<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>Reverend Herbert D. Outlaw, Sr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>Lynne Miller Ginn, Historian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>Methodism in Norcross</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>Pastors of John Wesley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>The Story of Our Church Property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>The Organization of Our Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>The Spiritual Life of John Wesley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>The Growth of John Wesley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Chapter VII</td>
<td>Our Present Church Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Chapter VIII</td>
<td>Our Current Membership Roll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A wise person once said, "He that would know what shall be must consider what has been." There is truth in that statement. It is impossible and meaningless to consider the future apart from the past in any area of life but especially is this true in the life of the Church.

We at John Wesley United Methodist Church, in presenting this history of our young church, are particularly cognizant of the contribution of those who first met and started this church. At the same time, we are aptly aware of our own roles, prompted and aided by the Holy Spirit, as links in a long chain of events and people that history will call "John Wesley United Methodist Church."

We rejoice in our share of this destiny. We are as optimistic about the future of this church as we are grateful and proud of its past. May John Wesley United Methodist Church, as a representative of the Church Universal, always be the Church militant and triumphant because it represents God's best - Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord.
PREFACE

It has been a great privilege for me to be a member of a church so spiritually alive as that of John Wesley. A close-knit family atmosphere was the first obvious trait David and I noticed that Saturday in October, 1970 when we followed our noses to their annual Bar-B-Que. We attended church the next day and joined shortly thereafter.

As the membership has grown over the 15 years of its lifetime, the Holy Spirit too has grown. We attended as a family of two until the birth of our child in December 1978. We were proud to have her baptized into the family of God that lives, works, studies and shares at John Wesley.

The history of John Wesley is a story of commitment to Jesus Christ, through the commitments of its members. Although many families who had a part in the early days have moved on, their contributions do not go unheeded. What those 30 members began in 1966 continues today through the commitments of new families who are eager to do God's work today at John Wesley United Methodist Church.

Lynne Miller Ginn
July 1981
CHAPTER ONE

Methodism in Norcross - The Origin of John Wesley

In November 1965 the District and North Georgia Conference Board of Missions and Church Extension for the Atlanta-Emory District, under the leadership of Dr. Frank Moorhead, bought 10.6 acres of land in Gwinnett County for construction of a new Methodist church. Originally referred to as the Tucker Road mission, John Wesley United Methodist Church was located in a rapidly growing area northeast of Atlanta off Norcross-Tucker Road. The building site was chosen by the District Board and pastors in the community.

In June of the following year, Bishop John Owen Smith appointed the Rev. Tom Lanford pastor of John Wesley and the home he purchased for his family on Rockbridge Road became the first meeting place for the John Wesley congregation. In July 1966 Rev. Lanford held services in his carport with a 12 member congregation. Two additional services were held in the carport before moving in August to the newly built Rockbridge School.
Robert Story, Lay Leader of John Wesley for many years recalls those first Sundays. "We were allowed only one classroom. The chairs were too small and all religious books and literature had to be removed each time we met. The place left something to be desired as a worship center."

In September the name "John Wesley" was chosen for the new church. "We almost named our church 'Rockbridge Road Methodist,'" Mr. Story explained, "but right before we voted, Tom said it had been called to his attention by Dr. Frank Moorhead that there was not a church in the District named after John Wesley. There had been one years ago, Wesley Memorial, but it was disbanded, so we unanimously voted on 'John Wesley' as the new name."

Rev. Lanford, Robert Story, Dr. Moorhead, District Superintendent, and Dr. Claude Haines, Sec. of the Board of Missions, met to discuss obtaining a temporary building for the property. The Board agreed to buy a mobile unit, 24 X 60 with a seating capacity for 112. The building contained a small office, kitchen, and 2 bathrooms. The congregation was required to provide a building of equal space for an educational building, so Rev. Lanford and Mr. Story searched for something affordable. A barracks-type building, which cost $2000 to move (the building was free), was found, cut in half, moved to the church property and remodeled by church members.

Bishop Smith consecrated the buildings and held charter service the 4th Sunday in November 1966.¹ Thirty charter members were present. Those members are listed as follows:

Ground was broken for the first permanent building on July 28, 1968 with actual construction beginning December 28, 1968. The building was completed June 15, 1969. Designed by architect John Dodson at an estimated cost of $138,000, the building contained 8 classrooms, a kitchen, office space and an interim sanctuary (fellowship hall) with a seating capacity of 300. Cost upon completion was $140,000.
CHAPTER TWO
Pastors Serving John Wesley

At the time John Wesley was established, it was included in the Atlanta-Emory District of the North Georgia Conference, but in 1977, it became part of the Atlanta-Chamblee District.

The first pastor to serve at John Wesley was Rev. Thomas Calvin Lanford (1966-1972). With his wife Roberta, and sons Tommy, Billy, and Jerry, Rev. Lanford led the John Wesley congregation for six years. He began preaching to a congregation of 12 members, but at the time he left to serve another church, the John Wesley congregation numbered over 300.

Clyde Ray Smith (1972-1975) served John Wesley for three years, with his wife Mottee and children Clyde Mark and Evie.

Burchard B. Berry (1975-1977) served John Wesley for two years, with his wife Martha and children Malivia and Bernie.

Herbert D. Outlaw (1977 to present) is the current pastor of John Wesley. Under his leadership the fellowship hall was enlarged and a new educational building was annexed to the present building, nearly doubling the size of the facility. His wife Margaret and sons Herb, Jr. and Mark are also part of
the big family at John Wesley. Rev. Outlaw also has a married
daughter, Renee, who lives the Atlanta area with her husband
and children.
CHAPTER THREE

The Story of Our Church Property

The land for John Wesley United Methodist Church was purchased in 1965 and temporary facilities were used for meetings until completion of the sanctuary in 1969. (See Chapter one.) Pews were not added to the sanctuary until 1976.

The army barracks building, purchased for $2000, remained a part of the church until shortly before the addition of the new wing in 1980. At that time it was given to the Boy Scouts by the church and they sold it to McManus Housemovers for $500 and removed from our property.

In addition to the original sanctuary and the army barracks building, another "trailer" was loaned to John Wesley by the Chamblee District in 1976 for use as classrooms. It too was removed for construction of the new educational wing.

The educational wing and enlargement of the existing fellowship hall was designed by architect Eugene McPheeters at an estimated cost of $245,000. It was built under the direction of Charles Story, one of the charter members of John Wesley.
Due to a financial "strain" which John Wesley witnessed for several years, special projects were sponsored to raise money to begin construction of a new educational building. The Building Committee sponsored a "Crock Pot Sunday" once every month for members to contribute toward the building fund. Peanut butter jars were given out to each family of the church, and the slogan "One Brick at a Time" was attached to each jar. Members were encouraged to put all their change into the jar and to come forward that designated Sunday to pour the contents of their jar directly into a big Crock Pot at the end of the service. Since we were located now on Jimmy Carter Boulevard (during Jimmy Carter's presidency), the peanut butter jar idea seemed logical.

Other groups of the church sponsored money raising campaigns for the Building Fund, such as recycling aluminum. Also, a community magic show was held and proceeds were donated to the building fund by the magician, David Ginn, who is a member of John Wesley. When $50,000 was raised by members, a loan was obtained to begin construction.

There have been other noticeable changes to the John Wesley property over the years. The first building sat in the midst of a graveled parking lot, but in 1974 the parking lot was moved to the rear of the building and paved. Now, behind the parking lot is a softball field which has been a project of The Men's Club.

One important change to be noted is the address of the property. Although the church remains at its original site, the 2000 Norcross Tucker Road address was changed to 5320 Jimmy Carter Boulevard in 1976.
The first church parsonage was located at 3247 Rockbridge Road, and was owned by Rev. Tom Lanford. He sold the parsonage to the church in 1969 for $23,491.27.

A new parsonage was purchased in April 1981. Located in the Trails Subdivision off Jimmy Carter Boulevard, the home is located at 583 Old Mill Court. Purchase price was approximately $88,000.
CHAPTER FOUR
The Organized Life of the Church

Since the first meetings were held in the temporary facilities, church school has also been held. The first established adult classes in the 1969 building were The Crusaders Class, The Tom Lanford Class, The Seekers Class, as well as the children's classes.

Presently, the Crusaders Class, The Seekers Class, The Joy Class, The Word Class, The Young Christian Fellowship Class, and The Navigators are the adult classes.

The Methodist Men's Club was chartered in January 1967 with ten members. It has continued to be active, sponsoring Cub and Boy Scouts (555) and an Annual Bar-B-Que and Softball Teams.

The United Methodist Women was organized in 1966 and continues to sponsor programs for women and their families, such as exercise classes, luncheons, banquets, and spiritual retreats. The UMW meets on a monthly basis at the church. It is also active in community affairs such as Meals On Wheels, a program for the elderly and shut-ins of Gwinnett County.
It sponsors the Mother's Day Out program, held 3 days per week at the church. UMW is also active in The Methodist Children's Home and Wesley Woods in Atlanta.

MYF has been active since the beginning of the church also. These young people participate in many activities both at church and in their homes, and they attend retreats for further christian fellowship. They sponsor fund-raising projects throughout the year to earn money to attend retreats and camp, and perform many services for the other church activities throughout the year.

There are three choirs at John Wesley, the Chancel (adult) Choir, under the direction of Billy Dowdle; the Children's Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Barbara Morris; and a Cherub Choir which consists of ages 2-4. This group is led by Mrs. Betty Ann Salle.

Lay Leader at Johns Wesley has been Robert Story, Sr. for the first 14 years of the church. In 1980, Paul Horton was named Lay Leader.

For more complete details of the early structure of the church, a copy of the 1969 Directory is attached herewith.
CHAPTER FIVE
The Spiritual Life of the Church
(in Reference to Missions)

John Wesley has always participated in the missions programs of the United Methodist Church. The organ now used in the sanctuary was donated to our church by St. James because of our mission giving.

The first budget for John Wesley alloted a total of $500 for "Benevolences." In 1980, $3,300 was designated for World Service and Conference Benevolences.

Members support The Children's Home and Wesley Woods through their donations at designated time every year. Within our own church we have a Samaritan Club which assists anyone needing immediate help, if they are sincere in their need and can be assisted financially or otherwise (trips to the doctor, prescriptions picked-up, etc.)

The first foreign missionary family John Wesley supported was The Jim Reutlers. Currently we support the Parke Renshaw family, missionaries in Brazil.
### Chapter Six - Growth of John Wesley

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Church Property Value*</th>
<th>Pastor's Salary**</th>
<th>Benevolent Contributions</th>
<th>Church School Enrollment</th>
<th>Income From Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 1966-May 1967</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>$44,000</td>
<td>$1,950.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>Jan.-Dec. 1980</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>$805,000</td>
<td>$14,611.00</td>
<td>$2,972.00</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>$89,000.00 +</td>
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*Does not include parsonage. Includes church building, land, furnishings and equipment.

**Does not include travel allowance, utilities, etc. Includes base salary only.

**Note:** Early records are not easy to decipher. A report for 1968-69 shows the operating budget for that year at $30,000. For 1981, operating budget is $107,727.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Current Organizations

Minister - Herbert D. Outlaw, Sr.
District Superintendent - Melton McNeill
Presiding Bishop - Joel McDavid
Trustees: Frank Benson, Ward Bond, Jim Clark, Ray Doss, Bobby Daniell, Arthur Durshimer, Danny Vining, Leon Wells
Church School Superintendant - John Rowland
United Methodist Women: Nancy Shealy, President; Libby Anderson, Vice-President; Mary Frances Ewing, Secretary; Joyce Nelson, Treasurer.
United Methodist Men: Tim Hall, President; Ward Bond, Vice-President; Dean Van Alstyne, Secretary; Leon Wells, Treasurer; Ray Doss, Projects Chairman; Frank Benson, Program Chairman.

For a detailed listing of other organizations within the church, please refer to the report dated November 1980, addressed to the Charge Conference. For comparison, a copy of the first report to the Charge Conference is also attached.