BRIEF HISTORY OF

FAST LAKE METHODIST CHURCH

ATLANTA GEORGIA

REV. W. EARL STRICKLAND, PASTOR

1953
In the late 1800's Poplar Springs, Georgia was a thriving rural community within two miles of South Decatur. Like most rural people at that time, the inhabitants of Poplar Springs came together to worship on Sunday mornings in the local school house. This group, as best we can tell, was interdenominational, as it included both Methodist and Baptist worshippers. As far as ritual was concerned, this was no special order of service, just as there was no appointed pastor to preach. But from this group assembled to satisfy the needs of the spirit, two great churches trace their heritage, East Lake Methodist Church and Fifth Avenue Baptist Church.

According to the North Georgia Conference Journal of 1897 East End Methodist Church was organized in July of that same year with 27 charter members. At that time Dr. John W. Hight was Presiding Elder (the prototype office of District Superintendent) and he placed East End on a circuit with Kirkwood Methodist Church and East Atlanta Methodist Church. According to Mr. B. R. Mountcastle, a charter member, East End had a preaching service on the second Sunday of each month, Kirkwood having preaching services on the first and 3rd Sundays and East Atlanta on the fourth Sundays. Pastor of this charge was Rev. H. W. Joiner, who served in this capacity until the 1899 annual conference, when Rev. F. G. Hughes was appointed to the charge. Under the leadership of Rev. Hughes five new
members were added to East End bringing a total membership of 32. In 1900 Rev. C. C. Carey took the circuit and urged his people to work towards building a house of worship. At his suggestion a meeting was held at the home of Mr. J. N. Harris with Dr. W. P. Lovejoy, the District Superintendent, presiding. At this meeting a committee, whose members were: Dr. E. E. Bryan, Elaine Christian, J. E. Christian, B. R. Mountcastle, J. N. Harris, W. D. Harris and E. O. Ford, was appointed to secure a lot and to start the building proceedings.

The Atlanta Suburban Land Company donated the lot on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Gordon Street in South Decatur to the growing congregation on the condition that within twelve months the congregation build a sanctuary costing not less than $1000 on the lot. This gift came as a result of the committee's work and the cooperation of Mr. W. A. Haygood, the land company's agent. The following Quarterly Conference not only confirmed the committee's work and endorsed the contract but it delegated authority to purchase the lot adjoining the gift lot. A short while later the committee purchased this lot for $110.00.

The work on the church began. It was a twelve months race. The committee contracted with the Phoenix Planing Mill for materials and Mr. J. A. Douglass of East Atlanta to do the work. To help pay for the new building the ladies of the church used every conceivable moral method of raising money. Likewise the men did the same to meet the
weekly Saturday payday of the workmen building the church. Before the twelve months elapsed the little church was completed with a debt of only $170.00 on materials. The Church Extension Board graciously paid that.

On the second Sunday in September 1900, Bishop Warren A. Candler was present to dedicate East End Methodist Church. His sermon text for this occasion was Galatians 1: 9.

"If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."

After the dedication, Rev. Cary held protracted services, adding nineteen new members — ten by transfer and nine by profession of faith. The following year Rev. Cary added seven more members.

Immediately after the organization of the church, a Church School was organized. The first three superintendents were Dr. Link, J. N. Harris and J. E. Christian (their order not known). Those following were C. O. Smith, A. B. Colley, J. L. Scott, P. H. Evans, R. J. Kerr, C. B. Farrar, James Wooten. At present Carl Reich is General Superintendent.

Under the direction of Rev. O. C. Simmons in 1906 East End began having preaching on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Rev. W. A. Wells was procured to preach at the fourth Sunday meetings (He was not then a conference member). With the impetus of new leadership the church underwent a great revival. Rev. Wells secured
the aid of a blind man, John Hendricks, to lead the singing. The services were held outdoors as the small church could not hold the crowds that came. A wave of conversions swept the community and many members, especially young people, were taken into the church.

Several years later the church had grown so that in 1911 the sanctuary had to be enlarged to twice its original size. A few years following, another room was added to house the men's Bible Class. In 1920 the Epworth League was instrumental in having another addition erected. Two years later the church school superintendent, Mr. A. B. Colley, directed some of the members in building several side rooms. In 1925 a temporary one-room building was constructed at the rear of the church lot to house the overflow from the Junior Department and was later improved and used by the Tom Haynie Bible Class for men.

For 31 years East End remained part of a circuit. It has been on circuits at different times with Martha Brown, Kirkwood, Marvin, Ousley Chapel and others. Finally in 1928 East End was strong enough to stand alone and became a station church. Rev. M. M. Maxwell was appointed as its first full time pastor. Prior to this time East End had provided living quarters for their pastors in various ways. In 1920 the church had purchased a lot adjoining the church property in hopes that a parsonage could be built. In 1928 a beautiful six room brick parsonage was constructed to house the new full time minister. It was modern and com-
pletely furnished. Two more rooms were added in 1932, and at the time it was considered one of the best parsonages in the North Georgia Conference.

The church membership grew steadily, as did the church school. In 1933 there were fourteen church school classes and these were bulging for more space in their cramped quarters. Time went on, new rooms were added slowly—far slower than the influx of members. By 1935 the church had 543 members and the situation looked no brighter. A few more rooms were built along. In 1941, the war came and building became impossible.

In 1945 shortly after the close of the war Rev. Blake Craft was stationed at East End. Through his inspiration and the crowded conditions (the membership in 1946 was 630) the groundwork was laid for a new church to be built. A lot was selected several blocks away at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Boulevard Drive. Construction began in 1948 and the sanctuary was in use by late 1949.

When East End Methodist Church moved, it left behind its name and chose a new one. Now called "East Lake Methodist Church", it has over a thousand members, a new three story educational plant, a complete and modern sanctuary, and two pastoral assistants as well as a paid organist and sexton.

East Lake Methodist is new and modern in every respect and has a program suitable for all. The sanctuary is furnished in polished oak and has wine-colored carpet and
kneeling pads. Also the sanctuary has an amplification system for those whose hearing is defective. The church has two regular choirs, one of adults and one of young people, with a third choir being organized in the children's division. East Lake Methodist also maintains a nursery during the Church School and Morning Worship hours. In the church basement there are frequent supper meetings of various types, the latest being one on Sunday evenings for the Intermediate and Senior Methodist Youth Fellowships.

The future of East Lake Methodist Church looks bright as it continues in its purpose, ever striving to lead men to know the Master, to worship Him and to serve Him in a chaotic world where the only peace comes from knowing God.
The following pastors have served East Lake Methodist Church:

1897 Rev. H. W. Joiner
1898 Rev. H. W. Joiner
1899 Rev. F. G. Hughes
1900 Rev. C. C. Carey
1901 Rev. C. C. Carey
1902 Rev. W. H. LaPrade, Jr.
1903 Rev. W. H. LaPrade, Jr.
1904 Rev. W. R. Mackay
1905 Rev. H. W. Joiner
1906 Rev. O. C. Simmons
1907 Rev. O. C. Simmons
1908 Rev. Olin King
1909 Rev. W. E. Arnold
1910 Rev. W. E. Arnold
1911 Rev. W. E. Arnold
1912 Rev. C. L. Patillo
1913 Rev. C. L. Patillo
1914 Rev. W. H. Boring
1915 Rev. H. H. Jones
1916 Rev. H. H. Jones
1917 Rev. C. P. Marchman
1918 Rev. J. W. O. McKibben
1919 Rev. J. W. O. McKibben
1920 Rev. J. W. O. McKibben
1921 Rev. J. W. O. McKibben
1922 Rev. W. J. Culpepper
1923 Rev. W. J. Culpepper
1924 Rev. W. J. Culpepper
1925 Rev. L. B. Harrell
1926 Rev. L. B. Harrell
1927 Rev. W. T. Hamby
1928 Rev. M. M. Maxwell
1929 Rev. M. M. Maxwell
1930 Rev. M. M. Maxwell
1931 Rev. E. G. Thomason
1932 Rev. G. F. Venable
1933 Rev. G. F. Venable
1934 Rev. G. F. Venable
1935 Rev. J. H. Barton
1936 Rev. J. H. Barton
1937 Rev. J. H. Barton
1938 Rev. J. H. Barton
1939 Rev. E. M. Wise
1940 Rev. E. M. Wise
1941 Rev. N. O. L. Powell
1942 Rev. N. O. L. Powell
1943 Rev. N. O. L. Powell
1944 Rev. N. O. L. Powell
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Rev. L. B. Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Rev. L. B. Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Rev. L. B. Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Rev. L. B. Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Rev. L. B. Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Rev. W. E. Strickland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Rev. W. E. Strickland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Rev. W. F. Strickland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Rev. W. E. Strickland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>