HISTORY

of

HAPEVILLE METHODIST CHURCH
The first organization for religious worship in Hapeville community was a little Sunday School organized by a Methodist woman, Mrs. E. M. Sims, under the shade trees of her front yard, in the year of 1873. Years afterwards, when the first Methodist Church was established, 1908-1909, a banner won by this Sunday School was placed in the corner stone.

The Hapeville Church movement was started in January 18, 1908, at the quarterly conference held at Mount Gilead Church, when the following were elected trustees: J. L. Sims, C. L. Carmichael, Joseph W. Humphries, W. A. Landers, T. M. Hamilton, Jr., W. W. Allen, H. A. Coleman, E. T. Landers and H. P. Landrum.

On July 9, 1908 a lot was given by the late Judge John D. Humphries valued at $750.00 on which the first church was erected and the present church now stands.

At the quarterly conference held at Mount Zion Methodist Church, November 7, 1908, the board of trustees named above became the building committee with the addition of J. W. Humphries and R. O. McCord.

In order to help create interest and enthusiasm for the new church movement a tent meeting was held during the summer of 1908 on the grounds immediately in front of the present church which was conducted by Dr. Wallace Rogers.

The long looked for day . . . that of the laying of the corner stone . . . came July 16, 1909. The address for this memorable occasion was made by Dr. Joel T. Daves, presiding elder of the Atlanta District. The large gathering of about six hundred people was served a sumptuous barbecue dinner.

Work on the new church went steadily forward and in due time the building was completed. The first service was held in the church Oct. 24, 1909 at 7:30 p.m. The sermon was delivered by Dr. Joel T. Daves, followed by a series of services during which time Dr. S. R. Belk was the principle speaker. At the close of this meeting November 4, 1909 a society was organized with 183 members by the Rev. M. M. Walraven, Pastor of the Hapeville Circuit.

At the annual conference in November 1909 the Rev. P. A. Kellet was assigned as the first pastor of Hapeville Methodist Church. The following have served as pastors in the order named: H. W. Joiner, L. W. Rivers, W. H. Clark, J. H. Barton, Arthur Manus, J. R. Jordan and E. D. Hale.

The Rev. Hale's pastorate began in November 1925. By this time the
membership had grown so large that the church could no longer adequately accommodate the Sunday School and Church services and, being also in need of repair, it was deemed inadvisable to enlarge it.

A canvass for the purpose of erecting a new building was made and the sum of $22,990.00 was subscribed.

June 24, 1928 a special session of the quarterly conference was called with the presiding elder, the Rev. J. S. Jenkins, in charge at which time resolutions were introduced authorizing the membership to erect a new church building. At this conference a building committee was appointed as follows: Dr. W. Frank Wells, Chairman, Thomas Lewis, Secretary, Miss Eleanor Pace, Mrs. W. E. Harrison, Mrs. C. R. McWhorter, Mrs. D. W. Austin, Prof. Jere A. Wells, W. B. Stewart, H. J. White, Joseph W. Humphries, H. L. McElhannon, H. E. Smith, W. A. Landers, J. L. Simms, Walter Kinsman, A. H. Harrison and L. H. Williamson.

The erection of the present brick building was begun about the middle of March 1929, on the same location, the only difference being in the frontage - the present church to face the park along College Street instead of Atlanta Avenue. The cornerstone was laid with a very impressive ceremony at which time Judge John D. Humphries spoke.

During the time the new church was being built Joseph W. Humphries and John D. Humphries needed in escrow the lot directly in front of the building as long as it is used for church purposes.

In the days that followed the new building went steadily upward and outward until its final completion at a cost of $42,000.00.

The first service in the new building was held September 15, 1929 with Bishop Warren A. Candler delivering the sermon at the eleven o'clock hour. After a basket dinner was served several former pastors appeared on the afternoon program with Dr. John S. Jenkins, presiding elder, as guest speaker. The pastor, the Rev. E. D. Hale, preached his first sermon in the new building at the evening hour, a union Methodist service shared with the Baptist congregation. Perhaps due to the "Methodist environment" the Baptist minister, the late B. J. W. Graham, could not refrain from taking a collection, receiving from his members alone $1,061.00 which was graciously turned over to the Methodist Building Fund.

The spirit of cooperation was beautifully manifested throughout the entire building program, though this was during the days of the depression. Our church has had the distinction of meeting all of its obligations as they came due in spite of circumstances of the depression.

With respect to its financial obligations the church was most generously endowed by a contribution from the late Mr. J. R. Hunnicutt, whose constant loyalty and devotion to members of the Committee was a stimulation of the entire church membership.

May 1947 - Due to phenomenal increases in membership and attendance the church launched a building program of expansion and modernization. In the months that followed the sanctuary was lengthened and ten pews added. At the same time the church school capacity was increased more than fifty per cent by extending the building twenty-five feet toward Atlanta Avenue and the same toward Fulton Avenue. Within a year after its enlargement the church school attendance had filled the building to capacity.
The total cost of this building program, including an automatic heating system, was $75,550.00. Through the united support and sacrificial gifts of the entire church membership, more than half of this cost was paid during the period of construction. In addition to this, new furnishings were paid for during this time. Arrangements were made to finance the remainder of the building cost as a part of the regular budget over a ten year period.

During this 1947 program of building the church sustained irreparable losses in the deaths of three of its leaders who were members of the Building Committee. Mr. Fred G. Turner died July 3; Mr. Jere A. Wells died August 7; and Dr. W. Frank Wells died November 7.

The 1947 Building Committee was as follows:

Dr. W. Frank Wells, Chairman until his death Nov. 7, 1947
Mr. Ben H. Hutchinson, Chairman after November 7
Mr. Will E. Harrison, Vice-Chairman
Mr. E. Marvin King, Treasurer
Mr. Thomas Lewis, Secretary
Mr. Leon Harrison
Miss Bernice Jones
Mrs. W. S. Northcutt
Mr. Van B. Smith
Mr. Fred Turner
Mr. Jere A. Wells
Miss Josephine Wells

Since the erection of the present building many improvements have been made including the installation of a pipe organ due largely to the efforts of the members of the choir. Under the direction of Mrs. D. C. Starnes, organist and director, two splendid choirs have been developed. Mrs. E. L. Weinberg became the first church secretary and continues to serve in that capacity.

In summarizing the progress of the Hapeville Methodist Church, it would be incomplete without a mention of the annex our congregation has erected in Cuba, the Hapeville Methodist Church of Cuba. The membership of the local Hapeville Methodist Church contributed $3,000.00 to erect the building in Cuba. It is built of native stucco. Gifts have been sent to them since their building was completed.

As the church activities have increased so have the demands made upon the church leadership to the extent of acquiring a Youth Director.

The church has also built a beautiful brick scout hut on an attractive ten acrea of land owned by the church.

In 1950 a new brick parsonage was built and furnished at a cost of $50,000.00.

The following have served as pastors of the present church in its remodeled structure: E. D. Hale, W. M. Twiggs, J. H. Allison, Henry T. Smith, E. C. Wilson, L. E. Jones, W. C. Rudd, and J. J. Sneed.