

A B R I E F H I S T O R Y

of

THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Hartwell, Georgia

May 19, 1974

Hart County was created by an act of the legislature that was introduced on December 7, 1853 and passed in February of 1854. The County of Hart and the town of Hartwell were named for Nancy Hart, a famous patriot of the American Revolution. The land was a part of tract given up by the Cherokee Indians in 1783.

On May 12, 1854, 100 acres of land were purchased on which to locate the county seat. Lots were set aside for churches and schools in the planning. Originally a lot on the corner of Howell and Carter Street was set aside for the Methodist but in 1859 this was sold and our present location was purchased.

The Hartwell Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was instituted in 1854. The Rev. Howell Parks served as Senior Pastor and the Rev. William S. Turner as the Junior Pastor. The church was on the Hartwell Circuit, which was composed of Hartwell, Bethesda, Cokesbury, Providence, Macedonia, Mt. Zion, and later was to include New Harmony and Liberty Hill.

The Charter members included John B. Benson, Mrs. Elizabeth Benson, Col. P. E. DeVant, Mrs. P. E. DeVant, John R. Kay, Mrs. Lucinda Kay, Fred Hodges, Mrs. Martha Hodges, James Jones, Mrs. Mary Louisa Jones, Thomas M. Holland, Mrs. Julia Holland, Miss Mary Ellen Holland, Miss Julia Caroline Holland, Chesley L. Scott, Mrs. Eliza Scott, Fred Stephenson, Mrs. Mary Stephenson, and J. G. Justice.

Having no church building, services were held in the territory courthouse, a wooden structure on the north east corner of the public square. When the first brick courthouse in the center of the square was finished in 1858 the court room was used as a temporary place for Sunday School

and worship.

The first Church building was built by John R. Kay in 1859. It was a large frame building painted white. It had large windows with a tall steeple. This was the only church to be built in Hartwell until after the War Between the States. The use of the building was extended to the other denominations.

One early pastor observed, "Our church had a small membership, but was composed of earnest christians anxious to accomplish the greatest good for the community."

During the 1880's the building was remodeled. In 1891 a new bell was purchased for the church. The bell alone, without the fixtures weighed 1,050 pounds, it was "made of the best bell metal and had the tone of A flat." The original bell was given to the First Presbyterian Church for their new building.

Through the years these bells have tolled, calling men to prayer at church. The present bell has been used to declare the coming of peace of the closing of the two world wars.

During these early years the church remained a part of a circuit, with preaching services being held once a month. The Hartwell Sun of January 17, 1877 showed in the religious directory, with W. T. Norman as pastor, the following schedule: Bethesda, 1st Sunday, Hartwell, 2nd Sunday, Mt. Zion, 2nd Sunday (4PM), Redwine, 3rd Sunday, Macedonia, 3rd Sunday, 4:00PM, and Providence, 4th Sunday.

The Hartwell Sun observed on May 21, 1897, "Nothing can avert it! A building boom is on in Hartwell. During the summer the Methodist will

build a handsome brick church edifice on Howell Street, a number of brick and stone buildings are being built around the square, replacing the old wooden ones. Many nice residences are being built.

Our part of the "boom" was the building of our present sanctuary. The Rev. C. A. Jamison was the pastor at the start of construction and the Rev. T. J. Warlick, was in charge at completion in 1898. The gothic style plan was by Willis F. Denny, architect of Atlanta. a young German interior decorator, Mr. Didscheuneit of Atlanta, had charge of all painting and woodwork. The sanctuary was painted a soft shade of rose with white fringe around the walls where they joined the ceilings.

The art glass windows made of Tiffany glass were executed by the W. R. Orr Company of Atlanta. The memorial window to the Bensons was designed by D. H. Schurman. The large front window in memory of John R. Kay was donated by the citizens of Hartwell.

To make room for this new building the old one had to be removed. The building was sold at public auction on July 17, 1897 at 11:00 AM. A. G. McCurry bought the building to be converted into other buildings. The Hartwell Sun of July, 1897 said "The Methodist Church steeple was pulled down by horse power on Monday morning. Many hearts were saddened to see the sacred old edifice, the first church in town, dismantled.

While the church was under construction a special side track of the Hartwell Railroad was laid from Hodges Park down West Howell Street to the church to bring car loads of brick, granite, slate and other building supplies. The Methodist Church became the first building in Hartwell other than the Hartwell Mill to have electricity.

Through these early years and until about the middle of this century the Hartwell Church was connected with the Hartwell Camp Grounds. Services were held for a week including the first Sunday of August. Many of our families "tented" at the camp ground. The camp ground is the present Youth Center of the Athens-Elberton District.

Three Bishops have preached at First United Methodist Church of Hartwell. Bishop George Foster Pierce preached on June 24, 1874. Bishop Lucis Holsey of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now Christian Methodist Episcopal) preached in the 1880's. He was instrumental in the founding of Paine College in Augusta. Bishop Arthur J. Moore preached on July 6, 1941 and on October 5, 1952.

Bishop Moore's second time in Hartwell was for the opening of our Educational Building. This three story structure was built for \$750,000.00 in 1952. The Rev. W. M. Barnett was the pastor.

The present parsonage was built in 1953 while the Rev. Louie Huckaby was pastor. This is located at 415 West Howell Street. The only other parsonage is the house that stands at the corner of Franklin and Chandler Streets.

The sanctuary was completely redone during the ministry of the Rev. Hubert Flanagan in 1963. There was an addition to the parsonage during the ministry of the Rev. Bob Kerr.

The United Methodist Church has evolved from several mergers during the years of Hartwell First. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, came from the split that occurred between North and South in 1844. The two churches along with the Methodist Protestant Church merged in 1939 to form the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church and the Evan-

gelical United Brethren Church merged in 1968 to form the United Methodist Church.

The dates and facts of history do not reflect the true history of the congregation of Hartwell First as much as the statement by an early pastor describing her as a church, "composed of earnest Christians anxious to accomplish the greatest good for the community.". The first Church of Hartwell has always been active in programs of mission and service. The present missionary we support is Dr. Morse Saito in Japan. Also the church has been active in programs of worship and education.

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FORMER PASTORS (records incomplete)

Howell Parks	1854
Peter M. Ryburn	1855
A. W. Williams	1869 - 1870
John W. Baker	
William T. Norman	1875
W. A. Farris	1879
W. M. D. Bond	1884 - 1885
N. L. Glenn	1885 - 1886
W. Dunbar	1886 - 1888
W. M. Winn	1888 - 1891
J. Ware Brown	1891 - 1892
R. B. O. England	1892 - 1894
Ford McRee	1894 - 1895
Crawford Jackson	1895 - 1896
C. A. Jamison	1896 - 1898
T. J. Warlick	1898 - 1900
H. W. Joiner	1900 - 1901
A. W. Williams	1901 - 1902

FORMER PASTORS (Cont.)

H. B. Mays	1902 - 1904
W. W. Wadsworth	1904 - 1905
J. M. Bowden	1905 - 1906
W. P. King	1906 - 1908
O. L. Kelly	1908 - 1911
H. F. Branham	1911 - 1912
T. R. Kendall, Jr.	1912 - 1915
F. J. Mashburn	1915 - 1917
W. R. Foote	1917 - 1920
Homer L. Thompson	1920 - 1922
J. H. Barton	1922 - 1926
J. W. King	1926 - 1928
Frank E. Jenkins	1928 - 1931
Henry T. Smith	1931 - 1935
J. G. Logan	1935 - 1937
R. L. Whitehead	1937 - 1939
W. W. Cash	1939 - 1944
H. H. Dillard	1944 - 1949
W. M. Barnett	1949 - 1952
Louie F. Huckaby	1952 - 1957
Robert B. Hays	1957 - 1962
Hubert L. Flanagan, Jr.	1962 - 1964
Frank Q. Echols	1964 - 1966
Robert Allen Kerr	1966 - 1970
William Hugh Cauthen	1970 - 1973
Berry Wiley Stephens	1973 -

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