HISTORY OF FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

by
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Historian
First Methodist Church is replete with history that reads like romance, which probably accounts for the fact many writers have adopted it as a theme for sketches. The record is colorful, unique in some particulars, and always intriguing. Facts and figures, growth and development, are interwoven in an ongoing story, pulsing with vigorous life.

The beginning dates back more than a hundred years. As early as 1847, "local preachers were ringing" and Methodists were astir in the little railroad village. Small groups were meeting in private homes and in warehouses on Peachtree Street and Auburn Avenue and conducting services.

In 1847, Samuel Mitchell, a public spirited citizen, gave a lot of ground to Methodists, which was the triangular lot surrounded by Peachtree, Pryor, and Houston Streets, north of the Candler Building. Here was built a small log house with a chimney at each end, which was used as a school house on week days and a meeting place for church people on Sunday. Here a Union Sunday School was organized, June, 1847. James A Collins and Oswald Houston were the first superintendents, and leaders were Edwin Payne, A. H. Luckie, E. H. Johnson, and Robert W. Clark, who was made secretary and treasurer. Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists held preaching services, each denomination choosing a Sunday of no conflicts. This arrangement was used for some months and was first aid to each one in getting started in a pioneer community.

The Methodists were an up and coming group. After using the log cabin some months, they decided to build their own house of worship, the first denomination in Atlanta to take this important step. A committee was appointed to raise $700.00. Looking to the future, the committee bought land on Peachtree Street paying $150.00. The triangular plot where the Candler Building now stands and the land reaching on back down Peachtree Street and the Piedmont Hotel, where the home of Judge William Ezzard then stood, were included. The names of Reuben Cone and Ami Williams are on the deed, which was made to the following men who were members of Wesley Chapel Church and who constituted the first board of trustees: T. L. Thomas, Sam Walker, Edwin Payne, David Turman, J. A. Collins, and Stephen Terry.
A commodious frame building, adequate and outstanding for that day, but crude for this, was constructed. Five tall windows on either side and two in front gave ample light by day, and homemade tin chandeliers held the candles that "lighted up" for night services. Slabs obtained from the sawmill of Jonathan Norcross, with holes bored and pegs driven in, were used for seats. A pulpit and chair completed the furniture. A place for negro slaves was provided in the rear of the gallery. An entrance door on either side of the front presumably suggested men and women enter and seat themselves separately. The bell tower was conveniently placed at the right of the building. The bell, which has made its own captivating story through the years, was the only one in Atlanta not melted down during the Civil War. The Conference asked that it be spared for special reasons; hence, it was variously used. Not only for calling people to worship, but it called slaves from the fields, soldiers to the colors, and on occasion sounded fire and riot alarms, and the near approach of the enemy. It has continued in use more than a century. Should it ever yield to time and circumstance, it would be preserved in memory.

March 24, 1848, Wesley Chapel Church was dedicated by Bishop James Osgood Andrew and became a member of the Decatur Circuit with Rev. Anderson Ray as senior preacher and Rev. Eustace Speer as junior preacher. Rev. J. W. Yarbrough and Rev. J. W. Hinton were assistants. What a day long to be remembered! What lifting up of spirit was felt by every member! Can we not in imagination picture their earnestness and determination to make the right beginning for Methodism in a community emerging from the forest? Theirs was the zeal that would press on against all obstacles. Pioneer Methodists! Your vision was clear, your work was lasting, your essence lives on!

The twenty-two years of the history of Wesley Chapel runs parallel with a time of marked material growth of Atlanta. The latter passed through the stages of a railroad whistle stop, large town, and growing little city. The Church likewise was registering her life year following year by growing up. Members were athrob with enthusiasm for both; hence, the rollcall would show names of members identical with those of city builders.

Meanwhile, acting her part as the mother of Atlanta Methodism, Wesley Chapel, after considerable increase in membership, divided and groups pulled aside and together and founded other Methodist churches,
undeniable proof of the rapid and substantial growth of the Gate City. Among those established were: Trinity, 1853; Green B. Haygood and W. F. Peek organized a Sunday School that became the nucleus; Payne's Chapel, 1855; St. Paul's, 1868.

Wesley Chapel became a station 1850 with regular preaching services every Sunday thereafter. To be made a station within two years was somewhat unusual, but the incident indicates remarkable growth and keeping step with surroundings. The board of Trustees during these formative years included the names of Judge William Ezzard, E. R. Lawshe, B. H. Hill, Sr., Alfred H. Colquitt, Judge James Jackson, N. J. Hammond, C. W. Hunnicutt, G. W. D. Cook, and George Winship.

Ministers who were appointed and served from 1848 to 1870 were:

1848 - Anderson Ray, Sr.
     Eustace Speer, Jr.
     J. W. Yarbrough
     J. W. Hinton

1849 - J. W. Yarbrough, Sr.
     A. M. Winn, Jr.

1850 - Silas H. Cooper, Sr.
     J. R. Pierce, Jr.

1851 - C. W. Thomas

1852 - W. H. Evans

1853 - W. H. Evans

1854 - J. P. Duncan, Sr.
     J. M. Austin, Jr.

1855 - S. Anthony, Sr.
     J. Boring, Jr.

1856 - C. P. Jewett

1857 - C. W. Key

1858 - C. W. Key

1859 - J. P. Payne

1860 - J. P. Payne

1861 - W. J. Scott

1862 - W. J. Scott
Growth of the Wesley Chapel congregation is indicated in reports submitted annually. In 1858, ten years after the church was established, there were 414 white members and 199 colored. $150.00 was raised for missions. $700.00 was given to the negroes toward the building of their own house of worship and when it was completed they withdrew.

During the Civil War church activities were seriously interfered with; even the records were lost or destroyed. Some faithful members, however, were able to reproduce rolls from memory. These along with other precious things are now in the church archives.

The Annual Conference met at Wesley Chapel on three occasions, first in 1854, with Bishop Capers presiding. In 1861, The Old Georgia Conference held its sessions there. In 1866, the Georgia Conference was divided. The following year the North Georgia Conference met there in December with Bishop George Pierce in the chair.

The records of the Conference for 1867 give some details of church life at Wesley Chapel during reconstruction days. Dr. W. P. Harrison as pastor reported a membership of 400, a Sunday School of 200, a church house valued at $2,500.00 with seating capacity for 500 persons. The church paid the pastor $1,500.00 and the presiding elder $170.00. Total Conference collections equaled $69.00, and $74.50 was raised for home missions.

Sometime before Wesley Chapel had completed twenty-two years of pioneer Methodism, the congregation had outgrown its accommodations and deemed it
essential to erect a more modern building, one befitting the dignity, prestige, and influence of the Mother of Atlanta Methodism. As the church already owned the piece of ground where the Candler Building now stands, it was decided to use the site at that point. Committees were named, money was raised, details took form. March 14, 1870, E. R. Lawshe, Joseph Winship, R. F. Maddox, G. W. D. Cook, F. P. Rice, J. C. Davis, and G. C. Winship as a building committee signed the contract with W. C. Newman and J. N. Fain as contractors and W. H. Parkins as architect. September 1 of that year the corner stone was laid with appropriate ceremonies.

In reasonable time an imposing brick edifice, Gothic style of architecture, with sanctuary for seating 1,000 and ample Sunday School rooms, was erected. At the time, it was the most outstanding church building in Atlanta. Not only was the Gothic spire the tallest, it was the point of direction to the city and environs.

The erection of a pretentious house of worship so soon after the city had been laid in ruins by an invading army proved to be a task that tested to the limit the fiber of the congregation. Many sacrifices were made that the new structure might be completed. General Clement A. Evans, who was not only able on the battlefield, but in "preaching the word" as well, raised by subscription in brief time the final amount unpaid during his pastorate, 1880 - 1883.

Old Wesley Chapel became First Methodist Church, South, 1870. The next three decades make history of permanent value. Between 1870 and 1903, First Methodist takes her rightful place in an ever growing community of churches. Material progress has been notable, but spiritual has not lagged. If "activity" is a clinging characteristic of Methodists, First holds the banner high.

Following a well established practice, First by her means and forces was instrumental in founding several Methodist Churches in a ten-year period; Merrits Avenue (St. Mark) 1876; Park Street, 1882; Grace, 1883; Asbury, 1886. The church roll at this time carried more names of distinction than at any other period in all its long history. Among others were these: Governor A. H. Colquitt, Chief Justice Henry Jackson, Senator Benjamin H. Hill, Congressman N. J. Hammond, Judge Henry Cozart, Congressman Henry W. Hilliard, and the immortal Henry W. Grady. Not
only did one and all add luster to the roll, but they gave devotion to the church of their choice.

Several organizations came into existence and began their work that has continued without interruption through the years. The First Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the M. E. Church, South, was formed May 23, 1878. While the General Conference was meeting at First Church, some good women memorialized the body and the presiding bishop to allow this group to be organized. Dr. Young J. Allen, missionary from Georgia to China, was present and made an urgent plea, stressing the need for woman's help in the mission field. February, 1879, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, a Conference Auxiliary, was organized with Mrs. H. R. Colquitt as president. She was succeeded in office by Mrs. G. J. Foreacre. This body later became Woman's Missionary Society, and 1940, Woman's Society of Christian Service.

The Tuesday Afternoon Prayer and Relief Society was founded by General Clement A. Evans, 1880. Its special plan was to do social welfare work on as large a scale as possible, as abject want was widespread in the city.

The Methodist ministers of Atlanta came together in a formal way for the first time at First Methodist, where they held their weekly meetings. The minutes, so faithfully kept by secretaries for several years, reflect both large and small problems that were of prime concern to every member of the group.

The preachers that served First during this thirty-three year period were:

1870-72-73-75-77- W. P. Harrison
1871- - - - - - Arminius Wright
1874- - - - - - E. W. Spear
1878-79 - - - - H. H. Parks
1880-83 - - - - C. A. Evans
1884-85-86- - - W. F. Glenn
1887-88-89- - - H. C. Morrison
1890- - - - - - H. C. Morrison
1891- - - - - - I. S. Hopkins
1892-93-94-95- - - J. B. Robins
1896- - - - - - I. S. Hopkins
1897- - - - - - I. S. Hopkins
1898- - - - - - Walker Lewis
1899-1900 - - - - Walker Lewis
1901-1902 - - - - Charles W. Byrd
The North Georgia Conference met twice at First Church between 1870 and 1903: December, 1872, with Bishop Enoch M. Marvin presiding, and in November, 1902, with Bishop Warren A. Candler in charge.

In the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century revivals were the rule and not the exception. A member of First during that time has left a trustworthy report which states that during the pastorate of Dr. H. C. Morrison, 1887-1890, 110 members were received into the church at one time, the ingathering of a week. On another occasion about 300 were taken in at the same service. 'Twas a common occurrence for mature persons of prominence in the community to profess conversion and seek membership during the revival season.

Class leaders were first aid in the spiritual development of the church. These were local preachers and laymen of recognized piety, gifts, and graces, who exhorted members to seek a deeper Christian experience, thus preparing the way for a more effective ministry. A group was composed of older men and women, who might be considered the advance guard of church school classes today composed of more mature adults.

During this span of more than three decades, First manifested a serious interest in both home and foreign missions. Of special concern was the establishing or helping to maintain missions located in populous sections in the city, which would eventually, in some instances, become churches. Among the number were the following: North Atlanta, Marietta Street, Central Avenue, Decatur Street, Hemphill Avenue, and the Butler Street Mission for colored people. All were fruitful investments of money and services of members.

Two organizations in which the women of First were especially interested were the Ladies' Prayer and Relief Society, which did a definite and much needed work, and the Woman's Home Missionary Society, which was particularly concerned with furnishing the parsonage.

A special form of Christian service, organized in an effective way and carried on perennially, was the regular visitation of the sick and poor. As reports were made frequently, there was close touch with this important work.

During this time the custom was established of taking a collection for the needy every first Sunday. This practice persists, proving its worth.
March 23, 25, 27, 1898, a Semi-Centennial celebration was held which brought before the overflow congregations programs arranged around "What Hath God Wrought!" Emphasis was placed on the early history, marked achievements, and sketches of outstanding members, organizations, and former ministers. Dr. Walker Lewis was pastor. The celebration was notable and attracted many visitors.

Years before the eventful three decades were completed, the rapid expansion northward of the coming metropolis of the southeast forced First Church to ponder moving farther away from the noise and disturbance of the business center. Accordingly, another parcel of ground was bought some ten blocks farther out at the corner of Peachtree Street and Porter Place from Sam H. Venable, and plans were drawn for erecting a building that would suffice for several generations. Some objected to the spot selected as "being too far out in the wilderness". Bishop Candler voiced the opposition of many, but time has proved the wisdom of the choice.


Saturday, April 18, 1903, the corner stone was laid, Bishop E. R. Hendrix delivering the address. April 17, 18, 19 were set apart by the membership for farewell services in the old church which had become so beloved, also for visualizing the time when the new home would be occupied. For some months worship was maintained in a large tent in the rear; but December 1, 1903, the congregation moved into its magnificent home.

The edifice was the finest in Atlanta at that date. Constructed of Stone Mountain heart granite, the architecture follows classic lines with distinctive massive beauty. The square tower and fourteen turrets complete the design. The Sanctuary in plan follows beautiful proportions, with modified Moorish pattern oft repeated in walls and ceiling, and memorial and ornamental art windows of rare loveliness.
Other features follow closely an artistic outline.
Since its erection First has been a church of dis-
tinction in a city of many outstanding spires.

During the next thirty-seven years First con-
tinued to make a record worthy of any historian's pen.
It was a period of a vast amount of church building
by many denominations in the city and the metropoli-
tan area. The State Capital was rapidly becoming a
city of churches. First held her ground well, despite
the lure of new churches far and farther out. During
the practically four decades the Sunday School and
other organizations were working toward more definite
goals and doing indispensable work.

The Atlanta Methodist Stewards Association was
organized at First Church. This large body of up-
standing laymen, which holds meetings quarterly, is
united in purposes and outlook for Methodism in At-
lanta. Robert Lee Avery was elected the first presi-
dent. Judge L. Z. Rosser and E. Ralph Paris have al-
so served in that capacity.

First Church pioneered in following the Discipline
in creating the Junior Board of Stewards. This was a
forward move in drafting boys and young men into the
service of the Church. In 1920 Dr. J. E. Dickey named
the first members. Functioning as an official body,
the Associate Board assumed their duties during the
pastorate of Dr. S. T. Senter.

Between 1920-1930, certain properties were add-
ed to the holdings. As the Sunday School had outgrown
its attractive quarters in the rear of the Sanctuary,
the Donavan Cottage on an adjoining lot to the west
was bought to accommodate the primary and junior de-
partments. The annex on the north was constructed to
house senior adult divisions. A handsome parsonage
was purchased on Oakdale Road.

The Church Guild was organized 1905 in the Peach-
tree home of Mrs. Henry Jackson for purely social ser-
vice work. It now devotes its energies toward caring
for church properties, especially the parsonage, its
upkeep and comfort, also the dining room and kitchen
equipment of the church. The Guild has charge of the
Altar flowers perennially. Mrs. F. M. Bird is presi-
dent of the Guild.

The list of preachers serving from 1903 through
1940 include the following:
1903-1904 - C. W. Byrd
1905-1906 - C. E. Dowman
1907-1909 - J. S. French
1909- - - - S. P. Wiggins
1910-1912 - S. P. Wiggins
1913-1915 - H. M. DuBose
1916-1920 - James E. Dickey
1921-1925 - C. J. Harrell
1926-1935 - S. T. Senter
1935-1940 - E. G. Mackay

Between 1903-1940, men of prominence and influence, not only in the church but business and professional life in Atlanta, were members of the Board of Stewards; some belonged to the Board of Trustees. Giving unselfish devotion to First, they regarded her interests as a sacred trust and were ever ready to spend and be spent in her service. They have left a record of loyalty and faithfulness that merit special commendation. The list includes: R. A. Hemphill, Vaughn Nixon, H. E. W. Palmer, Preston S. Arkwright, Robert Lee Avary, Addison Maupin, Andrew Calhoun, B. J. Conyers, W. H. Ellis, T. K. Glenn, C. J. Haden, C. D. Hurt, R. Lee Miller, E. R. Kirk, Robert Strickland, Jr., W. H. Flowers, W. T. Colquitt, J. W. Clayton, E. G. Thomas, H. E. Thomas, W. A. Ward, W. C. Roger, Palmer J. Smith, Judge Garland M. Watkins, W. O. Alston.

In this long stretch of time (1903-1941) practically four decades, First broadened her record of usefulness and influence. The founding and supporting of local missions and giving financial help in the building of churches were large items in a planned program. Among missions established or aided were the Atlanta Woolen Mills, where members from First taught classes in the Sunday School and held official positions; Jefferson Street, which for many years served its purpose well; and Brooklyn, Bethany, and Central Avenue, which did a definite and consistent work. Capital Avenue, Howell Mill Road, Payne Memorial, and Hemphill Avenue Churches were aided materially in the construction of their houses of worship.

The Cuban Mission cause, personally presented by Bishop Candler, was generously supported. Wesley Community House, the Juvenile Missionary Society, and the Prayer and Relief Society were given financial assistance.
March 24, 1911, the men of the church were called together in a meeting for the purpose of getting better acquainted with each other, to cultivate fellowship, and to unite the spirit of all in a common interest in First. Its importance will not be overlooked, as it was the forerunner of the Men's Club, which was organized thirty-six years later with similar "chart and compass".

In 1917 the Board of Stewards created the Palmer Students Loan Fund to be of assistance to deserving young men attending Emory University. As the fund was available for some years, several students were aided. When there was no longer any request for help, a cash balance was wisely invested which continues to yield returns.

Over a long stretch of years First has been the beneficiary of many worthwhile gifts and bequests from members who at death wished to show tangible evidence of life-long devotion. At the discretion of the Board investments have been made which are financially profitable to the church.

Organized on a scale to take care of a tremendous undertaking, the Home Visitation Committee, composed of several hundred members within two years visited 78,000 homes and 240,000 persons, and gathered and compiled valuable data pertaining to the church situation in Atlanta.

Some significant signposts along the way were these:

1900 - Pastor's salary $2,500
   Church membership 1,276
1901 - Copies of New Testament were supplied some of the local Missions, also to Syrians, Russians, Greeks and Jews
1907 - Pastor's salary $3,000
   Paid to Wesley Memorial Enterprises $30,000

Total amount of budget for all purposes $50,000
1913 Church membership 1,000
   Enrollment in Sunday School 700
   Regular attendance 500
1914 - Practical Mission work done regularly by Sunday School teachers and members who visited city, county and Federal prisons and Fulton County Convict Camp and conducted services.

1915 - Church membership 1,300
Members Board of Stewards 40

1920 - $500.00 pledged to Howell Mill Road congregation toward the construction of their church building.

1925 - Near East Relief was substantially supported.

During more than sixty years of his connection with First Church, Robert A. Hemphill was a force in its progress, as he was engaged in various activities, held different offices, and was unsurpassed in the love and esteem of the membership. For forty-two years he was on the Board of Trustees and chairman for ten; for fifty-six years he was a member of the Board of Stewards and chairman twenty-five. He was connected with the North Georgia Conference Home for Children forty-six years and head of the Board forty-one. For four decades credit must be given him for the vigorous and powerful influence of First Methodist. As a steward he invariably sought to have the church meet every obligation, insisting it keep step with the advancing phases of life in other respects. On his retirement from the Board of Stewards, he was made Chairman Emeritus for life, the first time such an honor was bestowed within the bounds of the Southern Methodist Church.

Robert Lee Avary was the embodiment of a deep and lasting devotion to First Church for more than a half century. He always took high ground where interests were concerned. He was outspokenly ambitious First maintain supremacy in the pulpit and be unequalled in all things that would rate a church by the customary yardstick. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees some years and for more than sixty a member of the Board of Stewards. As secretary of that organization for more than fifty years, he has left a full record of proceedings that are invaluable.
The North Georgia Conference held its 63rd annual session at First Church, November, 1929. Bishop W. B. Beauchamp presided. First Church was again honored when the World Ecumenical Conference met for the first time in the United States at First, October, 1931. The deliberations lasted for a week and attracted visitors from many local churches. Dr. Wallace Rogers was secretary of the entertainment committee.

Some facts and figures that would be representative of the half period would be practically these:

- Church members: 1,350
- Sunday School enrollment: 400
- Raised for all purposes: $55,000
- Pastor's salary: $7,200

At the General Conference held in Kansas City, May, 1939, when by act of unification three branches of Methodism were united, the name "Methodist Church" was adopted. Automatically on that date the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Atlanta, Georgia, became "First Methodist Church".

CURRENT HISTORY
1941-1953

After an exceptional record of ninety-two years, which began with a mere handful of worshipers under an unpretentious roof, and in spite of vicissitudes of war, panics, and other adversities, ever holding to higher levels, First Methodist Church shifted gears and eased into a downtown church, 1941-1953. Under the pulpit leadership and direction of Dr. Pierce Harris, and capitalizing on an ideal location, where a strident rhythm dominates the air, the church began as a gesture in this new role to extend invitations through various agencies to the passing tourist, the hotel sojourner, the newcomer, and to others unaffiliated, to attend regular services. The response continues to be unprecedented. The "floating congregation" has on occasion represented twenty states.

Simultaneously running abreast, there has been a quickened stimulation in the ongoing of the church at large, in all activities and interests. Not only has attendance at both morning and evening worship been increased to an astounding figure, the additions to the church during the thirteen years are approximately 2,600.
The change has created the dire necessity for an expansion program of wide extent. Not only was more room needed in the main auditorium, but in the cramped Church School quarters as well; for several adult classes were meeting in nearby business places. None of the many essential organizations had adequate assembly places.

To take care of the situation and to solve ever-growing problems, a new Education Building was deemed essential. A group was appointed to look into the matter from all view points. Later a building committee was named, which was composed of the following members of the Board: J. Sam Hinton, Frank Carter, Charles T. Winship, F. M. Bird, E. Ralph Paris, Stephen Nelson Malone, N. Baxter Maddox, *Asa G. Candler, Jr., Rev. Pierce Harris, John M. Henson, Ernest L. Osborne, Kenneth Rice, W. H. Murray, Walter N. McDonald, *Mrs. N. Baxter Maddox, Mrs. James E. Hickey, Sr., *Robert Lee Avary, *J. Newt McEachern, *John Candler, who negotiated with architects Cooper, Bond and Cooper, and contractors A. J. Jones Construction Company.

*Deceased

In reasonable time a two-story brick building, finished with Indiana limestone, compact, combining beauty and utility, with 23,000 square feet of floor space, was erected in the rear of the main building. Completed November, 1948, it is planned and equipped to house the Church School of 1,000 members. With a modern kitchen and large dining room, organizations can be accommodated at any type of meeting. An underlying purpose is to channel through the church to an extent the recreational, social and spiritual life of the family, to enlarge the number of its interest groups for members. The building committee has stated that its aim is for the people to find in this church only the highest quality of music, sermons, physical and spiritual comfort, and a wholesome program of Christian activity that will make the church and its religion mean much to many, not only on Sunday but every day. What could be truer than - If the church is a rallying center for essential activities, does it not gradually make for itself an abiding place in one's thoughts, affections, and loyalties?

The Church School, under the stimulus of ideal surroundings, has noticeably increased in both attendance and enrollment. The work accomplished by organized classes is outstanding and ever-widening in scope. Leadership is alert and far-seeing. The
percent of teachers who hold college and University degrees is far above the average.

The new Education Building serves adequately many useful purposes. The overflow congregation finds the "second auditorium" comfortable and satisfactory. Through the public address system the worship services in the Sanctuary are followed through simultaneously. Groups, clubs, and larger organizations hold their weekly or monthly meetings there and have their part in the ongoing of church life. Among the members are: The Woman's Society of Christian Service, Mrs. W. H. Murray, president; through its long history it has kept close to highest ideals. With a budget of $2,500, services have reached to foreign fields for more than forty years, at the same time doing the duty at the door. The Men's Methodist Club, Joseph H. Pittard, president, seeks to promote fellowship among its 200 members, which will lead to an interest in each other and in turn create a united concern for the church. The Workers Council, Charles E. Sheppard, chairman, the clearing house of the Church School, is wide awake to all phases of the work, and by special reports keeps in touch with progress, attendance, and general trends in all departments. Prayer and Relief Society, Mrs. W. H. Budd, president, meets regularly for a prayer service, after which baskets are delivered to shut-ins. As the organization is endowed, no dues are necessary.

Church School classes frequently meet for dinner, after which there is a discussion of problems or a workshop demonstration. To break bread together, to labor side by side, to exchange ideas enthusiastically, tends to lower barriers and to unite the spirit of all in a worthy cause; hence, every encouragement is given to achieve the goal as quickly as possible.

For thirteen years intensive accent has been placed on youth. Unceasing efforts are made to get young adults under the protection of the church, where there is wholesome recreation, mental uplift, and spiritual guidance. Especially trained leaders are carrying through a program in a way to achieve the best objectives.

Late 1949, new church office suites, right angle halls, choir robing rooms, parlors and reception rooms, and other divisions were finished, which completes under one roof a church plant that lacks nothing for doing the work of a downtown city church,
which is unceasing, complicated and growing.

Activities in general cover a wide range of interests. For some years financial assistance has been given ministerial students and Candler School of Theology, Emory University, usually five at the same time. Contributing in a substantial way to the building of Methodist Churches in the area has been a privilege and blessing. The North Georgia Conference Home for Children is ever the object of worthwhile help and has been since the institution was established. The congregation and Church School classes take especial pride and pleasure in the annual contribution in October.

Some statistics for 1953 put these figures in the forefront:

- Church budget $86,000
- Total amount raised for all purposes by the church and all its organizations; also payment on New Educational Building $175,000
- Pastor's salary $10,000

A total of all monies raised and disbursed over the current thirteen-year period would approximately be $1,500,000

Church properties including all buildings, furniture, furnishings, equipment, land lots, are valued at $1,075,000

Coming to First Methodist December, 1940, Dr. Pierce Harris, has set in motion currents in the life of the church, which without interruption move briskly. In the pulpit or elsewhere, he is a dominant force. Sermon subjects are chosen for an arresting quality; and, in their individualistic pattern of development, there is first the psychological approach. Maintaining a conversational level, brushing various topics, sprinkling freely with memory gems, humorous anecdotes, and personal experiences, the central themes - a more self-satisfying and acceptable Christian life - is carried forward in an appealing and convincing way. A sermon, "the projection of the Gospel through a personality," is aptly illustrated by Dr. Harris.
Dr. Wallace Rogers, Associate Pastor, who possesses a mellow culture, a rounded ministerial experience, and varied abilities, fills with distinction his place in the ever-moving scene. If duty calls him into the pulpit or to the desk of the Church School classroom or to comfort the ill and distressed or to show the path to the bewildered, his indispensable services endear him to the entire church community.

As Director of Religious Education, Dr. Roger S. Guptill is successfully pointing the way in the Church School. Sensitive to the pulse beats of the organization, he has strengthened weak points, introduced changes for more effective work, filled vacancies in teaching and executive staffs, and inspired all with confidence in his leadership and a desire to reach highest goals. The Lenten School of Religion and the Vacation Bible School reflect creditable work annually.

Tied in firmly with the growth and development of First Methodist since 1941 is the conspicuous work of Rev. Harry P. Armstrong, Associate Pastor and Minister of Music. Knowing the high value of congregational singing and its outflowing influence, at the morning service he directs the singing of familiar hymns and at the evening hour the loved Gospel songs. The success of this plan is attested to by the fact thousands have been attracted to the Sanctuary and hundreds have united with the church. Rev. Armstrong has built up a choir of numerical strength and power. Following best methods in training and conducting a choir, yet avoiding mechanical finish, his success is continually obvious.

MEMBERS OF OFFICIAL BOARDS

Trustees

Charles T. Winship, Chairman
Charles E. Shepard, Secretary

-18-

Stewards
F. M. Bird, Chairman
Charles T. Winship, Vice-Chairman
John M. Henson, Vice-Chairman
W. H. Murray, Treasurer
Robert Lee Avary, Secretary


 Ministers -- 1848 - 1940

In a period of ninety-two years First Church was served by forty-six ministers who remained from one to nine years. The long list deserves more than a glance. We're dependent on tradition for sidelights on many of
that number, but can we not lean heavily? Should we take a cross section of any ten or twenty, we could say all were serious-minded, earnest in purpose, and zealous for the Kingdom. Realizing their responsibilities, they met them with courage, sound judgment, and devotion. Some were endowed with eloquence; some were profound thinkers; others could "rouse the emotions and bring a congregation to its knees in repentance"; many were both winsome in the pulpit and in making pastoral calls.

The high intellectual quality was shown when four were elevated to the Episcopacy and two to college positions. Dr. H. C. Morrison, Dr. E. M. DuBose, and Dr. J. E. Dickey were elected Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Dr. J. C. Harrell was made Bishop of the Methodist Church. Dr. I. S. Hopkins became president of Georgia School of Technology and Dr. C. E. Dowman was called to the presidency of Old Emory College at Oxford, now Emory University, Atlanta.

In more than thirty years close connection with the daily routine, first as pastor's secretary and in turn Church Secretary and Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. G. C. Seymour has held her rating—exceptional efficiency. In addition to regular duties she has had off the record tasks, which have necessitated going more than the second mile; and in doing them she has shown unfailing courtesy, unwearied patience, and warm, human sympathy. Over the years she has built up a bureau of information so helpful to the office caller and others. Mrs. Seymour's zeal for all things pertaining to First and her affection are only equaled by the church's appreciation of and love for her.

The atmosphere of First Methodist is vibrant with an onward and upward movement. The password is a challenge to join in purposes and spirit for a greater church. The best is still ahead when outreach of services will cover a wider territory, when influence and helpfulness extend beyond present dreams and hopes.

First Church is today at high tide in her long, eventful, inspirational history. The crest is the vantage point for the outlook in all directions. May there never be a recession and may a higher tide come in!!