AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF
HEADLAND HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH
1951-1959

In the summer of 1951, the Rev. George O. King, pastor of the First Methodist Church of East Point, recognized the need for a new Methodist Church in the rapidly growing west side area of East Point, Ga. He therefore employed the services of Robert Couch, a theology student in the Candler School of Theology of Emory University, to conduct a survey of this section to determine whether or not the families in that area would be receptive to a new Methodist Church. The survey showed enough interest to warrant the First Methodist Church of East Point to sponsor and assist the district superintendent of the Atlanta-East District, Dr. Nat G. Long, in starting a new church.

Several meetings were held in the homes of prospective members to discuss organizational plans. In September, 1954, the use of space in Radio Station WJH on Dodson Drive was obtained by Rev. King for services on Sunday afternoons. Rev. King, seeking someone to pastor this small new flock, sought the help of Dr. Long. Robert D. Bickel, a student at the Candler School of Theology, and a resident of Indiana, was appointed to be the church's first pastor.

On Sunday afternoon, October 3, 1954, the church was formally organized as the Headland Heights Methodist Church, the name proposed by Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Yarbrough. Dr. Nat G. Long, District Superintendent, presided over this meeting which was held on the grounds of Radio Station WJH. Fourteen members were received into the church at this meeting. These members were:

- Mrs. Lee Deck, Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Yarbrough, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius F. Connally, Mr. and Mrs. Jack B. Smith, Mrs. Robert D. Bickel. All were received by transfer of membership with the exception of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, who became members by profession of their faith.

Several weeks later the following officers of the church were elected:

STEWARDs: Cornelius F. Connally, Marvin Yarbrough, Conrad Thompson, James M. Spivey, Douglas H. Johnson, and Jack B. Smith.

TRUSTEES: Marvin Yarbrough, Conrad Thompson, and Douglas H. Johnson.
President V.S.C.S. - Mrs. Conrad Thompson; Church Secretary - Mrs. Douglas H. Johnson; Church Treasurer - Mrs. Marvin Yarbrough; Church School Superintendent - James M. Spivey.

The first meeting of the Official Board was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Thompson on Ivydale Street. At this meeting the following were elected: Chairman of the Official Board - Conrad Thompson; Recording Steward - Mrs. Douglas Johnson; Chairman, Commission on Stewardship and Finance - Douglas H. Johnson.

After this organizational meeting, regular meetings were held in the homes of members of the Board every two weeks. The principal discussion at these meetings involved the obtaining of the necessary property for a new church, the raising of necessary monies for operation, and the obtaining of new members.

During the months of October and November, members of the Board and the pastor investigated several prospective sites for a church. The most desirable of properties available was a twelve-acre tract of land located at 211/7 Dodson Drive and owned by Mrs. Mary E. Rosser. Mrs. Rosser offered to sell this property to the church for the sum of $15,000.00 with a down payment of $5,000.00 and the balance to be paid in three years. The First Methodist Church of East Point contributed $2,500.00 toward the down payment. Dr. Long stated that he could obtain $2,000.00 provided that the church members would raise the balance of $500.00, which they did within two weeks' time. The gift of $2,000.00 obtained from the Atlanta-East District Board of Missions and Church Extension by Dr. Long was the first of many such gifts in the first four and one-half years of the church's existence.

In November, 1954, a special meeting of the Quarterly Conference was held in the chapel of the First Methodist Church of East Point. A resolution was presented and unanimously adopted authorizing the trustees of the church to negotiate the purchase of the Rosser property, this being accomplished forthwith. Shortly thereafter, the members of the church began to renovate the home formerly occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Rosser in order that it might be suited for worship services and church school classes. An addition was built on to the original dwelling by means of volunteer labor from the membership. This addition almost doubled the original floor space.

The name of Headland Heights was first called at an Annual Conference in June of 1955.
To begin the first full conference year in the history of the church, Jack B. Smith was elected as chairman of the Official Board. Serving with Mr. Smith were: James M. Spivey, Chairman, Commission on Education and Church School Superintendent; John P. Yates, Chairman, Commission on Stewardship and Finance; Jose Nieves, Chairman, Commission on Missions.

Warren Smith began the new conference year as chairman of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism, but soon resigned. His post was filled by W. A. Moseley. Mrs. Conrad Thompson was again elected as President of the W.S.C.S.

When the Annual Conference met in June of 1956, Headland Heights showed a membership of 65 and a church school enrollment of 159. The same officers were again elected to lead the church with one exception. Mrs. Z. S. Albright was elected as the new president of the W.S.C.S.

The need was soon felt for a permanent building in which the congregation could worship, and where Church School classes could meet as well as in the Fellowship Hall, which soon became the grandiose title for the original make-shift structure. At the First Quarterly Conference a Building Committee was nominated with George L. Denny serving as chairman. Other members on the committee were: James W. Thomas, Jose Nieves, J. D. Upchurch, and K. H. Frantz. A formal resolution was presented and unanimously adopted making it possible for the trustees to borrow the necessary funds, which they did from the Atlanta Federal Savings and Loan Association.

In October of 1956 ground was broken for the first building in a master building program of which the firm of Barker and Cunningham was the architect. This structure was completed in the spring of 1957 at the remarkably low cost of $25,000.00. The original design was for it to serve as part of the final educational plant. Modifications were made in order that it might serve as a chapel until that time when an appropriately beautiful chapel could be realized.

During this period the pastor and his wife moved from the small home which was serving as a parsonage on Dodson Drive to an attractive five-room house at 844 Pinehurst Drive, East Point, which the church was able to rent for $90.00 a month.
In May, 1956, Rev. Bickel was called back to his own conference in Indiana. Headland Heights obtained as an interim pastor, Dr. Frederick C. Prussner, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

At the 1957 Annual Conference Headland Heights showed a total membership of 168 with a church school enrollment of 294.

At this Annual Conference the first full-time pastor was appointed to the church. He was the Rev. E. Owen Kellum, Jr. Within three months after Rev. Kellum assumed his duties, he and his wife were informed that the lease on the parsonage would expire the following March and that the owner wanted to reoccupy the home. After numerous discussions with the officials of the church (James M. Snively, Chairman of the Official Board; W. A. Moseley, Chairman, Commission on Membership and Evangelism; John P. Yates, Chairman Commission on Stewardship and Finance; C. S. Mitchell, Chairman, Commission on Education and Church School Superintendent; C. F. Connally, Chairman, Commission on Missions; Mrs. E. S. Albright, President, W.S.C.S.), it was decided that the trustees of the church, J. W. Thomas, president, should proceed to investigate the buying of an appropriate lot and the building of a church parsonage. Mr. Jack B. Smith was asked to serve in the capacity of general contractor. He and the pastor looked at numerous plans for building, and after due consideration arrived at one they thought could adequately serve as a parsonage.

In October of 1957 building was begun at 2405 Ben Hill Road, East Point. Many of the men of the church devoted their time and their talents to the building of the parsonage. In January, 1958, the parsonage was completed. It is a seven-room house consisting of living room, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, two complete baths, a pastor's study with outside entrance, and a full daylight basement. An additional 50 feet of frontage was offered to the church by Mr. William E. Peek, a member of the First Methodist Church, East Point, for the sum of $15,000.00, which was gratefully accepted. On May 18, 1958, the parsonage was consecrated at a special service held in the home over which Dr. Nat G. Long, District Superintendent, presided. The parsonage was built for approximately $15,000.00, but its market value has been appraised at $23,500.00.
During this same year, a Methodist Youth Fellowship was formally organized from the foundations already laid by Mr. C. F. Connally. A Methodist Men's Club was begun with thirty members, Mr. C. F. Connally, president. The church, through the supervision of the Methodist Men's Club, undertook the sponsorship of a Boy Scout Troop, designated as Troop 500.

At the end of the 1957-58 Conference year Rev. Kellum was able to report that Headland Heights showed a total membership of 253 and a church school enrollment of 380.

To lead the church during the conference year 1958-59 were:

- John P. Yates, Chairman, The Official Board; A. M. Merritt, Vice-Chairman; W. A. Moseley, Chairman, Commission on Membership and Evangelism; C. S. Mitchell, Chairman, Commission on Education; R. M. Whiting, Chairman Commission on Missions. Harrison Blake was elected as Chairman of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance but resigned in the fall. H. H. Guptill took over the duties for the remainder of the conference year. Harold Nash, formerly the choir director, was elected as Church School Superintendent. R. H. Elrod accepted the position as choir director. Mrs. N. C. Johnson was elected as President of the W.S.C.S. W. J. Stanton was elected as president of the Methodist Men's Club.

This year marks another milestone in the growth of the church, for in the winter of 1958 plans were begun for a new educational unit for the church school. It was to be a flat-roofed, one-story building holding from ten to twelve classrooms. The approximate cost would be $37,000.00. The sum of $40,000.00 was borrowed from Atlanta Federal and Loan Association after due church processes had been accomplished. A Building Committee was elected with K. H. Krantz as chairman. Work was begun in February, 1959, with a completion date set for July.

Elected to lead the church for the conference year 1959-60 are:

- W. A. Moseley, Chairman, The Official Board; George F. Owen, Vice-Chairman; Jack B. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Membership and Evangelism; George F. Owen, Chairman, Commission on Stewardship and Finance; R. M. Whiting, Chairman, Commission on Missions; C. S. Mitchell,
Chairman, Commission on Education; Harold Nash, Church School Superintendent; Mrs. J. D. Upchurch, President, W.S.C.S.; James W. Raney, Jr., President, Methodist Men's Club.

At the writing of this historical sketch of the church's growth (May 31, 1959), the church has a total membership of 317, and a church school enrollment of nearly 500.