A BRIEF HISTORY OF FOREST PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Forest Park United Methodist Church, originally the Forest Park Methodist Church was officially organized on June 26, 1955, in the auditorium of what is now the Forest Park Junior High School on College Street. Reverend Sale Lilly led the first service and forty-eight people were received into the church as charter members.

The present church property, five acres of land at the corner of College Street and Robin Lane, was purchased and the first phase of the building program was begun in March, 1956. On April 1, 1956, the congregation was able to meet in this building. Serving the church as ministers, at this time were two students from Emory, Reverend Buford Dickenson and Reverend Farrell Cox.

The third Quarterly Conference on May 23, 1957, voted to continue with a full time minister, and the parsonage at 1101 Stoneybrook Drive was purchased. Reverend Jack Reaves came to serve the church at this time and remained until 1961.

In 1962, construction was completed on the remodeling of the existing structure, and the addition of a second floor, adding much needed children's classrooms and a new Pastor's Study. The Pastor at this time was Reverend Marion Pierson who served the church from 1961 until 1965.

On June 2, 1968, during the ministry of Reverend Clyde Smith 1965 - 1968, a ceremony was held in which the previously redeemed church bonds were burned and ground was broken for phase three of the building program, the permanent sanctuary.

Construction was begun in July, 1968, during the pastorate of Reverend Shelton Adams. On July 7, 1969, our present minister, Reverend Zachary Farr, held the first service in this lovely, new, nearly completed sanctuary. The Consecration Service was held on October 5, 1969.

As of June, 1969, Forest Park had increased to a membership of 503 and a Church School enrollment of 422.

The Children's Division of the Church School has a total of ten classes; the Youth Division, four; and the Adult Division, six.

There is an active United Methodist Men's Club, a Women's Society of Christian Service, with three active Circles, and two Wesleyan Service Guilds.

Serving the youth and Children are an U.M.Y.F., a Junior High U.M.Y.F., two Elementary Fellowships, and two Children's choirs.
June 26, 1955, will be a day long remembered in the minds and
hearts of those who had dreamed of a new Methodist Church in
Forest Park, Georgia. On that day the Rev. C. Hoke Sewell led a
most inspirational service at which time a new Methodist Church
was organized in Forest Park. The initial number uniting with the
church was fifty-five. This number includes four preparatory members,
seven on profession of faith, three by vows, and forty-one by cer-
tificate from other Methodist churches.

With the rapid growth of Forest Park, there arose a need for
a new church. Several people were quick to see this need and began
meeting in the High School auditorium in Forest Park. They met for
several weeks before organizational date (June 26, 1955) under the
leadership of the Rev. Sale Lilly, who was a student in the Candler
School of Theology, Emory University. Prior to the first meetings
Rev. Hoke Sewell had seen the need for a new church. Thereupon,
a survey was taken, and Rev. Sewell conducted a revival in the High
School auditorium. A great response was shown in this revival and
interest began to mount for a new church.

Upon his graduation from the Theology School in June 1955, Rev.
Sale Lilly returned to his home conference in North Mississippi to
assume pastoral duties. The Rev. Buford Dickinson, also a student
in the Candler School of Theology, was appointed to lead the people
who were anxiously looking forward to organization as a church.
Rev. Dickinson assumed his duties as pastor on June 4, 1955, and
at the North Georgia Annual Conference in 1955, he was appointed
to the newly organized Church in Forest Park. The name chosen by
a church conference for the new church was "The Forest Park Metho-
dist Church."
A five acre lot was purchased at the cost of $5,000, which came out of Expansion Day offerings. The lot is in an ideal location, and there is plenty of room for growth and expansion.

Since organizational day, the church has grown steadily in every way. The present membership of the church is 89. There are 15 preparatory members at the present time. The budget for the first year was $2800, and everything was paid in full for the year.

An MYF was organized and has been doing a marvelous job. They have won the sub-district attendance banner several times. They have worked diligently and faithfully to make our church one of the best.

The WSCS began with 10 members and now has a membership of 25. The ladies of the church have responded wonderfully to the entire church program.

In the early part of 1956 construction was begun on the first unit of our church. The first unit is a nice basement, which is adequate for the present time. On April 1, 1956, we moved into the new church basement. A marvelous crowd was in attendance on that day, and a dream was realized. Up to that time the church had been meeting in the high school auditorium, and we are truly grateful to school officials for allowing us to worship there.

We, of the Forest Park Methodist Church, feel that a great church has been started. It can be one of the best and biggest churches in the North Georgia Conference. We dedicate ourselves to the task of making the Forest Park Methodist Church an instrument of God's service. Great things lie in the future for us. We expect great things from God; we shall attempt great things for Him.