Grant Park Methodist Church

50th Anniversary

Home Coming Celebration

Church History
Directory of Membership
Financial Information
And other Features

Rev. Wesley L. Thomas, Pastor

Residence - 812 Boulevard S. E. Telephone 627-6462
Church Office - 575 Boulevard S. E. Telephone 627-6221
The Pastor's Message

The Homecoming Committee has given me the happy privilege of including a message in this 50th Anniversary Issue of the History of Grant Park Methodist Church. I rejoice with you in the achievements of this Church, with God's help, since 1914!

Some wonderful changes—and some not so wonderful—have taken place during the past fifty years. To give one illustration, in transportation, we have come from the T-model Ford to the Space Capsule era. As a church, we have come from a Methodist Mission to a great neighborhood Church—to a Church with a gradually declining membership. Therefore, let me leave the history to Brother John Adams and others who know this Church's past first-hand. Let my message be concerned with its future! Must our membership continue to decline until the Church dies?

In answer to the above question I give an emphatic NO—Provided the membership opens its eyes to the facts and, with God's help, acts accordingly. Here are some of the facts as I see them.

(1) Perhaps you noticed above that I mentioned that this Church has been a "great neighborhood Church." The same can be said of Grace, Trinity, and possible First, to name only three. These churches also experienced a decline—before they changed their approach from a neighborhood to a down-town church. By "down-town" I mean one that draws and holds members from afar as well as near. How to draw and hold from afar is another story—to long to be discussed here—but it can be done!

(2) You do not have to be told that this neighborhood has undergone some drastic changes since 1914. Houses that were once stately family residences have been changed into apartments, rooming houses, business houses, or Interstate Highways. Yet, there are more people living in our area than ever before. This year's enrollment at Jerome Jones School is the largest in the history of that school. A lot of this record number of children—and their parents—are not being reached for Christ and His Church. What Grant Park Methodist Church is willing to do at this point can greatly influence its future.

(3) If you read one and two carefully, you noticed that there is a bit of contradiction between them. My third suggestion is that they may be combined and both used to advantage. Provided, that is, that group one will make group two feel welcomed. And it will require "work" rather than "words" to do so!

There are many more facts and factors involved than these I have mentioned, but let me turn now to a consideration of some basic, immediate needs. First of all, we (the pastor, officials, and each member) need to become dissatisfied with ourselves as we now are. To use a Christian term, we need to become CONVICTED. Just as no person can be converted until he is under conviction, no Church can be changed for the better until it is under conviction that a change is needed. Not only needed, but, with God's help, that change is possible. To carry the analogy a step further, conversion involves repentance and a complete surrender of self to God. Are we, as a Church, willing to make a complete surrender of self, pride, and prejudice—to become as clay in the Master potter's hands, willing to become and be what He wants us to be? The future History of Grant Park Methodist Church depends upon our answer to this question. I pray, God being my helper, that the history of the next fifty years will be as glorious as that of the past fifty years!

Let us begin the second half of our Centennial by renewing, and keeping, our vows to "Be loyal to The Methodist Church and uphold it by your ATTENDANCE, your PRAYERS, your GIFTS, and your SERVICE."

Yours in His Service,

Wesley L. Thomas, Pastor
Grant Park Methodist Church had a very modest beginning. In 1912 the Presbyterian Church on Georgia Avenue started a mission in a one-room building on Waldo Street on a lot now known as 499 Waldo Street. The Presbyterians conducted the mission for about a year and gave it up. The building was vacant until 1914 when a group of Methodists, under the leadership of Rev. W. W. Gaines, pastor of St. Luke Methodist Church, started a Methodist Mission in the building. Rev. Gaines worked with the group and organized the Grant Park Methodist Church, South, which was admitted to the North Georgia Conference in the Fall of 1914. Rev. Gaines was assigned as the first pastor and served for the conference year 1914-1915.

Grant Park Methodist Church grew rapidly in keeping with the growing development of this section, and in 1915 moved to the corner of Glenwood and Boulevard. Rev. S. S. Daughtry served the church during the conference year 1915-1916 and one-half of the conference year 1916-1917. After a year and a half Rev. Daughtry left the Methodist Church and went to the Presbyterian Church. Rev. E. Frank Pin came from Stilesboro in 1916 to fill the vacancy and served during the remainder of the conference year 1916-1917. The congregation purchased a parsonage for him at the corner of Boulevard and Rosalia Streets where the church now stands. This parsonage was later moved to the back of the lot and turned around to face Rosalia Street.

The ninety-one (91) Charter members (names listed on page 7) together with additional members, started a restaurant in the Connally Building in 1917 and soon had enough money to pay off the indebtedness on the Glenwood and Boulevard property. In the same year Brother Pin was married in the parsonage. During the conference years 1917-1918, 1918-1919, and 1919-1920 his ministry was a great blessing to the community. Brother Pin passed away in 1951 while serving the Park Street Church in Atlanta.

In 1918 the Women’s Missionary Society, now the W.S.C.S., was organized with twenty (20) members and is now celebrating its forty-sixth anniversary.

In 1920 the congregation sold the Glenwood and Boulevard property for cash and made plans to build on the present site. Rev. W. O. McMullen was sent as the new pastor for the conference year 1920-1921 and ground was broken for the new building. The Sunday School Building was first erected and the congregation worshipped in that building for the first year. From the years 1917 through 1921 the congregation operated a restaurant at the Southeastern Fair and made substantial profits which were used, along with individual donations, to pay for the Sunday School Building. Rev. McMullen also served the church in 1921-1922, 1922-1923 and 1923-1924. Some years later he was transferred to the Florida Conference.

The main auditorium, or sanctuary, was completed in 1922 and the completed structure represented an investment of $60,000.00. Mrs. McMullen, the pastor’s wife, started the graded work in the Sunday School in 1923 and worked very faithfully with the entire Sunday School, but particularly as Superintendent of the Junior Department.

Rev. J. Tillman Bakeas followed Bro. McMullen as Pastor and served the Church during the conference year 1924-1925. The next year he was moved to Calhoun and the Calhoun congregation gave him a superannuate home where he resided until his death in 1950.

Rev. W. O. Debardeleben came to us in 1925 and stayed three years, 1925-1926, 1926-1927, and 1927-1928. Following his retirement from the active
ministry he still found grace and glory in serving the Lord and preached at every opportunity until his death in 1953.

For several years during this period no reduction was made on the Church debt. In 1928 there was a balance of $10,000.00 due on the mortgage. $500.00 was paid on the principal in 1929 and $500.00 in 1930. Rev. T. H. Kendall Jr. was our pastor in 1928-1929 and 1929-1930. Nothing was paid on the mortgage from 1931 to 1935.

Rev. T. Hamby Barton was assigned as pastor in November 1930 and served one year. He and his wife helped to reorganize the Young Peoples Department under the Unified Plan.

Rev. B. F. Fraser came to us in November 1931 and served the Church faithfully for four years. In November 1935 he was assigned to Betheny Church in Atlanta and after two years service there was superannuated. His long and fruitful ministry ended with his death in 1939.

During Brother Fraser’s last year at Grant Park a campaign was launched to retire the $9,000.00 debt on the Church. The drive to pay off the mortgage continued during the pastorate of Rev. L. B. Jones who served the Church for five years 1935-1936 through 1939-1940. Brother Jones made many friends in the Grant Park section, and in his service to our Church he was ably assisted by Mrs. Jones who taught in the Church School and was active in the Woman’s Work.

Rev. D. P. Johnston was assigned to Grant Park in 1940 and served two years, and it was during his pastorate that the Church mortgage was finally paid off. The Church was dedicated in a formal ceremony at the evening service on October 11, 1942 by Bishop Arthur J. Moore, assisted by the Pastor and Dr. E. G. Mackey, District Superintendent.

Rev. C. A. Hall was Pastor for the Conference years 1942-1943 and 1943-44, and during this time a drive was started to raise funds for a pipe organ.

Rev. Willard W. Cash served the Church for five years, 1944-1945 through the conference year 1948-1949. During these five years the Church fiscal year was changed twice. 1946-1947 was an eight months term ending July 31, and the year 1948-1949 was an eleven months term ending June 30, 1949. During Bro. Cash’s first year the organ was purchased at a cost of $3,500.00, and with suitable ceremony was dedicated at the evening service on October 14, 1945, to the boys of our church who were serving in the armed forces. In April 1949 Chimes were purchased and installed at a cost of $1,400.00.

Rev. G. M. Rainey was pastor for three conference years from July 1, 1949 through June 30, 1952. The Church had an unusual spiritual growth during his pastorate, and during this time a fund raising campaign was begun to purchase a new parsonage in order to release the old for Sunday School rooms. In May 1951 a nice brick parsonage at 812 Boulevard was purchased at a cost of $15,000.00, with one-half down payment and a mortgage for $7,500.00. In two years this mortgage was reduced $4,019.62, leaving a balance of $3,480.38 still owing on June 30, 1953. During the pastorate of Brother Rainey the order was placed for the large stained glass window in the front of the Church.

Rev. G. M. Spivey was assigned as Pastor in 1952, serving two years 1952-1953 and 1953-1954. During his first year the stained glass window, depicting the scene of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, was installed, and paid for by the Stewards in October 1952. The cost of the window was $1,100.00. In November 1952 a drive was begun to place stained glass windows in each side
of the sanctuary. These windows, in honor, or in memory, of present or former members, were installed in April 1953 at a cost of $1,872.00 which was paid by relatives or friends of those whose names appear on the windows. The year 1952-1953 was the best year financially in the history of the church up to that time. During Brother Spivey's last year, 1953-1954, the remaining debt on the parsonage was paid in full. The 1954 annual conference assigned Bro. Spivey to the Lagrange church at his own request in order that he might send his two children to Lagrange College.

Rev. J. Herman Allison came to Grant Park in 1954 and served the two conference years 1954-1955 and 1955-1956. During his first year additional improvements were made to our church property. The floor in the sanctuary was sanded, refinished and covered with new carpet; a public address system was installed and the pews were refinished. The cost of these improvements was in excess of $3,000.00. During this year a Building Fund was started for an educational building and $898.84 was raised. In the next year 1955-1956 the Building Fund offering was $4,045.77, making a total for the two years $4,944.61. Brother Allison was assigned to Mt. Zion church in 1956 where he served six years before retiring in 1962.

Rev. P. Merrill Minter was assigned to Grant Park in 1956 and served four years and two months. The four complete years were 1956-1957, 1957-1958, 1958-1959, 1959-1960. The two months of the conference year 1960-1961 was a result of the transfer of Dr. Charles Allen from the North Georgia Conference to a conference in Texas, which apparently made it necessary to change several North Georgia appointments. During Brother Minter's first year plans were approved by the proper local church groups to engage the services of the National Fund Raising Service, to put on a campaign for pledges to the Building Fund. The details of this campaign and the funds raised are given elsewhere in this year book. It should be stated that at this time the Building Fund was designated as "BUILDING AND IMPROVEMENT FUND". The amount paid into the Building and Improvement Fund during the pastorate of Brother Minter was $29,316.25. Of this amount $6,723.69 was paid for repairing, and then redecorating the entire interior of the Building.

Rev. W. L. Brackman Sr., came to Grant Park on September 1, 1961 to fill the unexpired term of Brother Minter. The ten remaining months of the conference year 1960-1961, and the two following years 1961-1962 and 1962-1963 brought to a close the active ministry of this devout and consecrated man. Although his retirement, which was advised by the family physician, relieved him of many administrative duties, Brother Brackman still finds comfort and spiritual strength in serving the Lord when and wherever he may be called upon. It was during his pastorate at Grant Park that the sanctuary and Church School assembly and Class rooms were completely air conditioned.

Rev. Wesley L. Thomas Sr., who has just completed the 1963-1964 Conference year at Grant Park is still with us and for this reason we will tell you a little more about him than we did about the other 18 pastors who served our church. He has faithfully attended to his pastoral duties, especially visiting the sick and comforting the bereaved. In his 15 months at Grant Park we have lost 17 members by death. If the Conference Journal is correct Brother Thomas was born March 10, 1918 in Cherokee County. He was educated at Young Harris and Emory; he was married to Miss Sara Ellen Anderson on March 7, 1949. He entered the North Georgia Conference On Trial in 1951 and into full connection in 1953. He has served the following churches: Two years at Carrollton Circuit 1951-53, two years at Devereaux 1953-1955, two years at Marvin 1955-1957, two years at Stockbridge 1957-1959, four years at Hightower Church Thomaston 1959-1963. He and Mrs. Thomas have four lovely children, Dialphia, Wesley Jr., Mary Ellen and Johnny.
The following is a chronological list of Pastors who have served the Church:

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<td>Rev. L. B. Jones Jr. 1935-1936</td>
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<td>Rev. Wesley L. Thomas Sr. 1963-1964 (now serving second year)</td>
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It is with grateful hearts that we look back across the years and recall many of the names of present or former members whose lives have been blessed by the ministry of one or more of these consecrated men of God. No one can be called to a more sacred task than those who answer the call of God for full time Christian service, and today we pay loving tribute to those who dedicated their lives to the cause of Christ and His Kingdom.
The following is a list of the 91 Charter members of Grant Park Methodist Church. If anyone knows the address of any of these who are still living, or if you know of any direct descendants who could give us this information, please let the Church Secretary know. The annual Homecoming Day at Grant Park Church will be held on October 11th, the second Sunday in the month, and the committee wants to invite charter members to be present on this occasion, even though they do not presently belong to Grant Park.

1. Ernest C. Boling 47. Miss Dorothy Ivey
2. Mrs. Ernest C. Boling 48. Mrs. Fannie Jones
3. M. J. Chewning 49. Mrs. Addie Knight
4. Mrs. M. J. Chewning 50. Mrs. R. E. Lanier
5. Miss Melba Chewning (Ethridge) 51. W. Edgar Loden
6. Mrs. Grace Chiaves 52. Mrs. Jennie Loden
7. Miss Elise Choestwood (Loftis) 53. William D. Maybin
8. Mrs. Corie Christian 54. Mrs. Erin Maybin
10. Miss Addie Corto 56. Mrs. A. E. Morehead
11. Mrs. Mary Cramer 57. Louis E. Morehead
12. Mrs. Maudo Crow 58. John C. Morehead
13. J. C. Denard 59. Mrs. Marion Morehead
14. Mrs. J. C. Donnard 60. Miss Mary McLean
15. William K. Dolan 61. Wm. J. McWhorter
17. Mrs. Pearl Downs 63. Newton J. Nichols
18. J. J. Evans 64. Mrs. Clyde Ponder
20. S. C. Forrester 66. Mrs. George Steint
22. Frank P. Folger 68. J. E. Thurman
23. Mrs. Imogene B. Gainos 69. Miss May Troadwell (Diamond)
24. Miss Estello Gainos 70. Mrs. Edna Turnor
25. Miss Catherino Gainos 71. W. L. Walker
26. Miss Gertrude Gainos 72. Mrs. W. L. Walker
27. Benton E. Gainos 73. Clifford H. Walker
28. Richard H. Gainos 74. Nellie May Walker (Dunlap)
29. Richard B. Gainos 75. J. T. Waldrip
30. Miss Annie Kate Gainos (Cates) 76. Mrs. J. T. Waldrip
31. Miss Thelma Gainos (King, A.E.) 77. George C. Watson
32. Mrs. Emma Gammon 78. Mrs. George C. Watson
33. Miss Myrtle Gravitt (Garnon, A.C.) 79. F. J. Wollborn
34. W. C. Groen 80. Mrs. F. J. Wollborn
35. Mrs. Syrma Groen 81. Miss Lillian Wollborn
37. Mrs. J. E. Grubbs 83. M. H. Wolls
38. William T. Harwell 84. Mrs. M.H. Wells
39. Mrs. William T. Harwell 85. J. E. White
40. Mrs. Sarah G. Head 86. Mrs. J. E. White
41. R. W. Hinnosloy 87. Miss Gladys White (Hainoy, J.V.)
42. Mrs. Etta Hollinsworth 88. Carl White
43. Guy W. Heimbough 89. Miss Sallicio Williams
44. Mrs. Lena Heimbough 90. Joseph P. Williamson
45. William H. Ivey 91. Mrs. Rosa Williamson
46. Mrs. William H. Ivey

This page was used as an insert for our Church Bulletin a few Sundays ago. We would still like to hear from anyone who knows the whereabouts of any of these who might still be living. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Thanks to those who have already been helpful.
In this brief History of Grant Park Methodist Church we have been careful not to mention the names of any individuals, but during the 49 years we have completed (we are now in our 50th year) this church has had, and still has, many members who have served Grant Park with honor to the church and community, and to themselves. Their loyal devotion and unselfish service is a monument to the memory of the dead, and a source of joy and inspiration to those of us still living who love and appreciate each member of the Church for their support and cooperation. Our sincere gratitude to everyone who has had a part in making this History of Grant Park Church.

We will have to admit that the foregoing history of our church reveals more of the material accomplishments than the spiritual. This seems to be the trend in "THESE CHANGING TIMES" ?? We are inclined to feel sometimes that changing a $75,000.00 church for one that cost a million dollars, makes the angels in Heaven sit up and take notice. NOTHING our forefathers brought forth on this earth in the centuries gone by seem to have any value new, IT ALL HAS TO BE CHANGED. We sing about the Old Time Religion being good enough for everybody, but to some people, in and out of the church, it is completely out of date in this generation and must now be changed. In Billy Graham's column in an Atlanta paper he quoted a question that was asked in a recent letter he had received: Question: "I am a minister and I strongly object to your type of evangelism. In my opinion you have set the church back 100 years. WE NEED A CHRISTIANITY THAT IS GEARDED TO 1964 AND ITS PROBLEMS. Don't you agree?" This is Billy Graham's answer: "Thank you for saying I have set Christianity back 100 years. I only wish I could take it 2,000 years - back to the power, fire, and glow of those historic days. - Our trouble today is: We have tried to adapt the Gospel to the problems of these times. Instead, we should apply the problems of our times to the Gospel. In the Bible God says, "I am the Lord, I change not." The laws He set down for Moses are not antiquated and out of date. I hear no one clamoring for a new law of Gravity. There are some "absolutes" that never change."

On page 18 you will find a record of some of the evangelistic efforts of Grant Park during the period from 1914 to 1964, but before leaving this page the writer would like to remind you that practically every Methodist publication that comes to us stresses the importance of local church groups being informed on all phases of life, and particularly social, economic and political. With this sanction from the church the following brief comments give one of the answers to the question so often asked these days - "why are so many church members unhappy over certain things our church is promoting, and why is it necessary for church organizations to pass illegal resolutions condemning the action of high Methodist officials, and especially the action of around 900 General Conference delegates who erroneously think they are representing, speaking and voting for TEN MILLION METHODISTS?"

As a 65 year old layman, a Methodist for 50 years, a member of the official Board for 40 years, a tither, and one who loves the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, it can honestly be said he never begrudged any contribution to the church or any other benevolent institution. But when it is made to appear that the success and achievements of a religious body are determined by the amount of money it spends, then we take a look at Conference, District and Local Church GOALS, and we usually find Membership and Evangelism leading the list BUT every other item that follows has to do with raising more money for every project our church supports, from Church Extension to the Fund for supplying appearance bonds and legal counsel for those arrested in unlawful racial demonstrations. And we are criticized for objecting to Methodist support of the National Council of Churches which spends a part of every World Service Dollar we contribute, to promote these demonstrations and other integration efforts. The daily press has informed the world that one-quarter of a million dollars, 60% from the National Council and 40% from World Council of churches, was allocated to the Mississippi racial strife this past summer. After three civil rights groups had disappeared the NCC was still recruiting 50 Chaplains and a dozen or more lawyers as spiritual and legal advisors to the Northern agitators who were trained by the NCC and sent to Mississippi. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Chairman of the Religion and Race Commission of the NCC confirmed continued support, in Mississippi, when interviewed by United Press International. (For reference see Atlanta Journal & Constitution 7-4-64, J.E.A.)
THE OFFICIAL BOARD
1964 - 1965

Wesley L. Thomas, Pastor
Olen V. Babb, Chairman

H. L. DuPre, Vice Chairman
Mrs. P. A. Wood, Secy.-Treas.

Olen V. Babb, Chairman
Mrs. P. A. Wood, Secy.-Treas.

TRUSTEES
(Class of 1965)
Julius P. Buchanan
H. L. DuPre
G. Bert Tillison

(Class of 1966)
Virgil E. Adams
Guy Eaves
Carl E. Miller

(Class of 1967)
John E. Adams
Vernon L. Medlin
Byron J. Scott, Sr.

ELECTIVE STEWARDS
(on Rotation System, Classes as above)
John E. Adams
Enoch H. Abell
Julius S. Buchanan, Sr.

Olen V. Babb
C. Ward Fox, Jr.
Jack Griffin

D. H. Bland, Jr.
Candler C. Meadors, Sr.
Larry O. Lasueur

Julius P. Buchanan
Vernon L. Medlin
William V. Ransom

D. S. Carter
Carl E. Miller
J. Harold Snead, Sr.

Harry A. Dempsey
Zelman W. Sailleurs
Thomas F. Smith

Earl C. Dillard
G. Bert Tillison
Grover C. Williams

H. L. DuPre
Albert B. Timms
Robert E. Wood, Jr.

HONORARY STEWARDS
Virgil E. Adams
Roscoe C. Ailor

EX-OFFICIO STEWARDS
Carl B. Forrest
Charge Lay Leader

D. S. Carter
Church School Superintendent

Mrs. J. Harold Snead, Sr.
Secretary of Stewardship

Mrs. P. A. Wood
Membership Secy. and Recording Steward

Olen V. Babb
Chairman, Commission on Membership & Evangelism

Miss Jane Martin
Chairman, Commission on Education

Miss Eloise Riley
Chairman, Commission on Missions

John E. Adams
Chairman, Commission on Stewardship & Finance

Mrs. M. E. Bowdoin
Chairman, Commission on Christian Social Concerns

Julius P. Buchanan
Chairman, Commission on Worship

Mrs. Sam Eidson
President Woman's Society of Christian Service

Miss Dialpha Thomas
President Methodist Youth Fellowship

Byron J. Scott, Sr.
President Methodist Men's Club

(Nine names above are duplicated - - - Total membership of Official Board 36)

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

CHURCH SCHOOL OFFICERS

D. S. Carter, General Superintendent
C. Ward Fox, Jr., Asst. Superintendent

Mrs. M. E. Hodges, Recording Secretary
Mrs. G. C. Williams, Membership Secy.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

Albert B. Timms
Mrs. C. Ward Fox, Jr.
Mrs. Sam Eidson
Adult Division
Youth Division
Children's Division

(Church School Officers continued on next page)

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