History of
Hand Memorial United Methodist Church
Pelham, Georgia

1878 - 1975
PART ONE
1878 - 1958

Although the actual organization of the Methodist Church of Pelham, Georgia was not recorded, it is believed to have been established in the year 1878.

The Methodist minister from Camilla, who was Bishop Ainsworth's father, conducted a protracted meeting in a brush arbor near the present location of Pelham Phosphate Company. As a result of these services, the Methodist Church of Pelham came into existence.

The original building was situated on Castleberry Street, and was a crudely constructed, unceiled structure about thirty by fifty feet. The siding consisted of wide planks placed vertically. Mrs. Eula Cooper remembers attending Sunday School there as a very young child.

Wilbur and Bascom Tucker were among the charter members. Other family names to appear early on the church roll were Green (for whom Green Street was named), Dey, and Hand.

Pastors who served in the original building included Stubbs, Funderburk, Sanders, and Chester (who later became presiding elder of the Thomasville District).

A Sunday School came into being with Mr. Jule Dey acting as both superintendent and teacher. Mrs. Molly Atkinson was one of the first teachers. Mr. Frank Parks, who was superintendent of the public school at that time, later became superintendent of the Sunday School. Mrs. Florence Himman Hand and Mrs. Irene Hand Corrigan were teachers some time later.

The quaint hand pump organ occupied the center of the church around which the choir stood. First organists were Eula and Lula Dey, twin sisters.

The original building had served well at the beginning but in 1899, during the pastorate of Rev. Huckabee, a new wooden church was erected on the side where our present church is situated at 398 Hand Avenue. Mr. J. L. Hand offered the lot for both the church and the parsonage. At that time the parsonage was where the J. O. McElvey house now stands. In addition, Mr. Hand contributed liberally toward construction. He donated the altar, and the pews were given by his children.

A class of young ladies composed of Mrs. Clara Hayes, the Dey sisters, and others, was taught by Mrs. Florence Hollis Hand. It was in this second building that Mrs. J. O. McElvey began teaching in the Sunday School, a contribution which she continued to render for twenty-five consecutive years. Mrs. L. W. English took over the Primary Department from other classes for the first time. About twenty-five children met with Mrs. English on Sunday mornings in the parsonage.

Mrs. Louise Trawick and others were responsible for the exchange of the old organ for a new piano in the sanctuary.

Serving as Sunday School Superintendents during this period were H. H. Merry, Z. M. Floyd, Wilbur Bunch, and E. N. Wilson. Pastors were Reverends Tinsely, Blitch, T. D. Ellis, Parker, Snider (1901), McMichael, R. R. Norman (1899), Jenkins, G. F. Revere (1905), C. W. Curry (1906-1908), J. W. Arnold (1909), J. W. Lilly (1910-1911), C. M. Weeks (1912-1916), and Hutcheson (1917).

Rev. A. B. Wall arrived in Pelham in 1917, and within a short time started plans for the erection of a more adequate and attractive church including space for the Sunday School.

The old building was sold to the Negroes and was placed on the old Cotton Road where it remains today, in use.

Our existing building was constructed in 1918, at a cost of $35,000. Because half of this amount was donated by Mrs. J. L. Hand, in memory of her late husband,
Judson Larrabee Hand, the church now bears the name, "Hand Memorial Methodist Church". Bishop Warren A. Candler dedicated this building in 1920. Beautiful stained glass windows in the sanctuary are in memory of Judson Larrabee Hand and Emma Collinsworth Hand.

Facilities to be enjoyed for the first time by the Methodists of Pelham included a Ladies' Parlor attractively furnished in a home like manner, a kitchen, separate rooms for the various classes, a central heating plant, and a pastor's study.

Upon completion of the new building, the Sunday School was reorganized with Morton McDonald, a young man of only Sixteen, serving as superintendent. He is believed to have been the youngest person ever to serve as superintendent of any Sunday School in the district.

About this time the parsonage was moved to the present location, 400 Hand Avenue, and through the untiring efforts of Rev. Wall, it was remodeled. Improvements included the installation of a complete bathroom for the first time.

Rev. Wall was followed by Rev. E. M. Overby in 1921. Graded literature came into use in the Sunday School during this pastorate with Raymond King as superintendent. Rev. Overby served as pastor for two years. Ministers who followed were: J. P. Warrin (1922-1923); C. M. Ledbetter (1923-1925); W. A. Tyson (1925-1926); and W. A. Brooks (1926-1928).

Rev. Brooks proved to be most outstanding in civic affairs, as well as those within the church. The Women's Club was reorganized through his efforts. Results from his ministry include improvements in cemetery care and beautification, and the park on U. S. 19 which stands today as a memorial to the service and dedication of Rev. Brooks. During these years Sunday School superintendents were: W. C. Cooper, C. D. May, and H. K. Rickenbaker. After the death of Rev. Brooks on January 28, 1928 George F. Irwin, recently returned missionary from Russia, came to fill this place and remained until the conference year ended in November, 1928.

Rev. Guyton Fisher ministered from 1928 until his death on April 31, 1931. At that time Ralph Crosby, a young preacher, came and completed the conference year.

November of 1931 brought John S. Sharp to Pelham. His primary interest was in the youth of the community for whom he spent much time studying and ministering to needs. Realizing the great need of a place for wholesome social activities and additional Sunday School space, Rev. Sharp set about seeking means for the construction of a Sunday School annex building.

In spite of the economic depression, the loyal Methodists, under the enthusiastic leadership of Rev. Sharp, put forth every effort and in 1932, erected a two-story brick annex complete with basement, recreation room, and a up-to-date kitchen. The lot for this building was presented to the church by its oldest and beloved member, Mrs. Nat Bradford, affectionately called by all who know her, "Mother Bradford".

It was during this period that Dr. and Mrs. M. M. Burns came to Pelham to make their home. Mrs. Burns is the daughter of the late Charlie Tillman, well-known evangelistic singer and composer of many religious songs. "Life's Railway to Heaven" is one of his better known numbers. Jewel, as she is known, also participated in every phase of church life, including serving as president of the Woman's Missionary Society on two different occasions, arranging flowers in the sanctuary, directing various pageants and programs for special observances, singing, teaching the Ladies' Class and numerous other activities. She generously devoted her talents and time to the Lord's work during the twenty-two years that she lived in Pelham.

The Baptismal bowl used regularly in the church was presented by the Woman's Society of Christian Service in honor of Mrs. Burns after the completion of her first term of service as president, a term which lasted for six years.
The Burns Memorial Methodist Church in Cotton, Georgia was erected in 1947, honoring the late Dr. M. M. Burns because it was his initial interest that resulted in the establishment of the church. On many occasions he worked with the people of that area assisting them in many ways. Today that church is a symbol of gratitude for his efforts.

Indication of the awakening of the younger members in the church activities was apparent in the Young Men's Bible Class, taught by Mrs. J. B. Scott. This group fulfilled a need for maintaining the interest of those young men between boyhood and manhood. Untold benefit has been the inevitable result of such a class.

Rev. M. R. Heflin came to Pelham after John Sharp in 1933, and remained through 1934. Herman C. Jones served in the capacity of pastor from 1934 through 1936. During his stay he completely revised the church roll.

Beloved and held in high esteem by all who knew him was Dr. J. A. Thomas, pastor from 1936 through 1940. His personal appearance and saintly character often reminded children of Christ himself. The church experienced a period of genuine harmony at this time.

Mrs. Thomas was most helpful in all the activities of the church. It was she who reorganized and taught the Gleaners Class for young matrons. This class continues to be an active force for good in the community.

The Junior Choir, directed by Mrs. Burns and Mrs. M. W. Turner, Jr., contributed to the Sunday evening services and to many other occasions. Since that time it has progressed with increased effectiveness. Today it is directed by Miss Lilah Summerlin.

In 1940, the Woman's Missionary Society was replaced by the Woman's Society of Christian Service, and the League, by the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Both organizations have maintained record progress through the years.

Serving the Pelham Methodists for the 1940-1944 duration was Edwin Grimes, truly a Bible scholar. In 1942, the Hammond organ was purchased, an addition which added greatly to every service thereafter.

Rev. Bernard Brown followed Rev. Grimes in 1944, and remained until 1948. It was at this time that the conference was changed from November to June. Along these years immediately following World War II, under the capable direction of Rev. Brown, many changes took place and improvements made. He was a pastor to his flock in the true sense of the word. Elizabeth, his wife, was at all times a gracious hostess, mother, and helpmate.

The parsonage was renovated in 1945 into an attractive and convenient home of the pastor and his family.

The beginnings of the Wesleyan Service Guild, the Men's Club, and the Adult Fellowship all point to the many accomplishments which resulted from the initiative of Bernard Brown.

About this time Gus Jordan became interested in becoming a Methodist minister and he undoubtedly found inspiration and encouragement in the pastor.

Chimes were presented to the church by the M. W. Turner family in honor of Sgt. Fortson Turner whose life was lost in World War II. Dedicatory services were held in the sanctuary on Easter, 1947. Since then all within hearing distance have benefited from these chimes pealing their call to worship.

Coming to Pelham in 1948, to fill the place of Bernard Brown was Shannon Holloway who also completed a four year stay in Pelham. One outstanding talent lay in his ability to lead young people. He played the piano well and Edyth, his wife, sang. The impressive communion services conducted by Rev. Holloway have long been remembered by the congregation.

All who were privileged to hear Shannon Holloway
preach testify to the unusual gifts of diction, expression, and sincerity which he possesses.

Gus Jordan was licensed to preach in 1951; later he completed necessary preparation and was ordained an elder of the South Georgia Conference in June, 1955.

A new pulpit Bible was given to the church by the Tucker family in honor of their father, Bascom Tucker, a charter member previously mentioned.

The sanctuary was redecorated in 1949, and splendid red carpeting was obtained by the Women's Society of Christian Service.

On Sunday, November 25, 1951 a Homecoming was held in the form of a dedication service. Many former members and friends of the church from various places visited on that day.

The magnificent stained glass window which adorns the east wall of the sanctuary was dedicated at that service. This window was presented by Mrs. J. O. McElvey in memory of her mother and father, Nathaniel Bradford and Sara Wilson Bradford, and her husband, John O. McElvey. The window is the artist's interpretation of Christ at Gethsemane.

In memory of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas the mahogany pulpit was given by their children on that day. This lovely pulpit dedicated to the proclaiming of the Word of God is a fitting memorial to two lives dedicated to the carrying on the Gospel of our Savior.

Also, in that service the mahogany offering plates were given in memory of Mrs. L H. Cannon by her sister, Mrs. W. P. Lloyd.

Oscar Bell was the next pastor; his four year term of service extended from 1952-1956. Rev. Bell was especially interested in the young people as John Sharp had been at an earlier time. The Youth Choir was officially organized under the direction of Mrs. M. W. Turner, Jr.

The annex which was built in 1932, had by this time become somewhat of a fire hazard. For many reasons, unfortunate as it were, it became necessary to condemn the building although it was felt that the original purpose had been fulfilled. This has been known for some time, however, it was due to the interest and efficiency of Rev. Bell that the existing modern Educational Building became a reality. Plans for this building to replace the old annex were launched at a Loyalty Dinner in the public school's lunchroom. Pledges were made along with necessarily detailed plans. The annex was razed in order that the new structure could occupy the same lot. It was completed in 1955, and the dedication was made in the fall of that year by Bishop Arthur Moore.

Modern and up-to-date in every respect, this one-story building is of concrete construction. A larger fellowship hall with stage, complete kitchen with serving window opening into the larger area, Chapel, and classrooms for the occupancy of the different departments of the Sunday School, all afforded adequate space and convenience.

The Chapel, which has a seating capacity of sixty, was furnished in the memory of M. W. Turner by his family. Furnishings include altarware, attractively furnished with white pews, lectern, and luxurious carpeting. The Chapel offers ideal conditions for a worshipful atmosphere for smaller groups.

The Junior Department was furnished in honor of Mrs. M. W. Turner by her children. She had acted in the capacity of Superintendent of that department several years previously.

While Oscar Bell was here, he instigated interest in air-conditioning the church which later materialized.

Soon after the beginning of Larry King's pastorate, plans were formulated and arrangements made for
air-conditioning the entire church plant. Installation of such was completed early in 1957.

For many years the church choir has been directed by Blanche Lewis, who also teaches piano in the public schools. Her contributions of a musical nature have been and are gratefully appreciated through many years. When Mrs. Oga Morrison moved from Pelham in 1957, the church lost a loyal and capable organist and member. She had occupied her position in the church for some twenty-five years having been pianist previous to the use of the organ. Almost without exception she was at her place at the organ at each worship service.

Probably one of the longest service records of Hand Memorial Methodist Church is that of C. D. May, who held the post of church Treasurer for twenty-nine consecutive years. Another position of long duration was that of Treasurer of the Woman's Society by Mrs. Grover Thigpen for some twenty years.

The Board of Stewards has at all times analyzed needs and possibilities of the church, thereby contributing inestimably to its welfare. The Board operates on a different basis of organization at present, designating various commissions of service. Dr. J. C. Brim was replaced as Chairman of the Official Board in 1957 by R. W. Dent. L. D. Hand then succeeded to this position in 1958, and is in office at this time.

The Communion Table was presented to the church in memory of Mrs. A. T. Harrison by her children in 1957. Mrs. Harrison served as president of the Woman's Missionary Society for four years (1926-1930).

The Sunday School maintained steady growth rarely making a change in the office of superintendent. From the year 1934 to 1957 only three men held that position; Dudley McClain, Kelly Stough, and F. L. Duke. Winton Powell followed as that officer in the church in 1957, and serves at this time.

The Reid Dent Class was created in 1956 honoring Mr. Dent, Superintendent of Pelham Public Schools (1946-1958). Mr. Dent was the first teacher of this class which was designed for couples.

Rev. Chester Gilbert and his wife, Sara, came to Pelham to make their home in June 1958, filling the place of Larry and Ruby King, pastor and wife. In this brief time they are endearing themselves to all.

The Hand Memorial Methodist Church has progressed since its inception and continues to do so while it enriches the religious lives of numerous people.

May the service, loyalty, faith, and devotion of its members and friends strive diligently to help create a more spiritually powerful church in the years to come.
PART TWO

1958 - 1971

Chester Gilbert, with his wife Sara, served as pastor at Hand Memorial from June 1958, until June 1961. L. D. Hand was chairman of the Board of Stewards from 1958-59, followed by chairman A. B. Gar- rard 1959-60.

Several church dramas were presented by the Yough Department during this time at Christmas and Easter under the direction of Miss Lilah Summerlin. Mrs. Virginia Frosteg worked with many of these programs.

Improvements and additions to church equipment included a new electronic organ for the sanctuary and the construction of tennis courts on church property. These were later provided with lighting.

Henry Jones served as choir director from the fall of 1959 until the fall of 1966. Robes were obtained in 1961 for the choir members.

Unfortunately a record of memorials in the church has not been maintained; however, work has begun on such a record. Recognized memorials include: visitors' registration desk in memory of Miss Myrtle Foy; lectern in social hall in memory of Mrs. Mary Emma McElvey; hymnals for the social hall in memory of Mrs. J. N. (Ollie) NeSmith; wrought iron hand rails on church steps in memory of Mrs. Evie Rawls Gandy; brass urns in vestibule in memory of Mrs. Carrie Wooten Cooper; baptismal font in memory of Mrs. Ann Groover Tucker; urn and flower stand in memory of Dalton Gandy; flower stand anonymously given in memory of a beloved friend; urn in memory of J. D. McClain, Sr.; brass candlesticks in memory of Mrs. Elma Harrison Davis; brass round flower container in memory of Mrs. Mary Eloda Bradford McElvey; lighted church bulletin board in memory of Mrs. Mattie Lu Rogers; mirror in choir room in memory of H. J. Jennings; white street lights in memory of Carl Mitchell. Later memorials included Methodist Hymnals in the new edition for the sanctuary in memory of Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Summerlin and at the same time Methodist hymnals were placed in the chapel in memory of M. W. Turner. Plants in the vestibule are a living memorial to Mrs. Leola McNair. A pair of brass flower urns were given in memory of Joseph Lebron Eubanks.

Ernest Williams acted as Board chairman from 1964-65 after which Russell Browne served 1965-66.

The church was pastored from June 1961 until February 1, 1965 by Rev. Ernest Phillips and his wife Florence. Four months before the conference year ended in 1965, Rev. and Mrs. Phillips and children, Timothy and Kathy Jane, moved to California where he accepted a position in a conference.

Community Thanksgiving services have been held each year for a number of years as a local cooperative project.

Some revival speakers include Rev. Hamp Watson, Rev. John Lindser, Rev. Lawrence Houston, Dr. C. W. Hancock, and Dr. Jimmy Varnell. Among others, Kenneth Fuller and Ray Vaughn have led singing in revival services.

Robin E. Dorsey effectively led the congregation from the spring of 1965 until June 1969. Elia, his wife, and his children, Zeke and Robin, were helpful in every way.

An attractive and adequate new parsonage was constructed for the pastor and his family. The old frame parsonage was sold and moved from the site where the new brick structure was erected. At morning worship on November 17, 1966, the new parsonage was consecrated and in the afternoon open house was held for members and friends of the church.

Bob Fegis, from the School of Music of Florida
State University, was employed in 1966, as choir director.

During the same year a Methodist Student Loan Fund was established. This fund exists as a help to young people in the community in obtaining an education.

Board chairman for 1966-67 was Perry J. Simpson. About this time the Gleaners Sunday School class secured a new piano for the social hall. This class had previously bought a studio piano for the choir in the sanctuary.

Many members have contributed years of dedicated service to church activities. Outstanding records for teaching in the Sunday School Department include those of Mrs. O. B. (Lurlene) McElvey in the Primary department for thirty-two years, and Mrs. K. H. (Cora) Stough in the Junior Department for twenty-five years.

The Pelham pastor in 1966, began preaching at County Line Methodist Church on first and third Sunday Mornings at an earlier hour than his regular worship service. This practice continues today.

Somewhat earlier the practice of a monthly family night was resumed in the social hall with members enjoying an informal meal and Christian fellowship.

In recent years a nursery has been maintained for the care of young children during church services and special occasions.

Particular honor came to Hand Memorial in June, 1967, by being selected "Church of the Year" of Thomasville District.

From June 1967-68, Dr. W. C. Arwood served his church as chairman of the Official Board with Scott Turner taking that office in 1968.

Since May 1967, David Wingate, a professor of voice from the Florida State University, has directed the choir. David has been responsible for many outstanding musical programs during this time including "The Messiah", "Seven Last Words", and "Amahl and the Night Visitors" in addition to music for worship services.

He now works with the Youth Choir and music for night services having replaced Tom Warnock, who had worked in that capacity 1969-70.

Mrs. M. W. Turner, Jr. is church organist assisted by Miss Lilah Summerlin. Pianists for night services have been Mrs. Effie Norman and Miss Lilah Summerlin.

Members and friends of the congregation were privileged to hear two bishops in 1968, in the church sanctuary. Bishop Arthus J. Moore (retired) preached on the morning of October 31, 1968, and on December 25, 1968, Bishop John Owen Smith brought the message at the morning worship service.

Christmas 1968, was made memorable by the lighting of the first Christmon Tree in the sanctuary. The creation of the hand made symbols of Christianity occupied countless hours of the Young People under direction of Mrs. F. L. Duke and Miss Rebecca Turner. Additional symbols have been added each year, and the church receives inspiration during the Advent season from the establishment of this tradition in the church.

It was in 1968 that the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church were merged, and the name became Hand Memorial United Methodist Church.

Conference of June 1969, brought Carroll W. Crosby, his wife Edna, and daughters Jeannie, Cathy, and Cindy to the parsonage home. At morning worship service on April 4, 1971, a Yamaha studio piano was dedicated in memory of Cindy Jo Crosby, six year old daughter of the Carroll Crosbys, whose accidental death occurred on October 31, 1969.
With changes in the church structure in 1969, James C. Brim, Jr. became the first Chairman of Council on Ministries and Robert Chambers became the first Chairman of the Administrative Board. Chairman of Trustees was M. W. Turner, Jr.

Church treasurer N. James Hodges, continues at this time having followed Robert Powell some ten years ago.

In 1971, church officials include Scott Turner, Chairman of the Council on Ministries and J. C. Brim Jr., Chairman of the Administrative Board.

Quarterly Conference was replaced by Charge Conference. Meetings are set by District Superintendent, Rev. C. E. Cariker.

Adjoining property was obtained by the church in 1969, from property owned by Mrs. J. R. Clements.

"Fairs and Spares", a new Sunday School Class was established in 1969 for young adults.

Also in 1969, under direction of the Rev. Crosby, a pictorial church directory was published. Certain historical facts, pictures of the church, church groups, and many of the members are included.

Today in 1971, we of Hand Memorial United Methodist Church, are proud of our church heritage; we are proud of our resources; we are proud of our potential. At the same time we are aware of uncertainties, needs, and difficulties of the future.

Shall we commit ourselves to the challenge by striving to build a church of greater love, unity, and service.

PART THREE
1971 - 1975

A church secretary, on a regular basis, was employed for the first time in 1971. Mrs. J. Allen Eu-banks (Eugenia Turner) filled this position and continues to serve at the present time. Because of her lifetime connection with this church, her understanding and interest add to the effectiveness of her work in the church office.

From about that time a church newsletter has been issued to all members at regular intervals. In this way the program and activities of the church have been kept before its members.

A new tradition appeared in the form of "Camp Meeting" services on each Sunday morning in August with informality and the singing of old hymns. The members look forward each year to this welcome change with renewed spirit.

Some activities, in 1971, included the formation of Prayer Groups, Men's Monthly Community Prayer Breakfast, and Community Night Services (on fifth Sunday nights.)

A church Building Improvement Committee with J. C. Brim, Jr., chairman was appointed in April 1971, for the purpose of planning for future expansion and progress. Others on the committee were: Mrs. Beverly Bernier, Rev. Carroll Crosby, Mrs. Cornelia Eubanks, L. D. Hand, James Hodges, W. C. Kinard, Robert Powell, Kelly Stough, and M. W. Turner, Jr. Of course, as through the years, accomplishments were made through Christian missions, Vacation Church School, Youth groups, choirs, family nights and related church activities.

Each year our church is represented at Epworth-By-The-Sea at School of Missions and other conferences and seminars. M. W. Turner, Jr., one of our members, has served on the Official Board of Epworth-By-The-Sea.
for several years.

The American Flag for the sanctuary was presented in memory of Lt. Harris Alan Folmar in 1972, by his grandmother, Mrs. H. C. Harris. Somewhat later the Christian Flag for the sanctuary was presented in memory of Dr. H. C. Harris by the family.

In 1972, to succeed the Church Improvement Committee, the Building Committee was appointed. This effective committee continues today and is presently working toward future improvements and additions. Members of this committee are: Albert D. Thomson, Jr., chairman; J. C. Brim, Jr.; J. C. Calhoun; J. L. Banks; Fred B. Hand, Jr.; Robert Powell; Perry Simpson; Kelly Stough; and M. W. Turner, Jr.

"Amahl and the Night Visitors" was presented by the choir, with David Wingate director, for Christmas 1972.

The United Methodist Women was organized in January 1973 to succeed the former Women's Society of Christian Service with 77 charter members. Mrs. Glenn A. Scruggs (Doris Summerlin) served as the first president in 1973 and 1974. New groups were formed to replace the circles, each bearing the name of a Biblical woman chosen for particular qualities. These include Joanna, Lydia, Martha, Phoebe, Rebekah, and Susanna.

An important outgrowth of United Methodist Women was the establishment of a church library in the church school building during 1973 and 1974. Four UMW members formed a library and music group and were responsible for all details having to do with planning, designing, and financing custom shelving, procuring and cataloging books, and maintenance. We were fortunate to have professionally trained librarians on this committee with Mrs. F. Louis Duke chairman. Serving with her, are Mrs. M. A. Hancock, Mrs. Dalton Gandy and Mrs. M. W. Turner, Jr. Many memorials have been given for the purchase of books already in use. There are books for reference and guidance, children's books, devotion-al materials, and for interest for all ages, both fiction and nonfiction. The dedication of Hand Memorial Church Library took place on April 20, 1975.

The County Line United Methodist Church which had been on the charge with Hand Memorial since 1966, was closed at Charge Conference on November 29, 1973. Twenty-two members of the total membership of forty at that time, were added to Hand Memorial United Methodist Church roll.

The new conference year in 1973 brought Paul A. Sauls, his wife Lorene and daughter Becky to our church home. He is presently serving in his third year.

Later during the year in 1973, the Camilla-Pelham United Methodist Men's Fellowship was organized. Also in that year the Christian Leadership School was held in this church.

The church continued to cooperate with the Methodist Children's Home, Golden Cross, Missions, World Service, Higher Education, Kingdom Builders, Lake Janaluska, Epworth-By-The-Sea, and other special gifts.

Classes in church membership training are held annually during the week of Palm Sunday.

Jerold C. Teachey began his duties as choir director in 1974 and serves now in that capacity. "The Seven Last Words of Christ" was presented that year. Mrs. M. W. Turner, Jr. continues as organist with Miss Lilah Summerlin as assistant. New choir robes were purchased in 1975.

Each summer special activities are planned for the children and young people including vacation church school, crafts, studies, and other activities. Special emphasis is on music and choirs. Mary Ruth Smith directed the youth program in 1973 and was followed by Sherri Rouse in 1974. Elizabeth Cariker, daughter of our District Superintendent, C. E. Cariker, is our 1975 director.
Dedication of the steeple on Hand Memorial United Methodist Church on December 22, 1974, celebrated the realization of plans begun in 1973 to honor the memory of Florence Hollis Hand, widow of the late J. L. Hand for whom the church was named. Special lighting surrounds the steeple and at night can be seen from a considerable distance to give a spiritual uplift. Donors of the steeple and its special lighting are Mrs. Hand's children including Mr. and Mrs. Fuller E. Callaway, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Hand, Mr. and Mrs. Fred B. Hand, Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Hand, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles O. Morgan.

The church budget for 1975 amounts to $40,498.00, largest budget in the history of the church. Membership stands today at 365. Church buildings and lands are valued at $230,000.00 while the parsonage and furnishings have an evaluation of $55,000.00.

Combining informal suppers in the church social hall with the worship service proved successful and increased the attendance at the night service. Mrs. Loyce Parrow and her "Martha" church hostesses prepared and served attractive suppers each Sunday night. Family night is observed on one Sunday night of each month, with all members bringing covered dishes.

Special observances of Mother's Day has added meaning to the worship service in recent years. In 1975, two mothers were especially commemorated in the church family. Mrs. Perry Shiver (Nell Taylor) and Mrs. B. B. Cliett (Bethuel Bradford) were recognized for their many years of service and loyalty to their church, and each was presented with a gift.

Our beautiful stained glass windows in the sanctuary were professionally cleaned in 1975. A workmen, also an art student, remarked as he worked on the north wall window of "Jesus the Boy in the Temple", "I hope you people know that this type glass cannot be bought today at any price." He referred to the window memorials to Judson Larrabee Hand and Emma Collinsworth Hand. On the east wall the beautiful stained glass portrayal of "Christ in Gethsemane" and flanking windows are memorials to John Octavious McElvey and Mary Bradford McElvey; Nathaniel Bradford and Sara Wilson Bradford.

Some members who have held posts of high responsibility in the church program during these recent years include W. C. Arwood, J. C. Calhoun, Robert Chambers, J. B. Chism, Jr., J. Leonard Eubanks, James Hodges, Henry Jones, W. C. Kinard, Robert Murrah, Jr., Robert Powell, Winton Powell, Perry Simpson, Henry Steed, Kelly Stough, Miss Lillah Summarlin, Albert D. Thomson, Jr., M. W. Turner, Jr., Scott Turner, and Jack Wilkes. C. D. May and Olin B. McElvey serve as honorary members of the Administrative Board.

Plans are formulating for church Homecoming in October of this year (1975), the second ever held. Our first Homecoming was held on November 26, 1951 when Shannon Holloway was minister of Hand Memorial. We look forward to Rev. Holloway's return for our 1975 Homecoming in October and to his preaching the autumn revival at that time.

Hand Memorial United Methodist Church will celebrate its Centennial in the year 1978. Today let us be grateful for the faith and accomplishments of all those who have preceded us. May we, as dedicated Christian men and women, move forward earnestly into the second century of Hand Memorial United Methodist Church, appreciative of our church heritage, mindful of the challenges of today's world, and committed to the future with our prayers, our gifts, and our service to Jesus Christ, our Lord.