100 YEARS
OF
SERVICE TO GOD
Anvil Block United
Methodist Church
3895 ANVIL BLOCK ROAD
ELLENWOOD, GA. 30294
In the beginning...there was a one-room schoolhouse in a wooded area on Anvil Block Road (where the Anvil Block Community House now stands). Many of the people connected with Anvil Block Church attended this school down through the years, including Inez Sockwell (Clark), Grace Mitchell, Morris Bond, Ray Clark, and O'Delle Stanfield (Wilson).

In the Spring of 1898 preachers Blalock and Hightower from Jonesboro converted Mr. Henry Masters and started a Revival in this schoolhouse. Mr. Sammy Masters, father of Henry, was a Methodist preacher and helped start the Revival. The Reverend Samuel (Sammy) Masters preached the last sermon he ever preached at Anvil Block Church on fourth Sunday in February, 1899, at the age of 89.

There was felt to be a need for a church in this community so Anvil Block Church was organized in May, 1898. In July of that year, after "laying-by time", all the men in the community started building the church. Some of them cut the logs while others hauled them to the sawmill and on to the church site, where the carpenters were working on the building. The lumber was sawed free of charge by John Sprayberry. Will B. Hayes was the foreman of the building crew and others helping were John Humphreys, J. J. Kelly, Grace Partin, John Weaver, Mac Blackmon, Ed Hunt, Jim Clark, W. W. Clark, Bill Henry, the Rowdens, Henry Simpson, William Henry Clark, Hayden Bond, John Clark, John Boyd and W. I. Mitchell. Mr. Henry Masters gave the land on which to build the church.

The church building was finished and dedicated on the fourth Sunday in October, 1898. Carl Clark (brother of O. Ray Clark) gave the welcome at the dedication. He was just a little boy. The Rev. W. B. Costley was the preacher. He was preaching at Mt. Zion at the time and Anvil Block was put on the Mt. Zion Circuit.

Mr. Kirkes had a blacksmith shop across the road in front of the schoolhouse and there was another blacksmith shop nearby run by Billy Clark. Captain Clayton had a woodworking shop at the corner of what is now Steele Road and Anvil Block Road and there was a Post Office on the hill just beyond the church on Anvil Block Road. This Post Office was run by Mr. Henry Masters and was named Anvil Block because of the blacksmith shops, and the church took its name from the Post Office. What a fitting name for a church! The anvil block which the blacksmith uses to shape his creations and mold them into something useful is made from metal which doesn't wear out. So God's church lasts forever, shaping the lives of its believers.

Some of the charter members were Liva Pope, Fannie Weaver, Mamie Clark (Snead), Janie Partin, Maidie Weaver, Jessie Snead, Minnie Rowden, Mattie Leak Clark, Zanie Partin, John Weaver, R. M. Gilbert, Robert Partin, H. J. Snead, L. O. Kelly, W. F. Kirkes, Mary Belle Rowden, Alex Blackman, H. A. Austin, J. W. Clark, Ida Rowden, W. C. Rowden, Mrs. Will B. (Cordelia) Hayes, W. R. Simpson, J. R. McKee, William Wilson McKee, John Gilbert, Fannie Blackman (Clark), Mattie Rowden, J. C. Kelly, Anna Kelly, Mrs. W. C. Rowden, Maggie Lee and Bessie Shuttlesworth, Grady Simpson, and Donnie Clark (Baughknight). This is a partial list from old records available.

In 1900 the first Conference was held. Anvil Block was at this time a Methodist Protestant Church.
In a report to the Quarterly Conference (Charge Conferences used to be held once a quarter rather than once a year as they are now) held at Mt. Zion Church in July, 1911, the value of the church property at Anvil Block was given as $1600, and $1200 insurance was carried at a premium of $1.40. At the end of 1997, the value of the Anvil Block Church property was $596,000 and the parsonage property was $133,200.

We had always been a circuit church, being on many different circuits, until June, 1974, when we went full-time and became a station church. In 1911 we were on the Cedar Grove Circuit with Cedar Grove, Clifton, and Kelley's Chapel. In 1932 we were on the Anvil Block Circuit with Kelley's Chapel. We were also on the Riverdale Circuit at one time. In 1941 we were put on the Ellenwood Circuit with Ellenwood, Bethel, and Mt. Zion, where we remained until we went full-time in 1974. Ellenwood Church was just being built in 1941.

At the Quarterly Conference held October 4, 1913, to elect officers for the next year, the following were elected:

TRUSTEES - I. H. Simpson (Great-uncle of E. M. Bond)  
P. M. Blackmon  
W. I. Mitchell (Grandfather of Bill Mitchell)  
W. C. Rowden (Grandfather of Jack Bond)  
J. E. Boyd

CLASS LEADERS - W. C. Rowden and W. A. Sockwell (Grandfather of Donald Helms)  

HOUSEKEEPER - W. T. Stanfield (Father of O'Delle Wilson)

STEWARDS - W. C. Rowden, G. F. Chafin, A. H. Blackmon, Mrs. Parry Carroll, and Miss Ida Rowden.

Our Sunday School has always been a vital part of the ministry of our church. Even when we had worship services only once a month, our Sunday School met each Sunday. In the early 1900's Sunday School was held in the afternoon, with Mr. Ed Cowan as Superintendent. He would hold Sunday School elsewhere in the morning and then come to Anvil Block in the afternoon.

In a Quarterly Conference report dated Nov. 12, 1910, Anvil Block had 5 Sunday School teachers, 25 on roll and an average attendance of 15. In January, 1911, we had 3 Sunday School officers, 4 teachers, 40 on roll, and an average attendance of 10. During the quarter, $2.50 was raised for Sunday School supplies. The church had 89 members at the beginning of that church year. May 15, 1920, we had 4 teachers, 60 on roll and an average attendance of 50 (Quite an improvement in 10 years!). In May, 1921 we had 4 teachers, 85 on roll, and an average attendance of 65 for Sunday School. During that quarter, $10.00 was raised for Sunday School supplies. The church membership was 76. In November, 1958, we had 46 on roll in the Sunday School with an average attendance for the month of November of 41. At the end of 1987 we had 9 teachers, 76 on roll and an average attendance of 54, with 118 church members. At the end of 1997 we had 60 on roll in Sunday School, with an average attendance of 31 and 129 church members.

At the 89th session of the Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, a report from the Committee on Temperance reads: "We are thankful to say the cause of Temperance is still growing in our nation and Church, but we are sorry to say that the habit of tobacco and Coca-Cola, etc. is being indulged in by men, women, boys and girls to their hurt mentally, physically and spiritually. We recommend that all abstain from the use of the same."

At this same Conference the Committee on Sabbath Observance recommended: "That the Sabbath be strictly observed. That we, as pastors, do our very best to discourage Sabbath desecrations, such as joy riding and visiting places of amusement on the Sabbath or buying or
selling on the Sabbath Day."

We had two members to serve as Treasurer for the Georgia Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church: E. Morris Bond and O. Ray Clark. At the 105th session of the Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church held at Mt. Zion Church, Ellenwood, Ga., November 14-17, 1935, E. M. Bond, Conference Treasurer, reported $508.12 received during the Conference year; payments of $130.10 for "General Interest", $164.36 for "Annual Conference," and $.70 Government Tax, leaving a balance in the Conference Treasury at the end of the year of $212.96 (This included $50.00 for the Superannuate Fund). At this Conference E. M. Bond and Anvil Block minister, the Rev. Marcus L. Spain, were elected as delegates to represent the Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church at the General Conference held at High Point, N. C., on May 20, 1936, where plans were made for unification.

Unification came with the "Uniting Conference" of 1939 at Kansas City, which brought together The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church South, and The Methodist Protestant Church into a body known as The Methodist Church. After unification the name of Anvil Block Methodist Protestant Church was changed to Anvil Block Methodist Church.


Since unification, the following pastors have served Anvil Block:
- Glyn Boye (1960-61) Richard Wilson
- Trank E. Jenkins, Jr. (1949-52) Donald D. Cooper (1985-87)
- Thomas W. (Tom) Martin (1997- )

The District Superintendents serving Anvil Block since 1941 are:
- M. M. Maxwell (1942-43) Adolphus Dickerson (1971-74)
- P. A. Turner (1944-49) A. C. Epps (1974-77)
- Delma Haygood (1962-64) John Minter (1988-94)

Anvil Block has been in several Districts: the Griffin District, the Atlanta-Decatur-Oxford District, the Atlanta-Stockbridge District, back in the Atlanta-Decatur-Oxford District, and now back in the Griffin District. Anvil Block has hosted two Annual Conferences. We have had two ministers to enter the Armed Services - Rev. Hoyt Henderson, World War II Chaplain; and Rev. Clifford T. Weathers, who made a career of the Chaplaincy, just now retiring.
In the Annual Conference minutes for the Conference held Nov. 17-20, 1932, it was reported that the Anvil Block Circuit (composed of Anvil Block and Kelley's Chapel) paid the pastor a salary of $210.00 for the year; the church offering for the year was $40.52; the Sunday School raised $62.02; the Ladies Aid raised $3.00; and the Children's Day offering was $17.81. The two churches received a total of $143.19, spent $130.58, leaving a balance in the treasury at the end of the year of $3.61. In the year 1997, Anvil Block paid out a total of $45,715.99. In the Conference year 1932-33 the pastor's salary for the Anvil Block Circuit was $210.00. The Rev. Marcus L. Spain was pastor at this time.

In his report to the fourth Quarterly Conference in 1939, the Rev. H. C. Marx, pastor at Anvil Block, reported during the year he had preached 27 sermons, traveled 3,581 miles, made 106 visits, had expenses of $48.45 and had been paid $87.60 plus $16.00 paid him at the close of the Revival. He worked 54 hours a week in Columbus, Ga. and came on weekends to hold services at Anvil Block.

My, how things have changed during the years! Not the least of these changes have been the comforts and conveniences to the worshiping congregation.

Our church was first lighted by kerosene lamps, then gasoline lamps, a Delco lighting system, and finally, in 1940, electricity. The hooks from which these early kerosene and gasoline lamps were hung by chains so they could be raised and lowered to facilitate refueling and lighting can still be seen in the ceiling of the sanctuary. Mr. E. M. Bond relates that during Revival services one year the lights went out because someone had failed to see that they had enough fuel before the services. The preacher had another meeting with him and Mr. Sam Mitchell following the regular service and the next day Mr. Bond went to Atlanta and purchased the gasoline lamps. Undoubtedly the fuel supply was checked carefully after that. The lights presently in our sanctuary are the original electric lights which were installed in 1940. The Rev. M. L. Spain, who was pastor at the time, wired the church and the lights were purchased from Bryant Electric Company, where he worked. Ceiling fans with lights and several other lights have been added through the years.

The round hole in the ceiling just in front of the altar rail was for the stovepipe. On cold days especially, the early preachers didn't have the problem so prevalent nowadays of people sitting in the back of the church. If you didn't sit near the front near the stove you would almost freeze. The church was heated by wood and coal stoves until gas was installed. Many faithful members and their families labored to see that a fire was built in time for some degree of comfort in the cold weather. Mr. Ray Clark also tells that he and Mr. Sam Mitchell would have to go down many Saturday afternoons and build a fire, get the stovepipe red hot and spray it with dairy spray to kill the wasps to keep the congregation from being eaten by them on Sunday morning. Perhaps the wasps we are still battling today are descendents of these early occupants. Now it is merely a matter of setting out aerosol bombs and letting them do the killing.

On September 8, 1934, the Ladies Auxiliary was organized with 10 ladies present. Mrs. J. B. (Hazel) Bond was the first President. After unification the name of this organization was changed to Woman's Society of Christian Service. This was later changed to Women's Society of Christian Service and then in 1973 to United Methodist Women. The Woman's Society of Christian Service was chartered August 30, 1940, with 21 members and the first President of this group was also Mrs. J. B. (Hazel) Bond. Our ladies have been and are still very active in the life of our church. They have always been concerned with the well-being and comfort of the worshiping congregation.

Their very first recorded building project is evidence of this concern for others. August 10, 1940, Mrs. S. D. (Ruby) Mitchell, Sr., Mrs. G. W. (Grace) Rowden, Sr., and Miss Lillian Clark were appointed as a committee to have an outside toilet built at Anvil Block. The toilet (a grand two-