

### HISTORY OF HILLCREST METHODIST CHURCH

The writer has been traveling the highway from Franklin to LaGrange since December 1930. The one thing that impressed him more than any other was the fact that there was no church of any description on the twenty miles from Franklin to LaGrange. He has asked himself the question each time he traveled the road WHY is there no church of any denomination, white or colored on this road? He felt that there should be a church of some description. But there was nothing he could do about it.

At the Annual Conference held in 1941 Asbury Methodist Church was placed on the Franklin Charge. About one-half of the members of Asbury lived on the highway around Hillcrest School. Under the Methodist Church law, this gave the Pastor of the Franklin Charge jurisdiction over the area around Hillcrest Community. He found that there was a division among the members of Asbury Church. Those living around Asbury Church constituted one division, and those living around Hillcrest the other. There was little fellowship between the two groups. He did not see any hopes of the two groups working together. He was convinced that another church should be organized.

During the summer of 1942 a Revival was held at the Hillcrest School Building. The writer did the preaching, Rev. J. K. Brown (pastor at that time at Roopville) led the singing; Miss Martha Johnson, now Mrs. C. T. Moore served as pianist and worked in the Daily Vacation Church School. It was the purpose of the writer to organize a Church in the community. Some self-appointed leaders decided that we would organize a Community Interdenomination church. The writer did not want to have any part in any such movement. He decided that the best procedure was to allow the movement to die a natural death from inattention, rather than to fight it.

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In a short time the idea of a community Interdenominational church was dead.

In the meeting at the School house, Charlotte Estes, now Mrs. Syrol McLain joined the church on profession of faith. Since the Methodist Church was not organized she was received into the Asbury Church. But Charlotte is rightfully speaking the first member of the Hillcrest Church.

In 1944 it was decided that the time was ripe for the organization of the church. Our District Superintendent, Rev. W. M. Twiggs was very much interested in the project. Mrs. Betty Render Morgan agreed to give a lot, and did give the lot where the church now stands. In May 1944 the District Superintendent, Rev. W. M. Twiggs, and the pastor, Rev. J. C. Adams rented a small tent, and erected it on the lot where the church now stands. They did the physical work of erecting the tent themselves. They secured some chairs and an old piano and held a Revival. Out of that Revival came the birth of Hillcrest Methodist Church.

It was definitely determined to erect a church building. There were two problems to be solved. One was to raise the money, and the other to secure permit to erect a building. The matter of securing the money was a drawn out affair. We needed a much better church than we could pay for in one lump sum. The building operation covered a period of several years. (More about that later).

The problem of securing a permit to build was very great. It was during World War II, and you had to have a permit to build anything. Your pastor went to Atlanta to confer with the officers in regard to a permit. The officer was hard boiled. He said he would live in a piano box before he would build him a house to live in. He finally said that we could build a church if we did not spend more than one thousand dollars. We had some timber promised us, but that timber could not be sawed any mill that cut as much as fifty thousand feet of lumber in a

year's time. It looked as though that would be impossible. We found that Mr. J. W. Combs at Big Springs had a saw mill in connection with his gin that had not run in more than a year's time. He sawed our first lumber. It looked rather foolish to haul the logs twelve miles farther than necessary in order to comply with a foolish requirement of law. Another problem was how best to build since we could only spend one thousand dollars. The question was whether to put up a temporary building that would be almost waste when we got ready to build the permanent building, or build on the permanent building. The latter plan was decided on. It was build according to the standard of church architecture that has been in use in Europe in their famous cathedrals. Take the height of your church adiforium, and double it for the width, and multiply the height by three for its length. That is called the one, two, three plan. The sanctuary of Hillcrest is fourteen feet high, twenty-eight feet wide, and forty-two feet long. The cheapest roof was put on. Every economy was practiced so that when we got ready to finish the building, there would be as little waste as possible. From the very beginning we had in mind the educational unit that was to be added as soon as finances would permit. The original building committee was composed of J. O. Barnes, W. J. Ringer, and J. R. Hall. The First Sunday School Superintendent was B. A. Johnson; the first W.S.C.S. president was Mrs. J. R. Hall.

J. O. Barnes, J. R. Hall, B. A. Johnson and W. J. Ringer were the first stewards.

The building was opened for the first regular service on the fifth Sunday evening in October 1944.

At the beginning of the new Conference year, December 1944, the pastor was already preaching at Asbury, Centralhatchee, Franklin, Harmon Salem and Wesley Chapel. It was quite a problem how to get in another preaching service on Sunday. Franklin was having services two Sundays each month. We solved the problem by having the evening service at

Salem the first Sunday afternoon instead of at night. Franklin agreed that we could use the third Sunday night, so that gave Hillcrest two Sunday night services a month. So far as the preaching services, that plan continued as long as the original pastor served the church.

During 1945 stained glass windows were placed in the church. This caused a great deal of amusement by people who did not know the reason. As you may recall roofing had been placed on the outside of the church building to make it warmer. The congregation had gone through the winter of 1944 without any trouble, for they did not need any more air than they were getting. As a matter of fact they did not need all that they were getting. But when Spring came we needed light and fresh air. We knew that eventually we would put in stained glass windows: why not do it, and avoid the expenses of buying plain windows to be used only for a short time. So they were put in. But the folks who did not understand asked why did that prescher put in the windows before he built the house? Improvements were made from time to time, until 1947 when the LaGrange District Conference was held at Hillcrest Church on Friday, April 25. This was a red letter day in the history of the church. The church had been brick veneered through the efficient help of our District Superintendent. At that time B. A. Johnson was Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. Martha\* Worley (now Mrs. C. T. Moore) was the Adult Counselor of the MYP; Mrs. Noah Gore was President of the W.E.C.S. and the following were the stewards of the church: J. B. Gasaway, J.R. Hall, B. A. Johnson and W. J. Ringer.

In <sup>1948</sup> ~~1947~~ the Troup Circuit was formed made up of Hillcrest, Asbury and Corinth. Rev. Felix Waddell was appointed Pastor and served the charge for two years.

- - - - - Written by Rev. J. C. Adams



1948-1950 Rev. Felix Waddell - Pastor

37 additions to the church.

Union Church (now Concord Baptist) was sold, \$1,000 was given to Hillcrest. This money was used to buy pulpit furniture, pews, piano, carpet and the floors were fixed. Church owed \$4200 when Rev. Waddell came and only \$400 when he left. The stewards during his pastorate were: Mrs. Noah Gore, Mrs. Louise Moore, Mr. J. L. Flournoy, Mr. J. O. Barnes, Mr. James Estes, Mr. Ed Brookshire, Mr. J. R. Hall.

1950-1952 Rev. Winton Carlock and Rev. Beverly Cook

The Sunday School rooms upstairs in the church were sealed.

1952-1954 Rev. W. S. Cruse - Pastor

Bought and remodeled the parsonage; bought kitchen stove, kitchen sink and hot water heater for parsonage. Bought stove for church kitchen.

1954 - 1957 Rev. Shelby Cook - Pastor

ADDITIONS

BY PROFESSION: 21 BY TRANSFER: 38 INFANTS BAPTIZED: 15

ORGANIZED:

Official Board	Methodist Men's Club
Membership & Evangelism Commission	Boy Scout Troop and Committee
Finance Commission	Cub Pack
Worker's Conference	Brownie Scouts
Mission Commission	Girl Scouts
Mid-week Prayer Meeting started again	

1954-1957 Rev. Shelby Cook - Pastor (continued)

SPENT ON CHURCH

Kitchen, dining room and one classroom in basement sealed and painted  
Water run to the church  
Sink put in church kitchen  
50 Hymn books purchased  
Curtains purchased for 5 classrooms  
Tiled the kitchen and dining room floor  
Purchased literature rack  
Bought 15 chairs for Kindergarten class and one large desk for pastor  
Repairs on church front and windows

SPENT ON PARSONAGE

Bedroom suit and 2 bedroom chairs  
Dining Room suit  
Hardwood floors in living room and dining room  
Built in cabinets in kitchen  
Window fan  
New door cut  
Two cement walks  
Shrubbery in yard

1957----- Rev. W. O. Dinkins-Pastor

Hillcrest Church was removed from the Troup Circuit and made a Station church. It is now listed in the Conference Journal as LaGrange, Hillcrest.