

MEMORIES
OF
FAITH
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
514 Valley Hill Road, S. E.
Riverdale, Georgia 30274

PREPARED

BY

QUIDA AND JOE LIBER

AUGUST, 1991

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 * HISTORY OF FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH *
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 * Prepared by *
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 * Ouida and Joe Liber *
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PREFACE

July 30, 1991

For many years I have planned to write a book about the history of Faith United Methodist Church. I did not intend for the book to be just a record of dates and events. I wanted it to include enough information, pictures and other papers so that it would stir dormant memories. Thus the reader could relive the joys and sorrows of the early years and sense the struggles, failures and successes.

To this end I have been making and saving notes on bulletins and scraps of paper; collecting audio recordings, programs, and similar papers; making photographs and color slides; and building up many memories in my own mind. Naturally this book will contain many of my personal memories and ideas. I hope it also contains yours.

There is never an ideal time to begin such an undertaking and never enough time to do the work in a satisfactory manner. However, an ideal time to present such a book to our members and former members will be the Homecoming Celebration planned at Faith United Methodist Church for Sunday, August 25, 1991. Although that is less than a month away, I have decided to attempt to put together a history book or pamphlet for that occasion. This will be briefer than originally planned in order to meet that deadline and may not be as accurate as I would desire.

PLEASE, if you see obvious errors in events, dates and places, let me know so that the computer data can be corrected. Perhaps at a later date, someone else will want to update or expand this history or write their own version.

Irvin S. (Joe) Liber

THE CLERGY

When we think of the clergy we normally think of the church pastors. But Bishops and District Superintendents are included for they also have an impact on the local churches.

Bishop John Owen Smith, Bishop William R. Cannon, Bishop Joel D. McDavid and Bishop Ernest A. Fitzgerald have served since Faith was organized and in a way have influenced our church. The Bishop's Cabinet makes decisions on assignment of pastors and District Superintendents. Our pastors have had contact with them and on occasion our laity have presented their views to the presiding Bishop.

Due to redrawing of district lines our church has been in three districts; Atlanta-Southwest, Atlanta-College Park, and Griffin. The District Superintendents gave necessary leadership, helped select pastors to meet our needs, and influenced our decisions. Rev. Joseph L. Black was D. S. when it was decided to start a new church. He and the district's builders club were instrumental in providing funds for the purchase of the property and construction of our first sanctuary. Former District Superintendents were:

Rev. Joseph L. Black, Rev. William C. Bowen,
Rev. Dumas B. Shelnutt, Rev. A. C. Epps,
Rev. P. Harold Gray, and Rev. James N. Thompson.

Present District Superintendent is Rev. W. Melton McNeill.

Each pastor was different and brought his own unique skills to provide leadership in decision making, inspiration through worship messages, comfort in times of illness and death, and love at all times. Each had a distinct part in making Faith United Methodist Church what it is today.

Former Pastors:

Rev. James. M. Varner	(Founding Pastor)		
		May, 1963	- June, 1965
Rev. J. H. Allison		June, 1965	- June, 1967
Rev. Julian Thompson		June, 1967	- June, 1969
Rev. Judson (Jay) Hodges, Jr.		June, 1969	- June, 1972
Rev. Don C. Nichols	(Interim Pastor)		
		June, 1972	- August, 1972
Rev. Bernard (Bud) L. Harkey		August, 1972	- June, 1975
Rev. Ralph W. Watson		June, 1975	- June, 1979
Rev. William A. Maxey		June, 1979	- June, 1985
Rev. Aleck G. Poolos		June, 1985	- June, 1986
Rev. Curtis R. Rivers		June, 1986	- June, 1991

Present Pastor:

Rev. John Dallas		June, 1991	- Present
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WHY START A NEW CHURCH?

Why start a new church? That question has been asked a number of times. Usually the question brings up two other points. Were the founding members a splinter group from another church? Were they disgruntled members of other churches? In the case of Faith U. M. C., the answer to both of these questions is a resounding NO.

Why start a new church? Generally, this is the way a denomination grows. A new church is started with a nucleus of Christians who see a need for another church and invite others to join them in this venture of faith. Some of the new members will be new Christians, others may be members of other denominations, some may be members of other churches who have grown lax in attendance and participation, and still others may have special problems or needs that a new congregation can meet. All are important to Christ. All have need of a church and a relationship with other Christians. Of such is the household of Faith U. M. C. Population growth is also a reason for starting a new church. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Clayton County was one of the fastest growing counties in Georgia and the United States. It was recognized by church officials of the North Georgia Conference, Emory University School of Theology, and local Methodist Churches, that new churches would need to be started to meet the needs of the increasing population.

HOW DID IT START?

Three events led to the starting of a new church congregation which became Faith U. M. C. The first was a study at Emory University which identified areas where new churches were needed. One area identified was south of Forest Park and west of Morrow in the vicinity of Holiday Boulevard, Morrow Road and Old Dixie Highway. The second event was a search for suitable land by the Commission on Missions at Jones Memorial Methodist Church. The third was a community religious survey conducted by Morrow Methodist Church and the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church. The latter had the most profound effect on starting a new church for it identified Methodists in an area where a new church might be needed. These Methodists were invited to attend a meeting to discuss starting a new church.

OUR FIRST MEETING

The meeting was held in the sanctuary of Morrow Methodist Church on Sunday afternoon, Mother's Day, May 12, 1963. Rev. Joseph L. Black, District Superintendent of the Atlanta-

Southwest District, presided. After a decision was reached to start a new church, Rev. James M. Varner was appointed as pastor of the new congregation in addition to his duties as pastor of Morrow Methodist Church. The following church officers were elected: Lay Leader---Joe Liber; Stewards--- J. W. Jones, Ronald Shaw, Jim Wilson, & Jim Yancey; and Secretary---Betty Wilson.

EARLY MEETINGS AND NEWSLETTERS

The group began weekly prayer meetings in their homes with the first one being held on Friday night, May 31, 1963, in the home of J. W. and Frances Jones. Meetings included scripture readings, a devotional by the pastor (or a visitor, or one of the laity), prayers, a review of progress and a business and planning session.

Meetings were held in the homes of J. W. and Frances Jones, Joe and Ouida Liber, Paul and Mathalda Cvechko, Jim and Betty Wilson, Bill and Mable Smith, and Rev. Jim and Bettye Varner. Devotionals were given by Rev. Varner, Rev. John D. Maxwell, Paul Cvechko, J. W. Jones, Jim Wilson, and Rev. Roy Hartley. Attendance averaged about 12 and ranged from 6 to 15.

A weekly newsletter was started to keep members and prospective members apprised of our meetings, actions and progress. This later evolved into a monthly newsletter and is now called Reflections of Faith.

Listed below are some items of interest from those early newsletters:

"Jim Wilson will present historical highlights about the Beginnings of the Methodist Movement."

"Ouida Liber read from John Wesley's "Characteristics of a Methodist" and stressed each of the things of faith which the Methodist Christian believes."

"Thus, in order to be able to call this a "good Methodist gathering" and to have funds with which to SEND THE GOOD NEWS FORTH... the Pastor prompted the taking of an offering. The Secretary reported that \$5.08 was received, and will purchase stamps for sending these Minutes with an Invitation to Prospective Members."

SELECTING A NAME

The only restriction on selecting a name was that we would not duplicate the name of any Methodist church within the Atlanta-Southwest District. The matter of a name was discussed at several meetings as these portions of the newsletters record.

The Congregation is pondering and is Praying over a NAME for their new Church. In seeking GOD'S WILL in Prayer, the Group agreed to bring many names and suggestions to this next Prayer Meeting...IF one of the many names that are suggested seems to spontaneously "catch the sentiment" of the Body, IT is to be felt that the Holy Spirit is leading in its adoption...BUT, IF none seems to "stand out as 'IT'" then the Group will continue until the following Meeting.

Bro. J.W. Jones suggested that the NAME of the new Church might be "Ebenezer", saying that this had been the name of his childhood-church. Bro. Paul Cvechko suggested "Mt. Tabor", telling of his own church "back home." Bro. J.W. Jones suggested "Varner's Chapel", but the founding Minister would not hear of such an idea-- with absolute and positive sincerity. The title "Faith Methodist Church" had been used several times as an example and it was listed as a third suggested title. Mrs. Jackie Yancey suggested that the group might consider the title-- "Philadelphia Methodist Church" and the original Greek meaning of "Brotherly Love" was discussed. Other names discussed were: Good Hope, Trinity, Harmony, Concord, Aldersgate, Sincere, Faithful, Friendly, Gospel, Friendship, Hope, Lighthouse, Venture. It had been agreed beforehand, that if none of the suggested Names seemed to captivate the wishes of the whole Group, that the matter of a NAME would be postponed until the next meeting.

Irvin Liber had received a letter from Rev. Joe Black, the D.S., which included the Names of Churches in the Atlanta-S.W. District. The Group discussed the matter of getting a Name and Jackie Yancey asked if the Church could be called by the name of a Saint. Betty Wilson brought up one of the NAMES which was on the Group's List and said she liked the name - FAITH METHODIST CHURCH. Others were in agreement and when Bro. Liber put the question to a vote, it was the unanimous agreement of the Congregation that they designate themselves - ~~FAITH METHODIST CHURCH~~.

DENOMINATIONAL NAME CHANGES

Mergers of several Methodist groups on May 10, 1939 resulted in our denomination being known as "The Methodist Church". In 1968, The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the "United Methodist Church". This document attempts to use names that were appropriate at the time. Thus the new church, Faith Methodist, begun in 1963, is the same church now known as Faith United Methodist Church.

ABOUT THOSE DATES AND ANNIVERSARIES

We met on Mother's Day, May 12, 1963, and decided to organize a new church. A pastor was appointed and local church officials elected that same day. That same month we began holding prayer and business meetings. Originally we dated our start from that May 12, 1963, date. Therefore, we celebrated our first anniversary on Mother's Day in 1964 and began our charter membership drive. Our Certificate of Organization was issued on June 25, 1964, by Bishop John Owen Smith at the North Georgia Annual Conference. Local church officials later decided to use the date on the Certificate of Organization as the beginning of Faith Methodist Church, and to count anniversaries or birthdays from that date. We decided to recognize the occasion in some way every June and occasionally have a major celebration event. June 25, 1991, was our 27th anniversary or birthday.

MEETING AT THE PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Arrangements were worked out with the pastor and congregation of the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church to allow Faith to meet in one of their Sunday School classrooms on Thursday nights. This provided the consistency of having a definite place to meet. John and Evelyn Tilghman purchased a small wooden cross and stand that we set up each meeting for a worship center. This cross was later used as a wall decoration in our own first worship area and, still later, used by one of the children's Sunday School classes.

It was recognized that Faith needed a Sunday worship service. Philadelphia Presbyterian Church graciously allowed us to hold vesper services at 5:00 PM two Sundays a month. No charge was ever made for our use of their facilities.

Two items that were part of our first worship or vesper services at the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church remain part of our current worship services: laity assistance in the worship service and intercessory prayer requests. Our

founding pastor, Rev. James Varner, wanted the laity to be involved with the worship service and asked the lay leader to assist him. Rev. Varner also asked the congregation for prayer requests and these were voiced immediately preceding the prayer. Subsequent pastors have generally followed these same procedures.

With Rev. Varner's other commitments, he left the planning of the worship service to lay leader, Joe Liber, and to pianist/organist, Jim Wilson. Joe selected the call to worship, opening prayer, and responsive readings. Jim chose the songs to sing and provided other music for the services. Even though Rev. Varner, Joe and Jim worked independently, the various elements of the service usually fit together well and complimented each other.

At first, we did not have Sunday bulletins for our worship services. Pen and ink notes were used by the three worship leaders, Rev. Varner, Joe Liber and Jim Wilson, as a format for the service. Later the format was typed but only the three leaders had copies. By early 1965, regular bulletin covers (from Cokesbury) were used and the worship format printed along with the words for the Apostle's Creed, Lord's Prayer, Gloria Patri and Doxology. Details of scripture, hymn titles, etc. were entered on only the copies for the three leaders. By mid 1965, the church directory (listing Bishop, District Superintendent, Pastor, Local Preacher, and church officials) was added to the bulletin but it remained as only a format for the congregation. The bulletin cover featuring Sallman's head of Christ was used for many of our bulletins. Other bulletin covers have been used including several sketches of our sanctuary prepared by members.

THE SEARCH FOR LAND

No firm location had been selected when it was decided to start a new church but it was thought that the location might be in the vicinity of Ash Street, Morrow Road, Holiday Boulevard, and Old Dixie Highway. There were several fairly new residential areas, Holiday Hills and Young America, near there and it was expected that more new homes would be built in that vicinity.

The Atlanta-Southwest District officials helped with the land search but most of it was left up to the members of Faith. We watched newspaper ads and roadway signs and even ran an ad in the newspaper. We looked at numerous parcels on Morrow Road, Old Dixie Highway, Tara Boulevard, and Morrow Industrial Boulevard.

Most land was too expensive. Some was considered unsuitable for a church. We put some earnest money down on a site on

Morrow Industrial Boulevard but found that the property was landlocked and our option expired before we could resolve the matter. Apartment houses now occupy that site. We looked at several sites on what is now Tara Boulevard, one near the entrance to Sherwood Forest Subdivision. Another parcel near Battle Creek Road was only about 100 feet deep. Subsequent widening of that road would have taken up a good chunk of that depth.

Things began to fall in place when some of our members were at a ladies night meeting of Jones Memorial Men's Club and sat with a real estate agent, Mrs. Vivian Haynie. She knew about the Nelson property, a tract of vacant land, on Valley Hill Road, SE, that makes up most of our present site. After seeing the land, details were worked out to purchase it and the adjacent Hatfield property with a small house where the Hatfields were living. This provided us about 11 acres of land, more frontage on Valley Hill Road and a building where we could begin meeting. The Atlanta-Southwest District purchased the land for our use at a cost of about \$22,000 with Faith contributing about \$1,000.

THIS OLD HOUSE

After closing the land deal, the Hatfield family moved and our members were able to closely examine the house. The Lay Leader was unable to see the house on that occasion but received a number of phone calls that evening. The house appeared to be in worse shape than we expected and seemed unusable. Members were discouraged. Later inspection proved that the house was not as good as we first thought when we agreed to buy it nor as bad as we thought at first sight. It needed extensive repairs to make it suitable for our needs.

Members of the church worked hard to clean, remodel, and paint the old house. The house had five rooms and a bath. No one room was large enough for the worship area. So a wall between two rooms was removed to make a larger room. A raised platform was built at one end of this room for the pulpit area. The floor was sanded and varnished, and walls repainted. A space heater was purchased for heating. When remodeling was complete we used the large room for worship and the adult Sunday School classroom, the nursery and a children's Sunday School class used the other two large rooms and the youth class met in the small kitchen. Although the building was crude by many standards, the members were very proud of it and elated over having our own site and building for our use.

One of the members decided that our building had to have a cross on it so he built one of wood, painted it white, and hung it above the porch. That cross was saved when the

building was demolished. Later that cross was repainted red and used in Pat Hussey's Sunday School classroom.

Later, foundation and roof repairs had to be made but the building served as our only meeting place for over a year and continued as Sunday School space for another three years. After completion of our educational building in 1973, the old house was no longer needed and was deconsecrated and demolished.

WE MOVE TO OUR NEW SITE

In the Spring of 1966, all was ready and on April 12, 1966, we held our first services in the old house at the new location. There were 17 persons at Sunday School and 31 for the morning worship service. From that time on, all church meetings except a few social events and retreats were held at this location. We did not have a piano and a borrowed chord organ was our only musical instrument.

The building had many shortcomings. There was no air-conditioning and only a small fan to help circulate the air. Hand-held paper fans were obtained from a local funeral home and used by individuals to keep cool. In the wintertime, the floor was so cold that ladies brought rugs or bath mats and wrapped their feet in them. An elusive leak in the roof let rain water drip from the ceiling light in the nursery classroom. The floor in the kitchen gave way and had to be rebraced and partially replaced.

A TENT REVIVAL

Our first revival was held in October, 1966. It was decided to have an old fashioned tent revival because there was not enough room in the church building. We rented tent, chairs, and a platform. We borrowed Donna Liber's piano. Rev. Robert Ozment, pastor of First Methodist Church in Atlanta, agreed to be the revival preacher; and Rev. George Holden was the song leader.

We had good crowds including persons living in the area and visitors from neighboring churches. We had great singing and preaching and great fellowship. One person, Ellen Florence, joined Faith as a result of the revival. Later her husband, Bill, and several of her neighbors joined.

It rained one night and church members had to get shovels and ditch around the outside of the tent to keep the water from pouring into the tent and around the congregation's feet.

Before the last night, church leaders had met to discuss how much we should pay Dr. Ozment. No arrangements had been made ahead of time. We couldn't afford much but wanted to show our appreciation and did come up with a monetary gift for both the evangelist and song leader. Just before the last meeting started, Rev. Ozment handed our Lay Leader a check for \$1,000.00 to be used towards a new building. New car sticker shock is mild compared to the Lay Leader's and the members' shock at receiving this gift. This in essence was the beginning of a fund for our first new building, our sanctuary.

A WEDDING TAKES PLACE

One of the young ladies in the church, Diane Gordon, became engaged and wanted her wedding in the old house that was now our church. A massive effort took place to clean up the building and grounds for the occasion. No church can match the radiance of a bride on her wedding day but Faith Methodist Church looked nice and was attractively decorated for the marriage of Diane Gordon and Randy Rogers. More than 70 persons attended the wedding. Too many for all to get into the church so some stood outside on the porch near the open door. A reception was held in the community room at a bank in Forest Park.

THE FIRST SANCTUARY

The District and Conference had promised us a little money to be used for our first permanent building. We hired William Haynie as our contractor/builder. Although we discussed plans, we did not have any blueprints or drawings. When we asked Mr. Haynie what the building would be like, he usually said something like, "It will be just what a little frame church should be." In the building process, Rev. Julian Thompson realized that we had provided for a small porch, but no vestibule. We agreed to eliminate the porch and use that area for the vestibule. We used a licensed electrician for the electrical work and a church friend, J. W. Jones, and our members helped run the conduit and cables and installed the lighting fixtures.

The sanctuary was completed in December, 1967. The first event held in the new sanctuary was the children's Christmas Program and Party on December 21, 1967. The congregation had decided to help some needy families and some of these children were present. The first worship service in the new sanctuary was held on December 24, 1967.

The sanctuary was dedicated to God in a special service on Sunday, May 12, 1968, exactly 5 years after the decision to start a new church.

PARSONAGE

At first we had no need or funds for a parsonage. Rev. James M. Varner, was housed in the parsonage of the Morrow church since that was his primary assignment. Rev. Herman Allison lived in a home provided for a retired minister and Rev. Julian Thompson had his own home. Eventually it became evident that a parsonage was needed. On May 25, 1970, a brick and frame house at 754 Huntingdon Drive, in Sherwood Forest subdivision was purchased for the parsonage. The district provided funds for a sizable down payment and Faith borrowed the rest and made monthly payments until the loan was paid off in 1990.

EDUCATIONAL BUILDING

Almost from the start it was known that we needed a Sunday School or Educational Building. This came to a reality in 1972 and 1973. The Building Committee, chaired by Betty Wilson, held many meetings to discuss what was needed, type of construction, and financial plans. Somewhere in the discussion phase, it was decided to place the Educational Building near the center of our property and move the sanctuary to a spot next to the new building. Betty drew up a floor plan, a cost estimate was prepared, and \$25,000 borrowed for construction. On June 24, 1972, the ground-breaking ceremony was held and construction begun. The contractor, William Haynie, did the main portion of the building, that is, foundation, floor, concrete block walls, roof structure and roof. Separate contractors were hired to do the electrical work, plumbing and heating. Church members put up the inside wooden walls for the classrooms, hung the inside fluorescent lighting fixtures, installed the ceiling grids and panels, put in the ceiling insulation, and did many other jobs to complete the building. Gene Hussey, Chairman of Trustees, was the mastermind behind much of this work. The building loan has been repaid.

By action of the Administrative Board, the building was named "Liber Hall" in honor of Ouida and Joe Liber. The cornerstone was laid and the building was consecrated to the Glory of God in a special service on Sunday, April 11, 1973.

THE BIG SNOWSTORM

Every effort was made to complete the educational building in time for a Sub-district meeting of the Youth Fellowship at our church on Sunday, January 8, 1973. All was in readiness that Sunday but the heating. The heating contractor worked Sunday afternoon and got the heaters operating. But the weather did not cooperate.

In the afternoon, a snow storm began and the forecast was that the weather would get worse. It was finally decided to cancel the evening's program. Many of our own members were already at the church at that time completing last minute preparations for the dramatic program. On the way home, Joe and Ouida Liber stopped to buy gasoline at the service station on Old Dixie Highway near the I-75 interchange. They noticed many police cars at the entrance ramp to I-75 and found out that the snow storm had moved up from the South and that I-75 was blocked from this point south. Many motorists were stranded. Motels and camping grounds were full. After arriving home and a few telephone calls to other members, it was decided to open up the new educational building to stranded motorists. While some of our church folks made sandwiches and other snacks, others kept the building open, and a shuffling process began, finding stranded motorists at filling stations along Tara Boulevard and leading them to the church. One family parked their motor home in the parking lot and plugged into the electricity inside the building. A group of students enroute to Florida had bedrolls and slept in some of the rooms. Others sat up all night talking.

STARTING CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Sunday School, Morning Worship and weekly Prayer Meetings: We started these activities when we moved to our site on April 12, 1966. Attendance ranged from 9 to 40 the remainder of that year with an average of 18. At the same time, attendance at the morning worship service ranged from 8 to 44 with an average of 19. The highest attendance occurred the weekend of the tent revival. Prayer meetings attendance ranged from 6 to 14 with an average of 7.

United Methodist Women: In May, 1965, the women of the church organized a study group and began meeting in their homes. On November 5, 1967, these women organized a unit of the Women's Society of Christian Service with 7 members. This group is now called United Methodist Women and is active in mission work. They sponsor flea markets and bake sales to finance their projects.

United Methodist Men of Faith: Jones Memorial's Men's Club invited the Faith men to join them for their meetings. This we did for several years. On February 19, 1971, twelve men of the church met and organized the United Methodist Men's Club. The name was later changed to Men of Faith. The Atlanta-Southwest District and its successor, the Atlanta-College Park District held an annual Men's Rally with outstanding inspirational speakers. Attendance awards were presented and Faith won many of them for having the highest percentage of church membership at the rally. At first a rotating trophy was used and when all the space for listing

the winning church was filled up, Faith, having won the trophy most often, kept it. It often sits on top of the coke machine. At other times, plaques were awarded and those we won are displayed in the hallway of Liber Hall near the kitchen.

Youth Fellowship: The United Methodist Youth Fellowship was formed in the summer of 1971. Our youth have been active in local, district and conference activities and are a vital part of Faith. In addition to their Sunday evening meetings they have participated in many activities of the church. At retreats they took part in worship events that impressed the adults. They have held their own fund raising events and contributed generously to church projects. One example of this is their paying for the materials used for the covered walkway connecting the Sanctuary and Liber Hall. They have held slave sales, auctions, car washes and other fund raising events. One of the most popular is the Halloween Fun Trail. It was started, not so much as a fund raiser, but as a project to provide Halloween fun for younger children who would be too frightened if they attended haunted houses and other such activities that are keyed to teenagers and young adults.

United Methodist Children's Fellowship: In recent years a Children's Fellowship group, under the direction of Janice Christopher and Linda Pollok has been active. In addition to the Sunday evening programs, field trips and social outings are held.

Children and Youth Choirs: At various times during our history we have had children and youth choirs. Recently Rev. Angela Gilreath-Rivers had great success in restarting the children's choir, teaching them the fundamentals of music and worship, helping them with keyboards and other musical instruments, and presenting music for our entertainment and worship.

OUR TENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Our tenth birthday celebration was our first elaborate one. It was held on Sunday, June 23, 1974. I do not recall who planned it. I do recall the surprise, joy and beauty of the occasion.

The sanctuary was gaily decorated for a birthday celebration. A large "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" banner was on the front wall. Red and white crepe paper streamers and colorful balloons hung from the ceiling. The offering plates were replaced with two boxes wrapped in white paper and red ribbons to look like birthday presents.

Rev. Bud Harkey was our pastor and was assisted that day by Stiles Cobb. Many of our members were involved in the celebration. Sam Vining was the organist and Grace Jones was the acolyte. Joe Liber welcomed the congregation, Herb Williams read the scripture, and Linda Hearn gave the morning prayer. Oreta Hinamon told the children's story. Melinda Cobb, Cindy Helms, and Debbie Hearn provided special music.

Eight large banners had been made depicting Christian themes; two for each of the four liturgical colors (white, red, purple and green). Later these banners were used in the sanctuary by hanging the two with the current seasonal color on the front wall of the sanctuary and remaining ones on the side walls.

SANCTUARY REMODELING

In 1982 it was decided to expand the sanctuary. Worship services were moved to Liber Hall while the work was accomplished. Members and friends donated approximately \$30,000 to expand, remodel and refurbish the sanctuary. Sara Williams was one of the driving forces behind the financial and memorial effort. Many items were donated in memory or honor of loved ones. Gene Hussey, Chairman of the Trustees, and Bill Millican our "resident contractor" were in charge of the construction phase. The expansion provided additional congregational seating and more space for the altar area, piano, organ and choir. New pews and other furniture, carpeting and stained glass windows were added. Work was completed and the worship service returned to the sanctuary in October, 1982. The beauty of the sanctuary makes an excellent setting for worship services.

WE TELL THE BIBLE STORIES IN MANY WAYS

Of course, the biblical stories and gospel message are told in Sunday School classes and in the worship services. Lesson plans and sermons repeat old stories and bring us new ideas about biblical characters and teachings. Sometimes new insights are gained by special presentations.

Children's Christmas Programs held annually since 1967 have included a dramatic presentation by skits or tabloids and narration to tell the Christmas story and its meaning.

Esther - A drama: Oreta Hinamon, a member of our Youth Fellowship, wrote a play based on the biblical book of ESTHER. Our Youth Fellowship decided to present this play for the Sub-district Fellowship which was to meet at Faith in January, 1973. An unusual snow storm prevented the program

from being presented on the scheduled date. It was presented later at Faith and also presented for the evening worship service at the Morrow United Methodist Church.

Puppet Shows: Betty Wilson's Sunday School class staged a puppet show to tell the biblical account of Pentecost and a story about John Wesley. This show was presented as part of the evening worship service. The class used a big cardboard box to make a puppet theater and the program was staged in the fellowship room of Liber Hall. Later, Pat Hussey's class made a wooden frame for a puppet theater and put on a show. Sara Harkey and Janice Christopher also actively worked with creation of puppets and puppet shows.

Radio News Report: One pastor had Tommy Helms and Joe Liber stage a Pentecost scene in the vestibule as a radio news broadcast. After a brief time of confusion, "Peter" used scripture ideas from Acts to explain to the news reporter what was happening. The pastor used that scene as a basis for his sermon.

Music: has often been used to tell the special stories of Easter and Christmas. Our musical directors, Larry Martin, Dan Doeden, and Kay Ariel, have worked with the adult choirs to present some of the most beautiful cantatas. Selections from these cantatas have been used as special music for our worship services.

Mock Trial: Gene Hussey and the Genesis Sunday School class came up with the idea of presenting a mock trial along the idea of "If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" The script was written by the members of the Genesis class. Experts in the legal profession, Judge Stephen Boswell, District Attorney Robert Keller, and Attorney Crandle Bray, took the major parts in the "trial". The performance was staged in the Sanctuary and was well received by the large audience.

Living Last Supper: Dan Doeden returned from his military tour of duty in Germany with an idea for a Holy Week program, "The Living Last Supper". This program featured Jesus and his 12 disciples at the Last Supper. A narrator explains events leading up to the event. Each of the disciples told about their meeting Jesus and how it had affected their lives. Jesus serves communion to his disciples and then communion is served to the congregation. The program was presented several years. Sara Williams and Pat Hussey served as narrators and Kay Ariel and Dan Doeden presented special music.

Tape Ministry: For awhile we had a tape ministry with audio tapes being made of the Sunday morning worship services. Copies were made on Monday and the tapes mailed or delivered in person to shut-in. One couple said that they listened to

the tape the day they received it, then played it again at 11:00 AM on Sunday so they worshipped with a tape at the same time our worship service was being held. One pastor used the tapes so a relative could make a typewritten copy of his sermons. Barbara Peacock made and sold craft items to help pay for the tape ministry program.

REMEMBERING OTHER EVENTS

Bazaar at Greenbriar: The ladies made Christmas items and decorations and sold them at Greenbriar Shopping Mall.

Spaghetti Dinners: Starting in 1973 our United Methodist Men have held a Spaghetti Dinner each fall as one of their money raising projects. At first a group of men cooked the spaghetti sauce ahead of time. Then Lyn Craig took over this task. Linda Doeden prepared it one year, Ilene Yancey did it several years and one year some of the men prepared it. The recipe has now been standardized and provides a tasty meal. Sam Vining often donated the spaghetti and other donations have helped this be a good fund raiser for the Men of Faith projects. The United Methodist Women bake and sell desserts at the Spaghetti Dinner and this provides funds for some of their projects. The 1991 Spaghetti Dinner set for September 28th is the 19th annual event.

Fall Festivals and Craft Shows: For several years a Fall Festival was held in conjunction with the Spaghetti Dinner. Various group within the church and organizations outside the church were invited to put up booths, tables, displays, games and entertainment. One of the most colorful of these festivals was the one Pat Hussey chaired in 1976, our country's Bicentennial. Some of the displays like the one selling Bicentennial tags was colorful and many of the girls and ladies were dressed in colonial dresses.

Some of the booths and tables over the years included jewelry, Christ Time watches and clocks, cake walks, games of skill, Christmas decorations and gifts, and various arts and craft items. One year the festival was limited to arts and craft items. Another year most all of the activities were sponsored by our church members or church organizations and their income was over \$1,000. It has become increasingly difficult to find someone to spearhead the Fall Festival and to find booth entrants, so this event has fallen by the wayside.

The Birthday Calendar: It is almost impossible to keep up with birthdays. We tried putting them in the church newsletter each month but didn't always have room. And almost always, someone's name was omitted. We started a Birthday Calendar or Birthday Bulletin Board in Liber Hall

and this has proven to be an attention-getter. Rose Saxon started it, then Janice Christopher took it over, and now Stacey Mattox is doing it. Each month, a poster or display is made showing who is having a birthday that month and the date. Some of the ideas used include names and dates on hearts for February, or on shamrocks for March, and special decorations such as flags for July and Independence Day.

Church-wide Birthday Celebration: The congregation of Faith United Methodist Church, Riverdale, celebrated all birthdays at a gigantic birthday party on January 24, 1988. Chip and Donna Nettleton, adult and family coordinators, were in charge of party plans and arrangements.

The fellowship hall was gaily decorated with a balloon tied to each chair, wall decorations, streamers and "Happy Birthday" banners. Party hats and noise makers were given to all persons as they arrived.

Twelve tables were set up, one for each month of the year, with a cake and table decorations appropriate for that month and its season. All persons having birthdays in a given month sat at the same table. A sandwich and salad supper was provided. Rev. Curtis Rivers gave a devotional about living in the presence of Christ, the light of the world.

After entertainment, candles on all the cakes were lit, the room lights turned off, and everyone sang Happy Birthday. Then the cakes were cut and ice cream served. It was a grand evening of fun and fellowship.

Choir Dinner Theaters: Many fund raisers have been used over the years. Some of the most entertaining have been the Adult Choir's Dinner Theater programs held in our fellowship hall. The first one was held on August 26, 1989, and featured music from 50 years of Broadway plays and musicals. Our music director, Kay Ariel, was in charge of the musical portion of the program and Pat Hussey and others in charge of the meal. In addition to singing, choir members served the meal.

The program opened with a fanfare and the choir coming into the room from the hallway as they sang Lullaby of Broadway. The singers roamed about the entire room as they sang. Some numbers were performed on the stage, others in front of the stage, and others as singers mingled with the diners.

The 1991 Dinner Theater on May 18, 1991, featured music from the 1950's.

OTHER THINGS YOU MAY REMEMBER

Some of you worked hard to plan and carry out special events for the church. Many of you served in leadership positions

or on committees or performed many tasks. Others of us may have been only on the receiving end, enjoying the music, the preaching, the dramas, the entertainment, the decorations, and the food. Do you recall these:

The many years that Herb Williams served as liturgist and as Chairman of the Administrative Council with his excellent ideas, leadership and soapbox.

Musical Programs by:

The Candler Choraliers

The youth groups traveling through Georgia

Don Wilson's guitar playing and singing

The cantatas by our own choirs

Rev. Bud Harkey singing "The Woman at the Well"

The many special solos by our own members

Jim Wilson singing "The Lord's Prayer"

Barbara Peacock singing "He Touched Me"

Dan Doeden's "Little Altar Boy"

Scott Benson's "I Believe"

The beautiful music of the Ariels as a family, as groups and as individuals

Instrumental music by Jim Wilson, Sam vining, Linda Doeden, Kay Ariel and Judy Blake

The musical program Claude and Paula Herbert arranged by the Children for Christ Choir from Shoal Creek Baptist Church. They swayed with the music and set our hands clapping and our hearts rejoicing.

The human Christmas trees (Diane Gordon and J. W. Jones) at our first Christmas party at the mobile home park.

Stan Hearn receiving his Eagle Scout Award, our first member to earn this rank.

When our church was used as a staging area for Operation Christmas and the distribution of food, clothing, toys and other items to needy families in Clayton County.

The many dramatic programs that were staged in Liber Hall with scenery designed and constructed by Cindy Helms, Linda Pollok and others.

Our "cold turkey" visitation programs and distributing circulars in neighborhoods near the church.

The parties we held for special occasions such as Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and Christmas. The many horrible and odd characters that show up in October.

The hard work and planning by Janice Christopher and Chip Nettleton to present our summer programs of Enchanting Tuesdays for the children and Wonderful Wednesdays for the youth.

The good record keeping of Sara Willliams during the many years she served as our financial secretary.

The Children's bulletins prepared by Janice Christopher and Deborah Reagin.

The many revivals, retreats and special spiritual programs especially the healing messages of Rev. Barbara Brokoff.

Liber Hall overrun on Monday nights with children and youth as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cubs and Brownies use our facilities.

The Womanless Weddings The Singing Midgets The Lip Sync show The annual visit by Santa Claus The luminaries lighting our driveway on Christmas Eve The Christmas star atop Liber Hall the Easter Egg Hunts.

The Poinsettias and Lilies that have adorned our sanctuary at Christmas and Easter times.

The many ways we have received communion, including the time in Liber Hall when we took communion 12 persons at a time at a long table, reminiscent of the time of the Last Supper with Jesus and his 12 disciples. And the time in the sanctuary when we all stood and formed a cross with the top in the altar area, the cross arms in front of the altar rail, and the rest extending down the aisle into the vestibule.

Jim Wilson carefully watching over our finances and expenditures and maintaining excellent treasurer's records.

Churchwide workdays with the men, women and youth of our church wielding brooms, mops, paint brushes, hammers, saws, trowels, and other tools to lay sidewalks and repair, clean and paint furnishings, equipment and buildings.

Special Holy Week services for Maundy Thursday, the Seder meal, the Tenebrae or Service of Shadows, and our own Easter Sunrise services.

Too many nice and interesting things have happened to include them all in this booklet. It is hoped that those that were included will stir your memories and help you recall other happy times.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT

In addition to financial support by the District and North Georgia Conference, Jones Memorial, Morrow, and Jonesboro Methodist Churches provided financial support to Faith during our early years. Lighting fixtures, folding chairs, pews,

song books, hymnals and other items were donated by friends, Sunday School classes and other churches. To all who contributed in any way, we are eternally grateful.

IT TOOK EVERYONE

The Bible indicates that "unless the Lord build the house, they that build it labor in vain." At times, we may have felt like we were trying to do it all alone. One member expressed the thought that the district probably hoped we would dry up and blow away. The progress made over the years, the ministry to those in need, and the prospects for the future all indicate that indeed the Lord has had a hand in building Faith United Methodist Church. We hope and pray that is true and that the Lord will continue to lead us in service to Him and His kingdom.

Many friends have helped build Faith but the primary workers have been those that have been members of Faith and the congregation of Faith supporting the church with their leadership skills, their attendance, their gifts, and their prayers.

NOTHING STAYS THE SAME

Many changes in facilities and activities take place over a period of time. We started with prayer meetings in our homes, then held weekly prayer and business meetings at the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, then Sunday afternoon vesper services twice each month. When we started meeting on our own property, we had Sunday School, Sunday morning worship services and weekly prayer and business meetings. As the needs and capabilities grew, so did our programs to include Youth Fellowship, United Methodist Women, Men of Faith, and Bible Studies. The Valley Hill Homemakers and Boy and Girl Scout units use our facilities for their meetings and activities.

Liber Hall has seen many changes: a stage was added; storage rooms were added on each side of the stage; at first there was no air-conditioning, then window units, and later central air; a burglar alarm system was installed; a big storage room added on the back; cabinets installed in the kitchen; the home electric range replaced with a commercial gas range; and wooden outside doors replaced with metal ones. The choir room, office and nursery were moved to accommodate needs. We can expect many more changes in the future as we grow spiritually, expand facilities, and change or add programs to minister more effectively to the community and tell the story of Jesus Christ and salvation.

IMPACT

It is impossible to indicate the impact that Faith United Methodist Church has had on individuals and the community. Ideas and lives have been changed. Troubled souls have found new hope and meaning in their lives. Strangers have been welcomed and found new friends. Others have learned more about the Bible and its teachings. Many have rededicated their lives to the Master.

Three members of Faith have entered the ordained ministry. Rev. John W. Tilghman, Jr., one of the charter members, entered the Methodist ministry in 1964 and is now a Baptist minister. Rev. Stiles Cobb, a pastor in the Assemblies of God denomination, became a member of Faith and in 1974 decided to become a United Methodist minister. He is now an ordained minister serving in the North Georgia Conference. Rev. Glen Tieman entered the ministry in 1979, studied at Emory University, and returned to his home state of Illinois to begin his ministry.

It is our hope and prayer that all who have entered our doors have been blessed. For some, Faith U. M. C. was their last church home before departing this life.

It is difficult to find words to describe the members of the congregation of Faith. Loving, kind, friendly, willing, capable and many other terms come to mind. But perhaps the words that describe the congregation best are loving, caring concern. This has been demonstrated over and over in so many ways participation in projects that help others, financial support of worthwhile causes, contributions to missions in many ways, assistance to needy families, visits to the sick and the shut-in, food after a family member has been hospitalized or a death has occurred, prison visits, and comfort for the bereaved. As Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40 KJV)

It is impossible to list all the things that have meant so much to us in the past. Nor is it possible to remember who provided the ideas and incentives or provided the work for each activity. Suffice it to say, that if you are now or ever have been a member of Faith, or if you worshipped with us or participated in our activities; then you have been a vital part of the history of FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH and the KINGDOM OF GOD.