepared by the pastor to guide in family worship in the home.

December was a happy, exciting, busy time. The sanctuary was
beautifully decorated; the children's program, "The Christmas Story, a Service of Gifts and Lights", was better costumed than the year before and more confidently performed, but nonetheless naive and charming. The chancel choir's contribution to the season was a beautiful program of Christmas music chosen and directed by Mrs. Catherine E. Jameson. The "White Christmas" candle-lighting service, which was now a tradition, was a sharing of gifts with the Cherokee Indians. On Christmas morning a special worship service, the first of its kind at Aldersgate, was held to celebrate and give thanks for the birth of our Lord.

Continuing its emphasis on the youth of the Church, Aldersgate sponsored a boy scout group which grew in number and enthusiasm until on December 27, 1964, it received its official charter as Boy Scout Troop 45, Mr. W. O. Granade, Scoutmaster. Cub scouts and an Explorer post would be organized within the next year.

Aldersgate members were not content simply to begin the New Year 1965. They chose the first Sunday, January 3rd, to break ground for the new education annex. It was a grey, overcast day—as could be seen in the picture which appeared in the February 7th issue of the WESLEYAN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE—but the sun was shining brightly in the hearts of the small group which gathered there as Dr. James F. Crawley, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Stewards, and others drove the spade into the ground for the second time in less than two years. The extraordinary blessings of God on this Church must have been uppermost in the minds those who participated in this ceremony.

Up to this point in time the pastor, with very little outside help, had been personally performing all of the clerical work of the Church, including correspondence, writing and publishing the Sunday Church Bulletin, and other minutiae of administration. This was, of course, in addition to preparing sermons, ordering literature, meeting with commissions and committees, answering the telephone, visiting the sick, and myriad other duties attendant to the pastorate of a lively, growing Church. It could not continue, and swift action followed that realization.

Without provision in the budget, and actually without funds in hand, Aldersgate employed Mrs. Julian Bailey as secretary. Fiscal irresponsibility? Not at all. An abiding faith and confidence in the partnership of God and self have sustained the members of this Church from the outset. The Church Secretary quickly became of inestimable value to the pastor, to commission and committee chairmen, to the Treasurer, and to the membership at large.
Aldersgate was fortunate in the Spring to have Bishop Marvin A. Franklin, of Jackson, Mississippi, past president of the Council of Bishops of The Methodist Church, and a supremely dedicated man of God, to bring its series of special inspirational services centered around Aldersgate Sunday. Reverend Norman Manning of Atlanta assisted with the music.

Attendance at the Sunday morning services had increased so gradually that in May it came as somewhat of a surprise that the choir was having to walk sideways between a row of chairs on either side of the center aisle. The pastor was holding two Sunday morning worship services, and this would continue until the main sanctuary was constructed, an event that was originally projected for ten years in the future.

Would it be that long?
THE FOURTH YEAR
1965 - 1966

The Bishop chose not to disrupt the status quo of Aldersgate, and so, following the Annual Conference, Reverend Arthur M. O’Neil, Jr. returned as pastor.

It was an especially active summer for the youth of all ages. Miss Alice Chambers was employed to direct the varied activities, which included field trips to the Cherokee Mission and Lake Junaluska as well as a mountain safari.

Reverend O’Neil, who had been District Director of Youth Work since coming to Augusta, as well as Chairman of the Youth Guidance Committee of the YMCA, organized and conducted a bus tour to Mexico of twenty-eight young people from throughout the District, plus four counsellors. It was an exciting and interesting adventure for the youth and gave them perhaps their first opportunity to share their Christian experience with those of other communities and other cultures. Once again, Aldersgate was made aware of its blessings in having a pastor whose youth, good health and zealous vitality enabled him to add this dimension to the youth program of the Church and of the community.

The Methodist Church, since John Wesley, has concerned itself with social issues of the day, whether on the local, national or international level, and Aldersgate was to continue the tradition. The Commission on Christian Social Concerns, with Mr. William G. Hatcher as its chairman, was particularly active this year.

Abhorring the criminal activities among young Americans, the Commission chose the youth as its particular area of concern, and its goal became a Code of Behavior for teenagers and their parents which would be a guideline for better relations between the two. It was also believed that this would ultimately result in better conditions in the home and consequently better relations between the young people and law enforcement officials.

Many meetings were held with representatives from civic clubs, junior and senior high school student councils, juvenile court, Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA and the Jewish Community Center. As a result of these discussions and seminars, a questionnaire was prepared and thousands of them passed out to the young people at the various schools, to be
completed by them and by their parents. A study and compilation of the answers formed the basis for the Code. Much newspaper and television publicity attended this project. The Board of Stewards repeatedly expressed wholehearted support of this commission in the attainment of its goal and commended the individual members for their zealous dedication and hard work.

On September 12, 1965, the congregation heard these words of the Reverend Harry Lee Smith, Augusta District Superintendent:

In holy reverence, and in confidence that God our Father will accept that which we do in His name, I now declare this house to be open for the worship of Almighty God. For nurture in the truth of the Holy Scriptures; for Christian teaching, fellowship and service, we reverently set apart and consecrate this building, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen

It was done! The church school building was indeed ready for "Christian teaching, fellowship and service." Thanks be to God.

Mr. Frank Calhoun came to Aldersgate in September as Director of Music, and not a moment too soon in the minds of the few dedicated souls who made up the chancel choir. It had been a difficult task during the past nine months to provide special music without a director. Mr. Calhoun set about immediately to add emphasis to worship through music.

The Methodist Church is reputed to be a "singing" church, and yet the congregation loathes to learn new hymns, preferring the tried-and-true songs of old. Mr. Calhoun changed all that! Each month he selected an unfamiliar hymn as the "hymn of the month", to be sung every Sunday for at least four weeks. What a surprise to find in the Methodist Hymnal wonderful hymns of praise which they had never sung before!

In the Fall the Music Committee began a series of Fine Arts programs, the first of which was a recital on a Sunday afternoon in November given by Mrs. Simon Smith, church organist, and Mrs. Catherine E. Jameson, guest pianist, with Miss Nancy Smith, flutist. Other concerts by visiting choirs and choral groups were planned.

The Women's Society of Christian Service, with Mrs. Grover G.
Maxwell, Jr., at its head, continued to grow in spirituality and enthusiasm if not in number. An even circle was begun, and in addition to the Society's contribution in the mission field, it contributed time and effort and goods toward making Shiloh Orphanage, a local Negro institution with very few resources, a better place in which to live. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these...."

The Commission on Missions, with Mr. Simon Smith as its chairman, took the center of the stage in January and February with a six weeks series of studies of the Book of Acts on Sunday evening following a snack supper and preceding Vespers. This was a time of outstanding enrichment and fellowship, and the many who came Sunday after Sunday were grateful for the opportunity.

The Commission on Missions served with distinction in another area. It recommended that $500.00 of its Advance Mission Special be given to Cokesbury Methodist Church of Augusta and $250.00 to Martinez Methodist Church, both of which were struggling to attain stability. In keeping with the highest traditions of Christian giving and sharing, the Official Board warmly endorsed the recommendation, remembering that Aldersgate in its first months of life received financial help from the General Board of Missions and the Conference Board of Church Extension.

Aldersgate received an invitation to attend the consecration service on January 29, 1967, of the new Cokesbury Methodist Church on Windsor Spring Road, and there was a sense of gladness and pleasure to have had a small part in this outreach of the Church.

Toward the end of March Aldersgate was fortunate to have Dr. Frank E. Morehead, District Superintendent of the Atlanta-Emory District, bring a series of spiritual enrichment services which would live long in the hearts and memories of those who heard him.

Easter morning was a very special occasion and a rewarding one for the chancel choir. It sang at the sunrise service in Westover Memorial Park in the crisp, clear early morning amid the brilliant azalea blooms and to the accompaniment of blue jays in a nearby tree. What a glorious setting to attest to the risen Lord!

In April Aldersgate was given an unusual opportunity. It was offered a lease of a piece of ground on the lake front at Clark Hill at a cost of one dollar, with the stipulation that permanent improvements would be made within five years. The Official Board was
quick to authorize the chairman to accept the offer, and so Aldersgate Recreation Area and Camp Site was born.

The Church began to wind up its loose ends at the close of the church year and to evaluate its assets. First, its membership had reached 299. Secondly, the chairman of the Official Board—Mr. James M. Johnson, Dr. James F. Crawley, Jr., and Mr. Kermit C. Cummings—had been sincere, dedicated churchmen who had devoted their total efforts to establishing Aldersgate as a force for good in the community. Third, the pastor was a man of compassion and quick response to the needs of the congregation and others in the area, particularly the youth.

Aldersgate was indeed blessed as it began its fifth year.
THE FIFTH YEAR
1966 - 1967

At the beginning of the fifth year of Aldersgate's life as a church, the following appeared in a Sunday bulletin:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ALDERSGATE

On September 9th of 1962, just four years ago, ten families meeting with Dr. Charles Cookman, Superintendent of the Augusta District, met in the Jewish Temple on Walton Way and gave birth to a new Methodist Church in Augusta, to be named ALDERSGATE METHODIST CHURCH. Since that time the Church has added over 100 new families and built two units of its permanent facilities, and become a meaningful influence in the life not only of its members but of our entire community.

A birthday is not only a milestone marking the achievements of a people, but it is also a reminder of the possibilities envisioned at birth not yet attained. Therefore, as we enter into the 5th year in the life of our Church, let us all who now belong to Aldersgate Methodist Church unite our talents, our prayers, our services and our love in being the people of God in the twentieth century...

Money to meet the needs of the Church was the first order of business of the Official Board for the new year. The projected budget called for a giving of $60,000—which was exactly five times the size of the first budget. However, the number of families in the Church had increased more than fivefold, and it was the thinking of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance that if the Aldersgate families of 1966 were imbued with the same sense of responsible stewardship as were the church families of 1963, then there would be no cause for financial worry.

On June 4, 1966, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Miss Linda Scott and Mr. Donald R. Dearing, Jr., were married, and a lovely ceremony it was in the beautifully-decorated sanctuary. This was the first formal wedding in Aldersgate and, happily, involved one of the...
sons of a dedicated church family.

The Church recognizes that young people during times of idleness and leisure are in particular need of guidance, and, therefore, each summer Aldersgate stepped up its program of planned activities for the youth of all ages. These encompassed not just the children of Methodist families, but all families in the immediate community, and the activities ranged from finger painting to baseball. The pastor had an abiding interest in the youth and gave a great amount of time and energy to their welfare and guidance.

The Commission on Education, too, through the years was outstanding in its efforts to establish the most progressive and comprehensive curriculum possible in the church school. Teachers and volunteers were urged to attend seminars and workshops. New methods and new concepts were encouraged to provide the soundest, most challenging Christian education to the child of the twentieth century. Aldersgate was fortunate in a way in not having hidebound traditions which can stifle, or at least discourage, intellectual pursuits and ambitions. The Commission was blazing a fresh new trail—time would reveal the results.

The wonderful new Methodist Hymnals, bound in red, were received in the Fall, and the "old" books were offered to members of the congregation for use in their homes. There at last remained seventy which were given to Paine College, a Methodist institution of learning in Augusta, that was rapidly expanding its enrollment and facilities. The gift was gratefully acknowledged by its president, Dr. E. Clayton Calhoun.

"Circles" for study and fellowship among church women are institutions of long standing in The Methodist Church, as in other denominations, and yet they were years in the making at Aldersgate. At last, in November of this fifth year the Women's Society of Christian Service completed its organization by establishing daytime circles to augment the one meeting at night. The Mary-Martha, Deborah and Lydia Circles were born. The Society also assumed partial responsibility for the Ethel Harpst Home, Cedartown, Georgia, by sending gifts and financial contributions.

December with its traditional events in celebration of the birth of our Lord was different from the Decembers of past years in one respect: it marked the final payment for the ground on which Aldersgate stood. Happy December 1966!
As mentioned before, The Methodist Church since the time of John Wesley has addressed itself to the world around it and the social issues of the day. In keeping with this "social concern", the Commission on Missions, with Mrs. George Mayfield as its chairman, gave leadership to a six weeks' winter mission study entitled "Affluence and Poverty: Dilemma for Christians." This was a timely, thought-provoking study and was well attended.

It might be of interest to point out that Aldersgate was one of the few Methodist churches in the area in which two major commissions—Missions and Worship—were chaired by women. This emphasized the pastor's continuing efforts toward total membership involvement in the life and affairs of the Church.

In March all Methodist churches in the North and South Georgia Conferences took part in a VENTURE IN FAITH—a series of services designed to create new enthusiasm about evangelism in the local church, and to encourage members to "respond in love and gratitude to any challenge which may come to you for special service for Christ and the church." Reverend Emmett Davis, pastor of Hinesville Methodist Church, brought the messages to Aldersgate, and surely God stood by his side! It was a wonderful week.

The chancel choir of Aldersgate has always been an integral part of the total church, not just participants in the worship service. Individual members have served in the capacity of Lay Leader, Church Treasurer, Chairman of Commissions on Missions and Worship, Chairman of Music Committee, Communion Steward, Adult and Elementary Church School teachers, and many others. Therefore, when the choir decided to buy new robes without requesting funds from the church treasury, it came as no surprise to the congregation that the feat could be accomplished. The largest portion of the needed funds was raised by means of a chicken supper sponsored, and prepared, by the choir members themselves; the needed balance came as a gracious gift from one of the parishioners.

The Aldersgate Chancel Choir was resplendent in its new robes on Easter morning!

Death came at last to Aldersgate. Colonel Robert R. Creighton, who was a member of the Official Board, a member of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance, and who served as District Steward, died on March 15, 1967, and was interred in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D. C. Reverend O'Keil accompanied the widow to Washington and conducted the service. Friends established a living memorial to
him by contributing to Aldersgate's Clark Hill Camp Site.

This first confrontation with death prompted the Commission on Worship to secure permission of the Official Board to establish a "Memorial Fund", separate and apart from the finances of the Church, to receive memorial gifts in the future. A careful record of these gifts has been, and will continue to be, preserved in another section of this Book.

In May the Music Committee presented another in its Fine Arts series: a performance by the Paine College Concert Choir under the direction of Mr. Frank M. Calhoun. The program included both clerical and secular music and was beautifully and professionally sung by the thirty-five members. Aldersgate Choir members served sandwiches, cake and tea to the performers after the concert. This was a memorable occasion inasmuch as it was the first time this Negro Methodist College Choir had been invited to sing in a white Methodist church in this area.

After five years, what of people? It might be of interest that exactly one-half, or thirteen, of the original group of twenty-six were still active, working members of the Church. Aldersgate had been particularly fortunate in having Mr. Grover C. Maxwell, Jr., as Chairman of its Commission on Stewardship and Finance. This dedicated churchman had handled all financial and budgetary matters from the very beginning, in addition to having taught church school classes year after year. He was a bulwark in the service of God through Aldersgate Methodist Church.

There have been many others who have served faithfully and conscientiously. To name them all would serve no purpose—the growth and progress of the Church attest to their efforts and to those of the minister.

As the end of the fifth year approached, the Official Board tackled the thorny problem of a budget for the new church year. There were now 361 members, representing about 125 families, and this was the budget proposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries for Local Staff</td>
<td>$16,796.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Church Operational Cost</td>
<td>$11,076.65</td>
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<td>Local Church Indebtedness</td>
<td>$21,902.04</td>
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<td>District and Conference Support</td>
<td>$2,387.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>$9,124.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$61,286.19</strong></td>
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The Board of Stewards recognized that it would take a great deal of time and sacrifice on the part of every member to attain this goal and continue to be a vital, witnessing church. However, everything worth while in life requires time or money or personal sacrifice. If it meant reaching for a star, then reach! With faith in God and in themselves, and with thanksgiving for the privilege of being a part of the wonderful growth and progress of this Church, they embarked on the second half of the decade.
THE SECOND FIVE YEARS

1967 - 1972

In the years that followed, Stewards were elected or reelected; commissions and committees changed hands, and the business of the Church moved on. Families moved away; new families took their places.

Perhaps some of the sense of excitement that stirred the early group was beginning to wane a bit, but this was inevitable as Aldersgate "settled" on its foundation and the membership roll lengthened. The TOTAL involvement of early years began to lessen somewhat into a pattern of deep involvement of the faithful and of some-time service on the part of others. There were even some "inactive" members.

Full time Kindergarten began in the Fall of 1967 and was an immediate success. There would be a continuing need in this area because of the many young adults in the Church. In the Fall of 1971 the Pre-school Education Program, to include the three and four year olds we well as the Kindergarten for the five year olds, was initiated.

The year 1968 was a banner one. The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church—"two churches that share a common historical and spiritual heritage"—were joined to become The United Methodist Church.

The local church experienced a slight upheaval by reason of the restructuring which followed the union. The Official Board became the Administrative Board, commissions gave way to Work Areas, and the Council of Ministries was created. Aldersgate was extremely fortunate in having as the first chairman of this important body Dr. Judson C. Hickey, a man of spiritual depth and superb administrative ability. In an all-day session of the Council held for the purpose of making plans for revitalizing the ministry of this Church, the following CONCEPT OF MINISTRY AT ALDERSGATE was formulated:

The objective of ALDERSGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is -- to be a studious and worshipping community — relevant to the modern age and true to the gospel of Jesus Christ — seeking to serve all people through creative involvement in service and the stewardship of life.
As always, the youth figured prominently in church activities. A group of teenagers from the Church and some other young people from the community, in company with the pastor and other adults, made a Missions-related trip to Mexico by bus. One of the high points was their visit with the people and the pastor of San Nicolas de los Garza Methodist Church in Monterrey, Mexico. Aldersgate contributed the major portion of funds necessary for the construction of this Church in an under-developed section of Monterrey.

Mr. Benjamin P. C. Kuo came to Aldersgate! With the help of Dr. Frank Chou, the Administrative Board, the pastor, the Church Secretary, the Immigration Department, the Secretary of State of Georgia, and assorted public and private officials, Mr. Kuo—born in China and presently residing in Formosa—gained entry into our country, our Church and our hearts. He was a talented choir director of long standing and was on leave from his career as teacher of Sacred Music and English at Chung Yuan Christian College in Chungli, Taiwan.

Upon arrival, he took immediate charge of the chancel choir and set about assembling an adult choir for the early service, as well as youth and children's choirs. It was an exhausting year of rehearsals and special programs and services but a very interesting, rewarding one for the choir members to have the opportunity to work with a man of different background and culture who possessed true Christian character and integrity. The members of Aldersgate will maintain a warm place in their hearts and a deep appreciation for the contribution that he made to their lives.

At the conclusion of his year at Aldersgate, through the efforts of Reverend O'Neill, Mr. Kuo gained the opportunity to attend a church school in New Orleans for credit toward the college degree which would enhance his position in his homeland. He was able to return to New Orleans a year later for further study.

ECUMENICITY was the Word of the Decade, and the six weeks' Mission study on the subject which was held at Aldersgate did not resolve all the questions about the matter. Our church families had mixed feelings about the proposals, but it was a beginning toward understanding.

A Quarterly Conference had been called on October 22, 1967, for the purpose of electing a building committee. The reason for this action, as stated by Dr. James Crawley, chairman of the committee, was: "The crowded conditions that now exist in all phases of our
Church program make it mandatory that our Church make a serious and determined effort to plan and provide the facilities needed to perform our task as a church. ... This Building Committee is charged with the responsibility of making preliminary sketches of proposed additional buildings."

The Quarterly Conference unanimously approved a Stewardship and Building Crusade and requested guidance from the upper echelon of The Church. Reverend Roy R. Finch, staff member of the Department of Finance and Field Service of our National Division of the Board of Missions, was assigned to direct our efforts and set up the needed organisational structure. Mr. Jack McGhee was chosen as Crusade Chairman.

A great many individuals worked diligently on the every-member canvas, and on April 12, 1968, the congregation was informed that $124,466.60 had been received in cash and in pledges over the next three years!

Mr. Walter Burgess, an architect from Charlotte, North Carolina, had been selected by the Building Committee, now under the guidance of the vice-chairman, Mr. David N. Barnes. Mr. Burgess spent almost a year in study and work on the plans, but by reason of poor health he was unable to finish his work. Mr. Dort Payne was engaged to complete the drawings. The plans and model were presented to the congregation on April 20, 1969, and were received favorably, although several expressed misgivings as to the contemplated $500,000 expenditure.

Inflation had attacked the national economy during the interim and building costs had spiraled. The Building Committee retrenched, cutting corners where possible, and finally arrived at the conclusion that the best course of action would be to build the educational annex first, at a cost of approximately $205,000, with the sanctuary to follow as soon as possible. The Administrative Board approved this recommendation. However, the government's battle against inflation resulted in a scarcity of mortgage money, and construction of any kind was deferred for the time being.

The Clark Hill Camp Site Committee made great strides in improving the lakeside recreation area. Much time, effort, money and pure hard work went into clearing and cleaning the land and swimming area - building a road, bathhouse, boatdock - sinking a well - and all the rest. The men and teenagers of the Church who have worked so diligently on this project are to be commended.
In May, 1969, Reverend Robert C. Bowling joined Aldersgate as Minister of Music and Education. He was a graduate of Candler School of Theology, Emory University, and came from Biloxi, Mississippi, where he was serving as associate Pastor and Minister of Music and Education at the First United Methodist Church. The congregation welcomed him and his wife, Robin, at a reception on Sunday evening, May 16th. Their first child, Bethany, was born in Augusta.

Brother Bob very quickly found his way into the hearts of the congregation, especially the young people with whom he worked so closely. His youth, vitality and good humor struck a responsive chord in the young and the young-at-heart. After plotting a course for the chancel choir, he set about organizing three children's choirs, together with a Choir Mothers' Guild—the first such accomplishment in the life of Aldersgate. Reverend Bowling not only taught the children to sing melodies, but he also gave them formal instruction in music and theory.

He spent a great amount of time with the youth, guiding and directing their plans and activities. He fostered their inclination to sing and eventually organized a group to sing as a choir once each month in the worship service.

Reverend Bowling served as soloist on many occasions, helped in the administrative work of the Church, assisted the pastor in the services of Communion and Baptism, and preached the sermon a few times. He made a significant contribution to Aldersgate in many ways, and the members were sad when he left in December, 1970, to assume the pastorate of Cumming Methodist Church in North Georgia. May God bless him in his ministry.

The year 1970 was in many respects a good one, a disturbing one and also a sad one. Two charter members—two of the original twenty-six—passed away: Mrs. Fred Scott and Mrs. Jack McGahee. Mrs. Scott had been living in Macon for several years and was no longer a member of Aldersgate, but Mrs. McGahee was an active, vital, vivacious member who will be ever present in spirit in the life of this Church and in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to call her "friend."

Our country during 1970 was in a state of unrest. The economy was unstable, and the cost of living rose steadily. This of necessity had an effect on the giving of the members to the Church. Many were unable to pledge to the operational budget at all; others were forced to decrease their contributions. In a word, Aldersgate experienced its first real financial "crisis." It was a lean year and a prayerful one.
God's help and guidance for our country and our Church were earnestly sought.

The word DRUGS reared its ugly head. Every effort possible was made through the Church School, UMYF, Work Area on Social Concerns, and others to educate the youth as to the evils, but more importantly, to the real and present danger of drugs. Every available method of getting the message across was used: films, seminars, lectures, talks by prison inmates, counselling—the assault seemed endless.

The chancel choir was honored by being selected to represent the 600 United Methodist Churches in North Georgia as participants in the mass chorus' presentation of Mendelssohn's ELIJAH on July 4th at Lake Junaluska. It was a very exciting, happy and successful camp-out weekend for them, and Aldersgate has cause to be proud of this group of dedicated servants of our Lord.

Beginning in September the Women's Society sponsored a weekly Bible Study, with particular reference to the Old Testament, taught by Mrs. Margaret Parker, a well-known and eminently qualified lecturer. More than half of the women who attended came from other churches or from the community at large. It was an informative, rewarding experience, and at the close of the session in May the "students" looked forward to resuming the study in the Fall.

During the Fall seven men of Aldersgate participated in a District-wide lay speaking program called "No Silent Pulpit." They joined lay speakers from other churches in providing a service for small rural churches that do not normally have a preaching service each Sunday. We were fortunate to have these outstanding laymen share their experiences: Messrs. Bernard Brown, Mack Chamblee, James Turner, Candler Miller, Joel Simmons, David Barnes and James Lester; also Kirk Miller, a pre-theology school student who "grew up" in Aldersgate and who attributed his decision to enter the ministry to the spiritual and personal guidance of his family and Reverend O'Neil.

The Building Committee continued to function quietly in the background and eventually arrived at its FINAL plans and drawings for the Educational and Fellowship Hall addition. Bids were received and the entire picture - plans, cost, financing - was presented to the congregation on Sunday, June 28, 1970.
During the groundbreaking service—the third one in the life of Aldersgate—on Sunday morning, July 19, 1970, these words were spoken by Mr. Dave Barnes:

"... let us trust that He will also favorably approve our godly purpose of setting apart this place in solemn manner, that upon it there may be erected a building for the worship and work of God ..."

and this statement of declaration by Reverend O'Neil:

"To the glory of God, in the presence of this congregation, I now direct that ground be broken for a new Educational, Fellowship, Administrative Wing Addition to Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Upon you as members of this congregation rest the responsibility and privilege to cause a church to rise here which shall be devoted to the honor and worship of Almighty God our Father, and to the glory of His blessed Son our Savior, Jesus Christ."

On the morning of February 28, 1971, Consecration Service was conducted by Dr. Dalma L. Hagood, District Superintendent, and by Reverend O'Neil in the new Fellowship Hall. Following the service a dinner prepared by the Women's Society was served. It was a happy, exciting day!

There was still much to be done—furnishing the new area, with particular reference to the kitchen and youth lounge, together with completing the Administrative Wing, but there was a roof over our heads, God was on our side, and we had room to grow!

During the Spring months the Women's Society worked diligently on plans for a Village Fair to be held at the end of May on the Church grounds. The purpose was to raise money—hopefully enough to finish paying the balance due on the $3,000 building pledge which the Society had made in 1968. When the nickels and dimes were counted, the grand total was found to be $727.33. Mission accomplished!

The year 1970-1971 was one of the busiest and most rewarding for the youth of Aldersgate. Under the leadership of Reverend Bowling they organized and held Youth Activities Week in the summer of 1970 at the Church, during which there were "games, fellowship, sharing groups, speakers, and a lot of fun." They held a retreat at Epworth-by-the-Sea
to plan the year's activities, to include many money-making projects. Some of the funds which they raised helped to furnish the youth lounge.

Mrs. Tison Connor was employed in the Fall of 1970 as Youth Director and worked closely with Reverend Bowling in organizing a 7th Grade UMYF in addition to the Junior High and Senior High; also in planning retreats, camp-outs and Sunday night suppers.

In the year 1971 the so-called "Jesus Movement" was widespread among the youth and young adults of the nation, and its influence began to be felt at Aldersgate. Participation in sharing groups in which the young people shared personal experiences and prayer was increased. Mrs. Connor organized a Youth Encounter Weekend wherein young people came from Florence, South Carolina, to "share their experiences in Jesus" with the youth of Aldersgate. In the words of Karen Johnson: "The two youth groups played, shared, prayed, learned, and grew through Jesus. Many of our youth had personal experiences with Jesus and many were strengthened in their spiritual beliefs."

This event was unique in the life of Aldersgate.

On May 31, 1971, the membership of Aldersgate United Methodist Church stood at 696, an increase of 643 during the eight years Reverend O'Neil was pastor. He would be reassigned at Annual Conference. On June 6th a church-wide covered-dish supper, under the direction of the Women's Society, was held in the new Fellowship Hall to honor Reverend and Mrs. O'Neil. There were warm words, special music, good food, presentation of a love offering as a gift, and more than a few tears.

It was the end of an era.

The Parsonage Committee swung into action to get the parsonage bright and shining for the new minister and his family. Our pastor was to be the Reverend Charles A. Farr, a native of Brookhaven, Georgia, and holder of AB and BD degrees from Emory University. He came to us from Royston United Methodist Church and arrived with his wife Julie and their three children on July 1st just ahead of a rainstorm. They spent the night on the floor since the parsonage is only partially furnished, and their own beds did not arrive with them!

The following Sunday, July 4th, Reverend Farr, assisted by Dr. Judson Hickey, Lay Leader, and Mr. Charles C. Royal, Jr., Chairman of the Administrative Board, conducted his first service to an overflow crowd, and it would be difficult to determine who was the more nervous:
the new pastor or his congregation!

Reverend Farr plunged immediately into the monumental task of reading files and records and reports to learn something about his new charge; of settling into an unfinished office in the unfinished administrative wing of the Church; of pleading with the telephone company to move the Church telephone from the extreme East end of the building to the extreme West, and of getting to know—at least by sight—the Aldersgate family. It was a long, hot summer!

Informal neighborhood gatherings—teas, covered-dish suppers, swimming and supper parties, to each of which a small group of the membership was invited—were arranged in order that the Farr family might meet and get acquainted with the members as soon and as easily as possible.

A special message from the pastor to the congregation which appeared in the Church Bulletin in July read in part: "These have been thrilling days for the Fives Farris. Our arrival in Augusta has been made memorable because of the many kindnesses you have shown. The parsonage is lovely and we appreciate the recent improvements by the Parsonage Committee. The pantry shower was nice and much appreciated. Your visits and warmth have made us feel right at home. I have joy in my heart as I anticipate living with you, working with you, and worshipping with you. It is a genuine honor to be your pastor. However, to acceptably serve God and this congregation, I will need your prayers and support. I will give you my best. I count on your best. Aldersgate is a GREAT church..."

At the suggestion of Reverend Farr, the Council on Ministries under the leadership of Mr. James R. Turner, initiated "Operation Feedback": a questionnaire, mailed to every family of the Church, to ascertain the direction in which the congregation desired Aldersgate to go in the coming year. The results indicated a desire on the part of the majority for a complete change of pace: retrenchment as to building expansion and Social Concerns; reduction of present indebtedness; outreach to and cultivation of members presently on the roll, and, importantly, greater emphasis on personal evangelism, spiritual growth and prayer.

In the last-mentioned area the youth led the way! Their Encounter weekend in August and their sharing and prayer groups were moving and apparently meaningful. Mr. Warren Ham became Director of Youth Activities after Mrs. Connor left, and he exercised a great moral and spiritual influence on the young people during his stay. The UMYF groups not only enjoyed their fun times, but they planned and executed various fund-
raising projects. Most importantly, they visited the patient/residents of the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home each week and were rewarded with a Certificate of Appreciation "in recognition of superior, self-sacrificing and voluntary services."

Aldersgate's full scouting program continued: Cub Pack, Boy Scout Troop, Explorer Post, Explorer Ship, and Girl Scouts, Junior Girl Scouts and Brownie Troop. Hundreds of these young people met at the Church regularly. Pack 45 Cub Scouts completed two community service projects this year: collected funds at Halloween for UNICEF, and bought, wrapped and delivered sixty Christmas gifts to patients at Talmadge Hospital.

Kindergarten which was begun in the Fall of 1967 continued to thrive. In the year just completed the Pre-School Education Program involved 32 five-year-olds in Kindergarten and 48 three and four-year-olds. The program has been successful, also, in maintaining itself financially.

In the Fall Reverend Farr initiated a monthly newsletter "to bring Aldersgate and its programs into each home." The first edition was dated October 1, 1971. It contained a calendar of the month with all activities for the period listed thereon by date and time, news items, present financial condition with relation to the annual budget, current Methodist Church events, etc. We are indebted to Mrs. Robert Sloan for the name of this publication: THE 'GATE POST.

On November 14th by an Aldersgate Church Conference Richard Kirk Miller was recommended to the District Board of Ministry and to the North Georgia Annual Conference for License to Preach, Probationary Membership in the Conference and Deacon's Orders.

Toward year's end the annual stewardship crusade was undertaken. A unified operational and building budget was projected for 1972 in the amount of $74,677.00. An "Advance Mission Special" item was omitted. Following the every-member canvass, the names of the families and youth who pledged were published in the Church Bulletin—a "first" at Aldersgate. The White Christmas of past years with gifts for others became, instead, an offering for Aldersgate only.

In an effort to keep the congregation better informed and in closer contact with the workings of the Church, a stewardship report was made in the Bulletin each week as to attendance the past Sunday and the weekly budgetary needs, amount of offering, and deficit if any.
Weekly operational needs were not always met promptly, but compassion for the unfortunate was still strong in the hearts of the Church family. A special collection for the support of the ministry of our United Methodist Children's Home at Decatur, Georgia, totaled $345.80, as opposed to $87.00 in 1970. The congregation responded to the Bishop's Appeal for Refugees from East Pakistan with gifts totaling $302.22.

It responded also to a special need of its own with funds to beautify the grounds around the new building area - $224.80 in all. Mr. Phillip R. Wahl, Sr., is Chairman of the Building & Grounds Committee at this time, and the extraordinary devotion and personal service which he has quietly rendered the Church in this capacity defy description. Aldersgate has been blessed to have this dedicated servant of the Lord.

The Women's Society has had a busy and rewarding year. Its five Circles have concentrated on spiritual growth and service to church and community. The weekly Bible Study continued. Exercise and Decoupage groups met regularly. As a fund-raising project, favorite recipes of members were compiled and a cook book published. Coupons and trading stamps were collected to assist the Ethel Harpster Methodist Children's Home, Cedartown, Georgia, in purchasing a station wagon. With the help and cooperation of Mr. Wahl, the Society provided the kitchen with cabinets and many items of equipment. It also arranged for and served as hostess at various dinners and other fellowship gatherings throughout the year, including the Spring Charge Conference of Augusta Area Churches which was held at Aldersgate.

Mrs. Joel Simmons, outgoing president, was honored with a Special Membership Pin and Certificate for her long and faithful service. A monetary contribution in her name was made by the Society to the United Methodist Board of Missions. Three "baby memberships" were also awarded.

The Administrative Board of 1971-1972 reversed a precedent set many years ago by agreeing to accept, as memorials, gifts other than money and financial contributions which would be spent in a way designated by the donor. However, both types of gifts would require approval of the newly-appointed Memorials Committee and the Board. It was also agreed to allow public acknowledgment if desired by the donor.

In keeping with the expressed desire of a majority of the congregation in "Operation Feedback" for greater emphasis on personal evangelism, spiritual growth and prayer, the Work Area on Evangelism with Mr. William B. Kuhli, Jr., as its chairman, embarked on the tremendous undertaking of a Lay Witness Mission in January. This included
weekend housing and food for a team of approximately twenty-eight laymen and laywomen from North and South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia, plus arrangements for meetings, discussions, worship services and an evening evaluation session. Mr. Milford Cheeming, of Fairfax, Alabama, was co-ordinator of the group and brought the message at both worship services. Special emphasis was on prayer, and the visiting laymen witnessed to their faith and personal experiences in Jesus Christ. It was an extraordinary demonstration of the power of God at work in the lives of men today.

Adult sharing and prayer groups which had been limping along following the success of the youth groups, were given added spiritual thrust by the blessing received in the Lay Witness Mission.

A short time thereafter—actually before the congregation could catch its collective breath—Conference-wide Missionary Week was upon us. A missionary from South America explained the program in his area, and a "lady" missionary from the Philippines met with the W.S.C.S. Attendance at both was small, which would seem to indicate a lack of interest in foreign missions at this time; however, the timing was unfortunate.

Mrs. Robert Ackerman was choir director—organist for eighteen months. Through her efforts the chancel choir maintained a high degree of proficiency, and also exhibited personal devotion by filling the choir loft Sunday after Sunday. With Mrs. Ackerman's help, Mrs. Robert Sloan, chairman, and the Music Committee with the permission of the Board improved the quality of the church music by purchasing a used Baldwin electronic organ to replace the one that had been in constant use since 1963. The cost was to be defrayed by sale of the old organ, contributions to the newly-established Organ Fund, and other means. The net obligation was $1,386.00, and a running report of the status of this obligation was carried in the Church Bulletin each week. The "new" organ has added beauty to the worship service and is a fine addition to the sanctuary.

In the Spring approximately twenty-eight of our Church family participated in a Christian Leadership Workshop held in conjunction with Trinity-on-the-Hill. This response was gratifying because of the critical need for children and youth teachers and workers. The success of the leadership training session was due in large measure to the efforts of Dr. Paul J. Brucker, Chairman of Work Area on Education, and Mrs. Charles Hardman, Children Coordinator.
This year the weekly news sheet accompanying the Church Bulletin contained short biographies of Church School teachers. It was interesting reading and enabled the congregation better to know and appreciate these unselfish volunteers.

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church was held in Atlanta April 17-29. This is the highest law-making body of our denomination. It meets every four years and is composed of twelve hundred elected delegates from the various Annual Conferences. Reverend Farr attended the session as an observer.

The proceedings and some of the pronouncements of the General Conference disturbed many Methodists, including more than a few members of Aldersgate. Our Administrative Board overwhelmingly approved a Resolution drawn for the purpose of protesting several points in the Conference pronouncements, both as to content and procedure, and Aldersgate's delegate to the North Georgia Annual Conference was directed to present the Resolution at the June meeting. The Resolution was read and received and thereby became a part of the permanent record of the Annual Conference.

In keeping with the congregation’s desire to cultivate its own members, Dr. William H. Carlton, Adult Coordinator, Mr. and Mrs. L. Dan Martin, Family Coordinators, and Mr. Dwight W. Parken, Chairman of the Clark Hill Recreation Area Committee, planned and executed many fellowship gatherings during this year, including most recently a full summer schedule of outings at our lakeside area. It has been a year of "getting to know you” and, consequently, a rewarding one.

Plans were begun back in the Spring looking toward a Tenth Anniversary Celebration during the weekend of September 9-10. All former members of Aldersgate were invited to return, and our former ministers—Reverend Bruyere, Reverend O’Neil, Reverend Bowling—were invited to attend and to participate with our pastor, Reverend Farr, in the worship services on Sunday morning. It was to be a joyous occasion.

Today we are ten years old as a community of faith in the service of our Lord. It is appropriate that we pause to reflect upon the accomplishments and the failures, the plans that succeeded and those that fell short of fruition.

We are 706 in number. Our hearts are full with thanksgiving to God for the extraordinary blessings which He has bestowed upon Aldersgate, and we pray His continued love and guidance as we face the future.

This day, September 9, 1972, marks the end of the beginning.