HISTORY

of

CLARKSTON METHODIST CHURCH
A Brief History of the Clarkston Methodist Church
Clarkston, Ga.

The Clarkston Methodist Church is located in Clarkston, in DeKalb County, five miles East of Decatur. It is in the Decatur-Oxford District of the North Georgia Conference.

The Church grew out of a Brush-Arbor Meeting conducted by the Rev. W.F. Smith, Pastor of the First Methodist Church, Decatur. The earliest records of these meetings date from 1878. The near-by school building was then used as a place of worship. The actual organization of the Church took place about 1880. The Building Committee was appointed. This Committee composed of the following: W.F. Patille, I.N. Wilson, Thomas H. Fincher, and J.J. Norman secured a grant of land from the Georgia Railroad and Banking Company. The labor and materials for a building were contributed by the members of the congregation and a small one room wooden building became the first Church building in Clarkston and this was used by the Congregation until the present building was built in 1932.

There was a clause inserted in the grant of land by the Georgia Railroad and Banking Company to the effect that should any alcoholic beverages be sold on the premises the land revert to the Company.


The Church was placed on the Stone Mountain Charge in 1892. It remained on this Charge until it became a Station in 1947. The following preachers served as pastors of this Charge: W.G. Crawley, L.W. Rivers, J. Speir

There is always the beginning of a feeling of a need for a new building for a Church long before even the actual planning is ever begun. It came from the ladies of the Church. They talked among themselves about this need in the meetings of the Missionary Society. So at one of their meetings in 1926 or 1927 Mrs. J.C. Ward, President, made the first contribution of five dollars to the Building Fund. Through their untiring efforts others began to join in the drive for a New Building.

The Rev. J. Foster Young was appointed as the Pastor of the Charge in 1930. The seed had been sown and now the movement gained in strength until the Church as a whole came to feel the need. So in 1932 the Quarterly Conference approved the building program. Plans were drawn for a new Sanctuary and to preserve the sentiment that had grown up around the old building it was enclosed in the plans and made into the Educational plant. The building is of brick veneer. Classrooms and a kitchen were included in the basement of the Sanctuary. The building was completed very rapidly and the congregation moved into its new Building in 1932.

When the plans were made for the Building the Trustees of the Church secured from the Georgia Railroad a Quit Claim Deed to the property. It was made to the Trustees of the Clarkston Methodist Church, who were as follows: J.F. McLendon, Chas. M. Roper, J.C. Low, C.M. Ross, W.C. McCord, and H. Reid Hunter.

There was a small indebtedness to be paid on the new Church. This was cleared in 1935. The great moment had arrived for the Church. So on October 19, 1935, Members, present and past, and their friends were invited
to come and join together in a great Homecoming and Service of Dedication.

So the Congregation was able to see a dream realized. The Pastor, Rev. J. Foster Young, preached at the Morning Service on this Homecoming Day. In the Afternoon Bishop Warren A. Candler, retired Senior Bishop of the M.E. Church, South, preached the Dedicatory Sermon and lead in the Service of Dedication.

The Rev. Foster Young was assigned to a new work at the Conference following. The men who followed furnished the fine leadership that was needed and the Church grew steadily. The following served as Pastors until the Church became a Station in 1947: Rev. T.H. Shackleford, H.H. Dillard, E.C. Swetnam, and John D. Maxwell.

There had been for sometime the talk of and the feeling for the need of the Stone Mountain Charge to divide and each Church become full time. This feeling came to a climax during the ministry of Brother Maxwell.

There had been talk of building a Parsonage. During the year of 1946 at one of the Circle Meetings of the Woman Society of Christian Service the group was discussing this need and they gave to the Parsonage Fund its first contribution of five dollars. The idea took hold and they began to push toward their goal. It was during the second year of Brother Maxwell's Pastorate that official action was taken in regard to the division of the Charge and the building of the Parsonage. The building was begun in the Spring of 1947. The plans for an eight room block building had been approved. This was the short Conference year. The building was almost ready for occupancy when the Annual Conference met in July of 1947.

The Rev. Chas. T. Gray was assigned as the first full time Pastor of the Charge. He and his family moved into the new Parsonage in August and have lived six very happy years in this new Parsonage.

The debt on the Parsonage was paid in May of 1952.
So on May 18, 1952, the Church invited its members and friends to a Homecoming and for a Service of Dedication of the Parsonage. The Rev. John D. Maxwell was invited to come for the Service and lead us on that day in Worship and Dedication.

The funds raised to pay the debt on the Parsonage was in connection with a campaign to raise money for the building of a new Educational Building. The plans were approved for the building and permission given by the Quarterly Conference in January of 1952 for this program.

The Church was to raise at least $4,000.00 in cash before the building could be started. This goal was reached by the first of February of 1953.

The plans had been approved. The building was to be 100 feet by 37 feet. It was to contain ten classrooms, and assembly room, the rest rooms and the heating plant. The go ahead signal was given by the Board and ground was broken for the new building on March 6, 1953. Plans call for the occupancy of the building by the Annual Conference to be held in June of this year.

The following are members of the Board of Trustees: M.H. Burrow, B.M. Ross, J.F. McLendon, Chr., R.R. Gibson, T.R. Crawford.