

HISTORY
of
ANNA KRESGE MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH

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Anna Kresge Memorial Methodist Church
Cedartown, Georgia

The Anna Kresge Memorial Methodist Church was started as a community mission in 1907, when Miss Bertha Addington of Boaz, Alabama, came to Cedartown after having learned of the need for religious work in this section of town. At first, all the religious work was held in an old abandoned knitting mill, near where the Goodyear Mill now stands. Then Miss Addington received permission from the Mill to use one of their dwelling houses as a Community Center. In addition to Sunday School and Worship Services, regular day school and night classes were organized.

In 1913, the Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church became interested in the work and erected a building to adequately meet the needs, the McCarty Community House. This same year, The Methodist Episcopal church, seeing the need for an organized church in this section of town, sent Rev. Garrett from Atlanta. He came to the Mission and organized the West End Methodist Episcopal Church. The name was later changed to West Avenue Methodist Church. All services continued to be held in the McCarty Community House.

In 1914 Miss Ethel Harpst came to succeed Miss Addington as Superintendent of the Community House.

The second pastor of the church, Rev. E. J. Williams, started the campaign to erect a church building for the newly organized church. Rev. Martin Sivils continued the campaign to raise funds for the erection of the church. The owners of the Cedartown Yarn Mills donated the site and \$500. The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension and Bishop Leete made similar donations. In 1917, the church, located on the corner of what is now West Avenue and Third Street, was completed and dedicated free of debt, at a cost of \$3500. This frame structure, consisting of three class rooms, in addition to the Sanctuary, was used until the present church was erected in 1949.

The first pastor after the church building was erected was the Rev. Ridley. Then followed Rev. B. A. Chastain; Rev. O. N. Wade; Rev. William McGarity; Rev. Coffin; Rev. George Davis; Rev. W. H. Bowman; Rev. Loran Parker; Rev. Frank Cook; Rev. Aycock; Rev. J. R. Poteet; Rev. Wallace Wiggins; Rev. Forrest E. Linder; Rev. Carl Thomas; Rev. W. A. Woodruff; Rev. C. H. Smith; Rev. Ray Stewart; Rev. Lamar Cherry; And Rev. Roy A. Neal.

There have been six members who have gone out of this church as ministers in the Methodist Church. Rev. Jack Atha, Rev. James Speer, Rev. Wiley Perry, Rev. Wallace Wiggins, and Rev. Charles Buice are all serving as Pastors in the North Georgia Conference. Another, Rev. S. P. Cobb, Jr. is still in school.

With the growth and development of the church, there was an ever increasing need for a larger and more adequate church plant. In the Fall of 1947, under the leadership of the pastor, Rev. Roy A. Neal, work was begun on the Educational Building and was completed in the Spring of 1948. Church services were conducted in the basement of the Educational Building for about

a year until the Church Auditorium was completed in October 1949 at a total cost of approximately \$55,000. The new church is a beautiful brick structure, consisting of 11 class rooms, a kitchen a large dining room and recreation room, the Pastor's, in addition to the Auditorium, which has a seating capacity of 250. There are 14 beautiful stained glass windows in the church, also a lovely stained glass, picture window, depicting Christ Praying in the Garden, is back of the choir loft. At the opening of the new church, the name of Church was changed from West Avenue Methodist Church to the Anna Kresge Memorial Methodist Church of Cedartown, Georgia.

The name of the church was changed as a memorial to Mrs. Anna Kresge of Detroit Michigian, who was interested in this community and served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Ethel Harpst Home for Children. In 1947, while here on one of her visits, Miss Ethel Harpst told Mrs. Kresge of the great need for a larger, more adequate Church here. Upon her return to Detroit, Mrs. Kresge sent a check for \$5000. to begin the building fund. Although Mrs. Kresge died, suddenly, before the check was presented to the Church, her children continued to send generous gifts until the Church was completed and free of debt. A total of \$26,545. was donated by the Kresge Foundation.

The members of the church worked faithfully, tithing, cooking, quilting, and many other ways to raise money until the church was free of debt. They are still working, looking forward to the day when a steeple can be erected on the church. They are expecting to have the steeple erected by the Summer of 1951.

Historians:

Mr. Floyd Jackson

Mr. W. C. Cooper